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Investigation of The Role of Human Resources Practices in Intention to Quit Work As A Result of Mobbing Behaviors

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Abstract
Purpose- The activities of human resources departments play a strategic role in terms of the harmony of individual and organizational interests. The aim of the study is to examine the role of human resources practices in the intention to quit, which is a result of mobbing.
Design/methodology/approach- Quantitative research methods were used in this study. This study is explanatory research and a cross-sectional scanning method was used. Employees of a multinational technology company operating in Turkey constitute the sample of this research. 300 employees of the company, which has 585 employees, participated in this study by online survey method. Validity and reliability, correlation, and regression analyzes were performed on the obtained data using SPSS 20 statistical program.
Findings- According to the findings, it has been determined that there is a significant relationship between the perception of mobbing and the intention to quit work. In addition, it has been accepted that human resources practices have a mediating effect on the relationship between mobbing and the intention to quit work.
Practical implications – As the perception of mobbing increases, the intention to leave the job also increases. However, employees' perception of human resources practices is primarily neutral. In this case, although human resources practices improve, they do not have a significant effect on the intention to quit. Also, it is thought that the factors that prevent the employees' intention to quit may be economic reasons or continuance commitment.
Originality/value: This study focuses on the reasons for the intention to quit work. With the findings it has obtained, it is a guide that the human resource policies of the organizations should be more visible and felt by the employees.

Keywords: Human Resource Practices, Mobbing Behavior, Intention to Quit Work

Introduction
Business life is a platform where people from different sociocultural, economic backgrounds and characteristics come together and act jointly to achieve corporate goals and objectives. Additionally, it is an area where people spend more time than their family and social lives and are more psychologically worn out. While some argue that its reasons are the intense competition in the business environment and the ambition to climb the career ladder, this
situation affects the expectations and relations of the managers and staff, and has some negative consequences on organizational and individual performance (Asunakutlu and Safran, 2006). At this point, the strategic role of the human resources department comes into play. Human resources departments should be solution-oriented by acting as a mediator between the management and employees with the applications they would develop. Otherwise it would be inevitable for employees to display unacceptable behaviors and it would result in severe damage to each other by conflicting corporate and individual interests. Mobbing behaviors are at the forefront of these negative behaviors observed in working life. The concept of mobbing corresponds to the meaning of disturbing the employee in the work environment (TDK, 2019). In places where mobbing predominates, there is no comfortable and productive working environment; it also damages the sense of trust among employees and causes disruptions in team work. Mobbing is the humiliating, harassing, unfair words and behaviors systematically applied by one group to another group or to a person in the workplace. There is no limit as it is for the purpose of harassing. Although mobbing is experienced in various sectors in many countries, it is more often than not a neglected or ignored issue. However, it is important for the future of the enterprise to investigate the causes of psychological mobbing and take necessary precautions since it causes great damage to both the name of the enterprise and the relations between the employees. Numerous studies have demonstrated (Jackson and Maslach, 1982; Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Akbolat, Yilmazer and Tutar, 2014) that employees who are exposed to mobbing tend to quit their jobs. It is very important for managers to take measures to reduce the negative work attitudes of employees in order not to lose their manpower. Studies suggests that managerial attitudes and behaviors are effective on the intention to quit work (Karagonlar & Ozturk, 2015; Yuksek, 2006; Deniz & Cimen, 2019; Polat & Meydan, 2010). In addition, studies have shown that human resources management practices are an important variable that affects that intention (Gunduz and Bekmezci, 2012; Icirgen, 2016; Rizwan et al., 2014; Kundu and Gahlawat, 2016). However, very limited number of studies had examined the role of human resources practices in the relationship between mobbing and the intention to quit work. For this purpose, the mediation effect of human resources practices in the relationship between mobbing as a negative work-related situation, and intention to quit work is under examination. As the findings highlight the harms of negative work attitudes, it is recommended that corporations should reevaluate their HR policies and develop strategic practices to prevent any mobbing behavior in the organization.

Conceptual Framework
The Relationship Between Mobbing Behavior and Intention to Quit Work
Mobbing behavior, as an organizational problem, causes tension and conflict in the working environment and makes the environment psychologically unbearable. Moreover, it is a process that discourages motivation among employees, harms their commitment to the organization and makes them unhappy in their work hours. Mobbing behavior is a set of malicious behaviors that a person or group directs to another person or people in the work environment by systematically repeating disturbing and abrasive behaviors and ultimately aiming to make them quit their job (Tetik, 2010). Leymann (1990), as a significant figure who has conducted a lot of research on this subject, defines mobbing as the psychological terror applied against one or more people and another individual in a regular manner with an immoral and aggressive (hostile) communication style. As mobbing studies tend to indicate, mobbing is harmful for employees and organizations alike (Wilson & Diedrich, 2011; Glambek
et al., 2014). A number of studies show that mobbing decreases job satisfaction (Karcioğlu and Akbas, 2010; Ay and Filiz, 2011; Uygun, 2014). Robbins and Judge (2015) states that when employees feel dissatisfaction at work due to mobbing, they choose one of four different types of behavior according to their personality traits

1. Quitting work: The employee who accepts the active and destructive behavior decides to quit job.
2. Raising his/her voice: The active and constructive employee tries to eliminate problems in the workplace
3. Showing his/her loyalty: Passive and constructive employee waits believing that the problems in the workplace will disappear
4. Ignoring: The passive and destructive employee tries to ignore the problem by paying less attention to the job, arriving late or not, and making less effort, even though the problems in the workplace continue.

At this point, the intention to quit work on the part of the employee who is subjected to mobbing has important individual and organizational consequences. Intention to quit work refers to the possibility for the employee to leave the organization voluntarily in cases where working conditions are not satisfactory for them (Kuvaas, 2006). In organizations where mobbing manifests itself, the economic problems experienced by the personnel quitting the job are the individual results, while the economic problems such as the orientation process and the training costs of replacements are the organizational consequences (Erdirençelebi and Filiz, 2016). Yuksel and Tuncsipler (2011) have found a relationship between mobbing and intention to quit in a study they conducted in Turkey, but their finding have proved that employees remained committed to the job due to economic conditions despite their intention to quit. A similar emphasis is also noted in the study of (Robbins and Judge, 2015). Robins and Judge point out that the decisions people make when they feel dissatisfaction at work are not merely related to personality traits and that environmental factors are also crucial. Elci and Karabay (2016), in their study conducted with the employees of 23 different companies in Istanbul suggest that exposure to mobbing in the working environment increases the intention to quit work and leads people stay silent. For Uslu and Aktaş (2017) the satisfaction that job security provides has a partial mediation effect in the interaction between organizational silence and intention to quit.

Within this framework, it is possible to point out the existence of a relationship between employees’ perception on mobbing and their intention to quit work. In this context this hypothesis has been formulated

“H1: There is a significant relationship between mobbing behavior and intention to quit work.”

The Relationship between Human Resources Practices, Mobbing Behavior and Intention to Quit Work
Strategically human resources departments are very important for corporations. In this regard, top management and line management have to act together to achieve the goals of the enterprise, hold consultation meetings in decision-making processes and engage in constant communication. The key role of human resources departments at this point is to harmonize employee strategies, support management channels and provide sustainable competitive advantage by adding value to the business (Gerhart and Feng, 2021).

HR practices are of great importance in terms of developing corporate culture and its acceptance among employees. As a whole, the selection of members, their placements in
positions suitable for their job descriptions, evaluation of their performance according to certain criteria, rewarding, continuing education and professional development activities, promotion processes, orientation of new members ensure the internalization, consolidation and continuity of the existing culture (Günsel and Pelenk, 2017). The role of human resources departments within the enterprise depends on the organizational structure and culture. In the literature, there are various classifications for the roles of HR departments. These are as follows: strategic role, operational role, service provider role, regulatory role, administrative role, strategic business partner role, consultant role and the agent of change (Ozcelik, 2006). In this case, making improvements in the working conditions of the service sector employees is the operational role of the HR department whereas meeting the more flexible demands of the employees in the technology and information sector is classified as the service provider role of the HR department (Pelit and Kilic, 2012).

There are many studies in the literature recommending that the decisions to be taken by the enterprises to manage their human resources should be the responsibility of the HR department in consultation with the managers (Duzgun and Cetin, 2017; Cetinturk, 2017; Günsel and Pelenk, 2017). Accordingly developing policies that will protect the rights of the employees within the enterprise, and that will bring together the goals of the institution and personnel is closely interconnected with the practices of HR departments. This connection will also contribute to the construction of a system to prevent mobbing that became a public issue. The conflict between institutional and personal expectations is its underlying reason. When managers have recourse to the suppression of the employees and the application of mobbing strategies in order to realize their business goals, they cause heavy damage. It lowers the motivation among employees and decreases their sense of belonging to the organization. If one employee experiences this situation in a constant manner, it damages his/her personality, health, working quality and communication with other employees (Bayat and Baykal, 2016; Sandybayev, 2015). Eventually it becomes an inevitable decision for the employee to quit job in order to put an end this situation. At this point, human resources departments should be involved in the process and assume consultancy (Vardarlier and Canon, 2017).

Within this framework, it is possible to consider the relationship between employees' perception of mobbing behavior and their intention to quit work as the intermediary role of human resources management practices. In this context this hypothesis has been formulated: “H2: Human resources practices have a mediating role in the relationship between mobbing behavior and intention to quit work.”

**Methodology**

An applied study was conducted in a multinational technology company operating in Istanbul, Turkey with 585 employees. 300 employees participated in the study by means of survey method. The sample constitutes 51% of the population. Within this framework, this study;
- has an explanatory research method in terms of measuring the intention to quit work by associating human resources practices with mobbing.
- is an applied study.
- it design model includes a causal context.

Its main hypotheses are:
- H1: There is a significant relationship between mobbing behavior and intention to quit work.
- H2: Human resources practices have a mediating effect on the relationship between mobbing behavior and intention to quit work.
In order to evaluate the human resources practices of the sample, it uses Human Resources Management scale developed by Chang (2005) and this scale consists of 7 factors and 32 questions. In order to evaluate the mobbing variable, it uses Psychological Terror Scale consisting of 5 dimensions developed by (Leymann, 1996). The intention to quit work is the scale developed by Rode et al (2007) consisting of 6 statements.

It is a quantitative research due to its data collection and analysis methods. In this direction, in order to test the relationship between relevant variables, the normal distribution test was performed with the help of SPSS 2.0 program; after it is determined that data shows normal distribution, correlation and regression tests were applied. In addition, frequency testing, validity and reliability tests were also carried out.

Findings

The socio-demographic characteristics of participants in the research are as follows: 50.3% are female, 49.72% are male; 60.3% of them are married and 39.7% of them are single. According to their positions, junior engineers consist of 30%, senior engineer 37.7%, expert 12.3%, senior expert 17.3%, department manager 2.7%.

For the validity analysis of the variables in the study explanatory factor analysis was carried out. The variables show a parallel distribution with their positions in the original scale. The results of the reliability analyzes for the variables are detailed in Table 1. As can be seen, the reliability of the scales for variables is above 0.70 and is accepted as reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Scale</th>
<th>Question number</th>
<th>Alpha Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobbing behavior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Practice</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Quit Work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that there is a positive (0.579) significant relationship between being exposed to mobbing and intention to quit. It is assumed that as the level of exposure to mobbing increases, the intention to quit work also increases. In addition, the level of influence of mobbing on intention to quit has a very significant effect with 44.9%. This result is consistent with other findings in the literature (Wilson & Diedrich, 2011; Glambek et al., 2014; Shellie, 2008; Erdirencelbi & Filizoz, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intention to Quit Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlation and Regression Analyses on Mobbing and Intention to Quit Work</strong></td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobbing behavior</td>
<td>0.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>14,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 3 indicates, multiple regression analysis was first performed to test H₂ hypothesis of the research. According to the results of multiple regression analysis, R²=0.411 has corrected R²=0.375 and F=32.745 (p<0.01) values. This result shows that mobbing and human resources
Managers' practices explain 37.5% of the variance in intention to quit. Mobbing behavior (β=0.509 p<0.01) and Human Resources Practices (β=-0.384 p<0.01) have a significant effect on this intention.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model: Independent variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Std Er.</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Significant Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.289</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>7.789</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobbing behavior</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>7.674</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Practice</td>
<td>0.384</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>7.573</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted R²: 0.375
Expected Std. Er.: 0.437
F: 32.745
Significant Values: 0.001

Dependent Variable: Intention to Quit Work

It is suggested that the mediating variable is a part of the causal relationship between the two variables. (McKinnon, Fairchild and Fritz, 2010: 594). The mediation relationship is tested with the model shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Mediating effect model](image)

In this figure, X represents the independent variable, Y the dependent variable, and M the mediator variable. In addition, path c shows the effect between independent and dependent variables after the mediator variable is included in the analysis, path a shows the effect between independent variable and mediating variables, and path b shows the effect between mediating and dependent variables (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 116).

![Figure 3: Relation between Mobbing and Intention to Quit Work (simple relation/correlation)](image)
Figure 4: The Mediating Effect of HR Practices on Mobbing and Intention to Quit Work

Figure 4 shows the results of the hypothesis regarding the mediating effect of human resources practices on mobbing and intention to quit work. Three regression equations were used to test the statistical significance of the mediation effect in the model. These are; \( c = \) the total effect of \( X \) on \( Y \), \( ab = \) the indirect effect of \( X \) on \( Y \), \( c' = \) the direct effect of \( X \) on \( Y \). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), they specified the necessary conditions in detail to be able to perform mediator variable analysis. In this context, it has been determined that human resources practices have a partial mediation role as they cause a decrease in the relationship between mobbing and intention to quit work (0.509).

In addition to the multiple regression model, the Sobel test method was also used to test the significance of the mediation effect. Sobel Test Esitliği

\[
z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{b^2s_a^2 + a^2s_b^2 + s_c^2s_d^2}}
\]

In this connection, results of our Sobel test regarding the significance of the indirect effect of human resources practices on the intention to quit work is statistically significant ( \( Z = 6.0143 \), \( p = 0.000 < 0.05 \)). Since the \( Z \) value exceeds the critical values of + 1.96 at the \( \alpha = 0.05 \) level, it has a mediating effect. Since the Sobel test is statistically significant, it can be concluded that the indirect effect differs significantly from zero. This finding indicates that human resources practices play a mediating role in the relationship between mobbing behavior and intention to leave. This finding supports the \( H_2 \) hypothesis.

Discussions and Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine the effect of practices human resources departments are responsible on the relationship between mobbing behavior and intention to quit work. Within the scope of the study, statistical analyzes were applied to the data obtained from the research conducted to measure the perceptions of employees in a multinational technology company about HR practices, mobbing behavior and intention to quit work. According to the findings, examination shows mobbing has a statistically significant positive effect on the intention to quit the work while no effect is found for human resources practices.

Literature review suggests that many studies find a positive and significant relationship between mobbing and intention to quit work. For Alkis and Yagci (2021), when the employees’ perception of mobbing and burnout increases, there is also an increase in their intention to quit work. According to the research conducted by Tanriverdi et al (2018) with bank employees, the perception of burnout and psychological violence increases the same
intention as well. Atalay and Dogan (2020) have also determined that the depression factor has a partial mediating role in the effect of mobbing on the intention to quit work. Tilki et al.’s (2021) had conducted a research with disabled employees and found that factors like organizational cynicism and job satisfaction are also effective on the intention to quit work, along with mobbing. According to Kahriman et al. (2021), while the employees' perception of mobbing behavior and their intention to quit work have a positive relationship, this situation also affects the job satisfaction of the employees negatively. Focusing on mobbing behavior, these studies take intention to quit work and job dissatisfaction as individual outputs; inefficiency, poor performance, employee turnover, etc. as organization outputs. At this point, human resources practices are crucial. According to the study conducted by Pelit and Soybalı (2021), human resources departments contribute to operations of units and overall business, functioning as a management body. Studies additionally emphasizes that HR departments are important for enterprises since it contributes to personnel's trust in the employer, emotional commitment, distributive justice and leader-member interaction. They are also very essential for interpreting the productivity of employees. In addition, it has been found that human resources management practices are effective in employees' intention to quit work, and that human resources practices positively affect employees' emotional states, thus reducing that intention (Hossain et al., 2017; Tuysuz & Bozkurt, 2021). In a limited number of studies similar to the model of our research, it is stated that human resources practices can reduce the intention to quit work, and that negative behaviors such as mobbing can be prevented with right strategies (Gunduz & Bekmezci, 2012; Ozturk, 2021; Kahriman, 2021; Atalay & Dogan, 2020; Grass, 2022). On the other hand, according to our findings higher levels of mobbing increase intention to quit the work directly but decrease human resources practices, which, in turn, increase intention to quit the work. This result differs from the literature. In studies conducted in Turkey, it is emphasized that there is a relationship between mobbing and intention to quit, but employees remain committed to the work due to economic conditions despite thinking about quitting. In our research findings, HR practices do not reduce mobbing, nor do they prevent leaving the work. The fact that employees do not have a clear perception of HR practices may also be a reason for this situation. A more visible and functional HR department can change this perception of employees. In this direction, human resources practices should primarily focus on actual causes of mobbing in order to prevent it and intervene in mobbing behaviors within the organization. Preventive methods should be developed for the causes, and employees should be aware of their rights according to labor law. Mobbing is a process that results not only in the victimization of subjected people, but also in decreased performance. Also it is likely to lead those people arrive late or be absent from work, and ultimately decide to quit their job. This situation also harms organizations. It reduces the productivity of the organization, undermines motivation among staff and affects the organizational climate very negatively. Human resources departments should carry out this process professionally in a solution-oriented manner and create a healthy working environment.

Since the current economic conditions of the researched country were not taken into account in our study, it is recommended to consider the economic conditions in future studies. In addition, at this point, the dimensions of employees' commitment to the organization is also important. Continuance commitment is the decision to stay by taking into account the costs, negativities, or the benefits of staying in the organization if the employees leave the organization (Chigeda et al., 2022). Most studies on employee turnover have revealed that an important measure of turnover behavior is related to job satisfaction, which is a sign of
people’s commitment to the organization. If the person is committed to the values of the organization and contributes to the realization of these values, he/she will not want to leave the organization (Wang et al., 2022).

It is thought that this study will contribute to the relevant literature, as it predicts that mobbing, as a phenomenon results in quitting or organizational silence in the workplaces and reduces organizational performance in both ways, can be reduced by human resources practices. However, the perception of HR practices in this study is not very clear. For this reason, it is important for HR practices to take a more active role. In future studies, it may be important to conduct a study including HR managers, in terms of comparing the perceptions of employees and HR managers.

Since the study was applied to the employees of a technology company operating in Turkey, it is thought that it is important to generalize the study in different geographical locations and various sectors.

References


