

# THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOBBING, ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND TURNOVER INTENTION: A SURVEY STUDY IN ERZURUM/TURKEY

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to find out the relationships between mobbing, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and turnover intention in organizations. The data for this study was gathered from 171 public and private sector workers in the province of Erzurum/Turkey. As a result of the study, we found out that there was an inverse relationship between mobbing and OCB, whereas a strong and positive relationship between mobbing and turnover intention. Rather, there was no relationship between OCB and turnover intention. The level of mobbing was found as very low, the level of OCB was found as high and the level of turnover intention was found as very low. We observed that there were statistically significant differences between the levels of mobbing, OCB and turnover intention according to the demographic characteristics of workers.*

**Keywords:** *Mobbing, Organizational citizenship behavior, Turnover intention, Erzurum*

## INTRODUCTION

The human resources play a critical role in the activity of an organization in today competitive market. The development and survival of an organization are basically determined by human and intellectual capital. It can be said that a convenient view to human resource management and creating an organizational climate appreciated by workers and contributes to satisfying their needs, are necessary conditions to be successful. An organization, thus, can achieve its strategic goals.

In this study we investigated the relationships between mobbing, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and turnover intention of workers at workplace which are very important subjects to create positive conditions which are mentioned above.

Mobbing is commonly used to describe all situations where an employee, a supervisor, or a manager, is systematically, repeatedly mistreated and victimized by fellow workers, subordinates or superiors. As a result of such behaviors high turnover, low morale, increased absenteeism, decreased productivity and loss of key individuals were occurred. The term OCB as described extra discretionary work behavior has serious positive impact on work quality, actual performance, service quality and service delivery, good reputation etc., thus, corporate image. On top of them, lack of OCB affects the organizational performance as well as image in today's highly competitive business. Labor turnover is an important and widespread feature of the labor market. This affects both workers and organizations. Employees look for safer, secure and better work conditions. If they have negative concerns about this, they may intent to leave the organization. On the other hand companies suffer the loss of job-specific skills, disruption in production and undergo the costs of hiring and training new workers (Garino and Martin, 2007).

The study begins by a literature review of those concepts and then will go on to the development of hypotheses. Research methodology, research model and analyses results will take place at next sections. Then, the results of the analyses will be discussed and recommendations will be provided.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Mobbing*

The word “mobbing” was firstly used by Konrad Lorenz (1991) to describe animal group behavior. The attacks from a smaller animals group threatening a single larger animal were identified as “mobbing” by Lorenz. Later, Heinemann (1972) used this word for describing destructive behavior of small groups of children directed against a single child. When Leymann and Gustavsson (1984) found a similar kind of behavior at work places they borrowed this word and used. But the phenomenon (mobbing), first introduced by the American psychiatrist Carroll Brodksy (1976) in the book ‘The harassed worker’. There are other expressions suggested for the same event at work. Those are: Psychological terror or mobbing (Leymann, 1990b), workplace bullying (Adams, 1992), work harassment (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997) and emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998). Leymann (1996) explains that bullying is used for physical aggression and threat acts at school but physical violence is very seldom found in mobbing behavior at work. As mobbing is characterized by much more sophisticated behaviors such as socially isolating the victim, Leymann (1996) suggests keeping the word “bullying” for activities between children and teenagers at school; hence he prefers to use psychological terror or mobbing.

All concepts refer to a situation where a worker over a long period of time is exposed to repeated and unwanted behavior merely directed against them or towards a group of employees by superiors or peers, creating an unpleasant psychosocial working environment as well as abasement, resentment and boredom in the target(s). The goal is to exclude, isolate, and eliminate the target(s) (Westhues, 2003). The International Labor Organization (ILO) recognizes emotional abuse as psychological violence, identifying bullying and mobbing as the two main forms of this violence (Denenberg and Braverman, 2001) . Leymann (1996) define mobbing as below:

*“Psychological terror or mobbing in working life involves hostile and ethical communication, which is directed in a systematic way by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual who, due to mobbing, is pushed into helpless and defenseless position, being held there by means of continuing mobbing activities. These actions occur on a very frequent basis (at least once a week) and over a long period of time (at least 6 months duration). Because of high frequency and duration of hostile behavior, this maltreatment results in considerable psychological, psychosomatic, and social misery.”*

When considering the phases of mobbing, five phases are typically suggested. The first is the initial conflict or critical incident stage. The second phase is where psychological abuse is increasingly directed at the target. The third phase occur when management intervenes, often siding with the perpetrators, and increasing the levels of harm. The fourth phase is recognizable when the target is accused of being ‘difficult’ or ‘mentally ill’ and the final phase is marked by the expulsion of the target from their employment (Shallcross et al, 2008).

Leymann (1996) says that mobbing causes negative effects on society, organizations and victims. For example, Leymann (1990) claimed that 15% of suicides in Sweden happened due to mobbing. He lists the causes of mobbing can be listed as follows: Poorly organized conditions, poor conflict management and personality of victim (Leymann, 1996). Sloan et al (2010) tabulated mobbing behaviors, changes experienced by target and organizational costs due to mobbing (Table1).

**Table1. Mobbing Behaviors, Changes Experienced by Target and Organizational Costs**

Mobbing Behavior	Changes Experienced by Targets	Organizational Costs
Interrupts the target in meetings	Poor concentration	Loss of best employees
Sighs, rolls eyes, glares at target	Insomnia	Demoralization of staff
Discounts/discredits target's ideas and accomplishments	Substance abuse	Resignations
Ignores target (silent treatment)	Headaches	Unable to hire diverse staff
Intimidates through gestures	Gastrointestinal disorders	Disruption of operations and staff relations
Questions target's competence	Depression	Company reputation suffers
Insults the target	Anxiety	Anxiety
Yells and screams	Exhaustion	Decrease in productivity and creativity
Makes unreasonable demands	Suspicion	Increased absenteeism
Steals credit for work done by target	Fear	Loss of trust
Cuts target out of information loop	Forgetfulness	System stays in place when players change
Blames target for fabricated errors	Fatigue	
Nice to target in public; makes rude comments to or about target in private	Failure to pay bills	
Constant criticism of target	Crying	
Poisons workplace with angry outbursts	Irritability	
	Change in appearance	

Leymann (1993) explains main reasons for engaging mobbing as follows:

1. To force someone to adapt to a group norm: "If they don't adapt, they have to go" would be the reasoning of someone driven by these motives. An overriding belief is that the group can only be cohesive and strong if uniformity exists.
2. To revel in animosity. People engage in mobbing to eliminate those they do not like. Relative position in organizational hierarchy does not really matter. Superiors, co-workers, or subordinates alike, when driven by personal dislikes, can initiate the process.
3. To gain pleasure. Sadistically motivated mobbers derive pleasure from the torment they inflict.
4. To reinforce prejudices. People use mobbing behaviors because they dislike or hate people who happen to belong to a certain social, racial, or ethnic group.

About mobbing process, Leymann (1996) propounds some measures directed toward preventing its development, stopping it, or rehabilitating a subjected individual: Precautions, early management interventions, vocational rehabilitation and law.

### *Organizational citizenship behavior (ocb)*

Barnard (1938) stated that the willingness of individuals to contribute cooperative efforts to the organization was necessary to effective attainment of organizational goals. Katz and Kahn (1978) pointed out that organizational citizenship is important in organizations because it can be highly valuable to organizations and can contribute to performance and competitive advantage.

The concept of organizational citizenship behavior was first introduced by Organ (1988). Organ defined OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization". This means citizenship behavior includes voluntary employee activities that may or may not be rewarded but that contribute to the organization by improving the overall quality of the setting in which work takes place.

According to Organ's definition, OCB reflects a "good soldier syndrome" which is so necessary for the plenty and good functioning of an organization. It means doing a better job, making an effort above and beyond formal requirements, and filling the gap between procedures and regulations on the one hand, and dynamic reality on the other. OCB is usually understood as exerting exceptionally good behaviors for the sake of the organization and informally supporting its members.

Coleman and Borman (2000) state that there are many different types of behaviors that might seem to fit the definition of citizenship behavior, but those could be separated into two main categories that differ according to who benefits from the activity; coworkers or the organization. The first category of citizenship behavior is the one with which someone is likely to be familiar: interpersonal citizenship behavior. Such behaviors benefit coworkers and colleagues and involve assisting, supporting, and developing other organizational members in a way that goes beyond normal job expectations. The second category of citizenship behavior is organizational citizenship behavior. These behaviors benefit the larger organization by supporting and defending the company, working to improve its operations, and being especially loyal to it (Van Dyne and Le Pine, 1998).

OCB is very important to organizations because they need employees who will do more than their usual job duties and provide performance that is beyond expectations. OCB describes actions in which employees are willing to go above and beyond their prescribed role requirements. As Organ (1988) suggested, high levels of OCB should lead to a more efficient organization and help bring new resources into the organization. It is believed that as more employees engage in OCB, the organization becomes more successful in building corporate image and improving performance. Employees high on OCB rating will not show any counterproductive work behavior that can have a negative effect on production, service delivery and promotion of corporate image (Kolade et al., 2014).

By reviewing the relevant literature of organizational citizenship behavior, it can be seen that there is a lack of consensus about the dimensions of OCB. Also the different labels used for the dimensions of OCB, the most relevant dimensions introduced by Organ (1988) are altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue and sportsmanship. Zhang (2011) explains these dimensions as follows. *Altruism*: Being helpful; *Conscientiousness*: Doing more than just the minimum; attention to detail (prevent/ minimize error); *Courtesy*: Being polite and courteous; prevent conflict; *Civic virtue*: Showing interest and involvement (e.g. keeping up to date) with the organization; defend organizational policies and practices and *Sportsmanship*: Tolerating less than ideal conditions; accepting of changes and performs requests without complaints.

### *Turnover intention*

Human resources department is facing the challenge of retaining the employees in the organization to achieve organizational goals. On the other hand employees look for safer and secure work conditions. If they have negative concerns about this subject they may intend to leave the organization. Turnover intention can be defined as how long an employee wants to stay in an organization (Ahmad, et al., 2012). Intention to turnover shows an individual's perceived probability of staying or leaving in an organization (Cotton and Tuttle, 1986). Tett and Meyer (1993) describe turnover intentions as a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization. Employees are the most valuable resource of an organization. It is very important for management to understand employee's needs in order to implement the business plan effectively. Workforce turnover is considered a sticky phenomenon that causes problems for business. Losing the qualified workforce leads to reduction on quality, productivity, innovation and competitiveness. Furthermore, turnover causes significant cost in the recruiting and training the new employees (Abbasi et al., 2008).

Today it is considered to be an important task to manage employee turnover for any organization. It is natural that people want diversities in their everyday life; seeks for new and challenging jobs and good working environment in job place. Every organization wishes to have high productivity, fewer turnovers and to be profitable. Managing turnover successfully is a must to achieve the organizational goals (Shamsuzzoha and Shumon, 2007).

Sometimes employee turnover benefits organizations positively. This might happen when a poor performer is replaced by a more skilled employee and when a retired employee replaced by a younger one (Shamsuzzoha and Shumon, 2007). Some mentioned about the benefits of turnover in settings requiring exploration or innovation. Dalton and Todor (1979) noted that the worker mobility meant by turnover may serve as a source of new knowledge for organizations. At an optimal rate of turnover, Huselid (1995) assumes that low rates of turnover are preferable to high rates. Employee turnover may be also costly as it requires different cost to take account such as administrative costs of recruitment, cost of covering during the period in which there is a vacancy, training cost for the new worker etc. (Shamsuzzoha and Shumon, 2007).

Turnover occurs for many different reasons. Sometimes new job attracts employees and pull them to leave the available one. In contrary employee also pushed to leave job due to the dissatisfaction in their present workplace. Poor managerial relationships can be an important reason for the employees to leave their jobs. It is relatively seldom for people to leave jobs in which they are happy even offered by higher salary elsewhere (Shamsuzzoha and Shumon, 2007).

Turnover intention can be either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary turnover occurs when the employee makes the decision to leave on his own. Usually, voluntary turnover intention occurs when the employee perceives another opportunity as better than his current position. This includes more pay, more recognition or a more convenient location. It can also occur when the employee has to leave for health or family reasons. If an employee plans to voluntarily retire from a position, that's voluntary turnover intention, too. On the other hand, involuntary turnover intention is a measurement of whether the organization in question plans to remove an employee from a position, causing the turnover. This can happen if an organization isn't happy with an employee's job performance and chooses to fire him. It also happens when a business has to eliminate positions due to economic pressures or downturns in business. In general, turnover creates monetary and structural stress on the organization it occurs within, especially voluntary turnover. At least with involuntary turnover, the organization can make preparations to reduce losses. To reduce turnover intention, organizations can offer strategic compensation packages especially with emphasizing performance and tenure. Also, employee-centric businesses tend to have fewer turnovers because the staff feels like it has a voice and the company values its contributions (Price and Mueller 1981).

## RESEARCH

### *Research goal and hypothesis*

The main objective of this study is to find out the relationships between mobbing, OCB and turnover intention at work. Then it is aimed to investigate whether the demographic characteristics of workers affect the levels of those concepts or not. The model of our research is shown in Figure1. In this context these hypotheses are developed:

H1: *There is an inverse relationship between the level of mobbing and OCB.*

H2: *There is an inverse relationship between the level of OCB and turnover intention.*

H3: *There is a positive relationship between the level of mobbing and turnover intention.*

H4: *The levels of mobbing, OCB and turnover intention differ according to demographic characteristics of workers.*

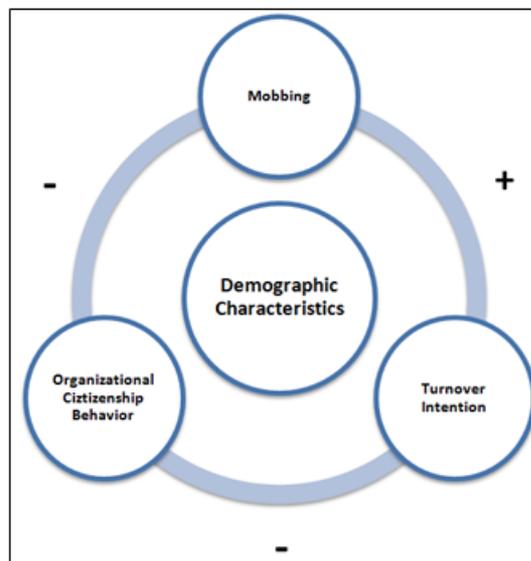


Figure1: Research Model

## Sample and data collection

To test the hypotheses, a field survey using questionnaires conducted on 171 public and private sector workers in the city of Erzurum located in the Eastern Anatolia/Turkey. Data collected by postgraduate students (Cemil İLBAŞ, Mevlüt YAĞAR, Rovshan ABBASOV, Uğur ŞEN, Yüsun YİĞİT) attending to Atatürk University Social Sciences Institute Labor Economics and Industrial Relations Program.

The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section includes questions related to the demographic characteristics of workers and the second section includes 42 items using 5 Likert-Type Scale (1=very low to 5=very high). Twenty items are related to mobbing yielded an  $r=0.95$  Cronbach Alpha, 19 items are related to OCB yielded an  $r=0.92$  Cronbach Alpha and 3 items are related to turnover intention yielded an  $r=0.82$  Cronbach Alpha. The Cronbach Alpha values indicate that the scales used in this survey are reliable.

To measure mobbing, 20 items were selected among LIPT Questionnaire (Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror Questionnaire) (Leymann, 1990a). LIPT includes 5 dimensions and 45 items but we used 20 items which could be convenient and valid to Turkish Culture. The average score of the scale was evaluated as the level of mobbing. Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale developed by Basım and Şeşen (2006) consists of 19 items including 5 dimensions based on Organ's classification. Finally, to measure turnover intention, the items developed by Cammann et al (1983) were used.

Data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed through the SPSS 16 statistical packet program. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, for relationships co-relation coefficient and for classification Mann Whitney-U and Kruskal Wallis tests were applied to analyze the collected data. Only observed statistically significant differences were tabulated.

To evaluate means a range table was established shown in Table2. As we used five-point Likert from 1 to 5, the step range should be found to evaluate means. We found step range as  $(5-1)/5=4/5=0.8$ . We added this value to 1 and so on. Then the range table included the situations as *very low*, *low*, *moderate*, *high* and *very high*.

**Table2: Ranges to Evaluate Means**

Range	Evaluation
1.00-1.80	Very low
1.81-2.60	Low
2.61-3.40	Moderate
3.41-4.20	High
4.21-5.00	Very high

## Findings

Table3 shows the demographic characteristics of the workers.

**Table3. Demographic Characteristics of the Workers**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Female	51 29.8
	Male	120 70.2
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	88 51.5
	Single	83 48.5
<b>Academic Qualification</b>	High School	87 50.9
	Vocational High School	25 14.6
	Undergraduate	59 24.5
<b>Age</b>	Up to 25 years	51 29.8
	26-35 years	89 52.0
	More than 35 years	31 18.1
<b>Managerial Status</b>	Manager	18 10.5
	Officer	153 89.5
<b>Seniority</b>	Up to 1 year	45 26.3
	1-5 years	65 38.0
	6-10 years	27 15.8
	More than 10 years	34 19.9
<b>Sector</b>	Private	74 43.3
	Public	97 56.7
<b>Total</b>	171	100

Table4 shows the means and evaluations of mobbing, OCB and turnover intention. As seen the level of mobbing and the level of turnover similarly are *very low*. But the level of OCB is *high*.

**Table4: Means**

	MEAN	EVALUATION
<b>MOBBING</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>VERY LOW</b>
<b>OCB</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
<b>TURNOVER INTENTION</b>	<b>1.70</b>	<b>VERY LOW</b>

We compared the means according to the gender of workers (Table5). When we examine Table6, it can be seen that the level of mobbing and the level of OCB differ in terms of the gender of workers. The mean rank of mobbing for females is higher than males. This finding indicates that female workers are faced more mobbing than males according to their perceptions. On the contrary, the level of OCB for males is higher than females. This finding says males show more OCB than females at work.

**Table5. Comparisons According to Gender (Mann Whitney U)**

	Gender	Frequency	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p
Mobbing	Female	51	97.44	2476	0.046*
	Male	120	81.14		
OCB	Female	51	68.33	2159	0.002*
	Male	120	93.51		
Turnover intention	Female	51	91.66	2772	0.301
	Male	120	83.60		

\* P<0.05

Table6 illustrates the comparison of means according to marital status of workers. According to table, single workers are more likely to intend to turnover.

**Table6. Comparisons According to Marital Status (Mann Whitney U)**

	MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	MEAN RANK	MANN WHITNEY U	P
TURNOVER INTENTION	MARRIED	88	76.46	2812	0.006*
	SINGLE	83	96.11		

\* P<0.05

Table7 shows the comparison of means according to the sector in which responders work. As seen, private sector workers show more OCB than public sector workers. This might be due to OCB is more necessary in private sector to earn more money, to rise up in the hierarchy etc. In private sector OCB is expected and desired by managers. In spite of this in public sector it is considered adequate if one do what is written in his job description. Interestingly the level of turnover intention is higher in private sector than public. Those workers in private firms may look for better job conditions. Repeatedly, workers in public sector are more stable with their job and generally think to work in available work till retirement.

**Table7. Comparisons According to Sector (Mann Whitney U)**

	Sector	Frequency	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p
OCB	Private	74	96.68	2799	0.011*
	Public	97	77.86		
Turnover intention	Private	74	96.97	2777	0.009*
	Public	97	77.63		

\* p<0.05

Table8 illustrates the comparison of means according to the academic qualification of workers. The levels of mobbing and turnover intention differ in terms of academic qualification. To identify different groups LSD test was applied to the data. It can be seen that well educated workers perceive more mobbing than others. This may be because of the awareness about mobbing fact. Beside this the possibility of well educated people being target is higher. Parallel to this finding, they are more likely to intend to turnover.

**Table8. Comparisons According to Academic Qualification (Kruskal Wallis)**

	Academic Qualification	Frequency	Mean Rank	Difference (LSD test)	Chi-Square	p
Mobbing	High school	87	77.36	Undergraduate differs from other	8.350	0.015*
	Vocational high school	25	81.30			
	Undergraduate	59	100.74			
Turnover intention	High school	87	77.61	Undergraduate differs from other	6.249	0.044
	Vocational high school	25	89.16			
	Undergraduate	59	97.03			

\* p<0.05

When we compared the means according to age, managerial status and seniority of workers, we did not obtain any differences between scores. Based on these results, H4 (*The levels of mobbing, OCB and turnover intention differ according to demographic characteristics of workers*) is accepted for gender, marital status, sector and academic qualification of workers.

Table9 demonstrates the relationship between mobbing, OCB and turnover intention. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between mobbing and OCB is -0.175\*, between OCB and turnover intention is -0.132, and between mobbing and turnover intention is 0.360\*\*. SPSS program evaluates (\*\*) as a strong, and (\*) as a moderate relationship between variables while (+) and (-) means the direction of the relationship. In the light of this explanation it can be said that there is an inverse and moderate relationship between mobbing and OCB. With this result H1 (*There is an inverse relationship between the level of mobbing and OCB*) is accepted. This means the higher the level of mobbing, then the lower the level of OCB. If in an organization OCB is expected and desired, then human resource management especially should control and eliminate mobbing in workplace.

There is no relationship between OCB and turnover intention. When we set up H2, we expected a negative relationship. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient between OCB and turnover intention is -0.132. In spite of predicting the direction (-) of the relation truly, H2 (*There is an inverse relationship between the level of OCB and turnover intention*) is not accepted.

Finally, we found a strong and positive relationship between mobbing and turnover intention. With this finding H3 (*There is a positive relationship between the level of mobbing and turnover intention*) is accepted. This refers to the higher the level of mobbing, then the higher of the level of turnover intention. As mentioned in literature review, people who engage in mobbing has a final goal leads the target (victim) quit the job. From this point of view it can be deduced that high level of mobbing causes high level of turnover intention and turnover rates. This also brings a lot of negative effects of turnover for the organization. Again an organization should be aware of mobbing and take necessary measures to prevent and stop it.

**Table9. The Relationship between Mobbing, OCB and Turnover Intention (Pearson Correlation Coefficient)**

		Mobbing	OCB	Turnover intention
Mobbing	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.175*	0.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.022	0.000
OCB	Pearson Correlation		1	-0.132
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.085
Turnover intention	Pearson Correlation			1
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

## CONCLUSION

In this study, we basically try to find out the relationships between mobbing, OCB and turnover intention. Then it is aimed to investigate whether the demographic characteristics of workers affect the levels of these concepts.

As a result of the study, we found out that there was an inverse relationship between mobbing and OCB, whereas there was a strong and positive relationship between mobbing and turnover intention. Rather, there was no relationship between OCB and turnover intention. With these findings we can firstly say that if there is a higher level of mobbing, then the lower level of OCB. If in an organization OCB is expected and desired, then human resource management especially should control and eliminate mobbing in workplace. It is possible to reveal secondly that the higher the level of mobbing is then the higher the level of turnover intention will be. It is argued in literature that people who engage in mobbing have a final goal aimed the target (victim) to quit the job. So, high level of mobbing causes high level of turnover intention and turnover rates. This also means a lot of negative effects of turnover for the organization. Finally, an organization should be aware of mobbing and take necessary measures to prevent and stop it.

We observed that there were statistically significant differences between the levels of mobbing, OCB and turnover intention according to the demographic characteristics of workers. The mean rank of mobbing for females is higher than males. This finding indicates that female workers are faced more mobbing than males according to their perceptions. On the contrary, the level of OCB for males is higher than females. This finding says males show more OCB than females at work. Another result says single workers are more likely to intend to turnover. When we compare means in terms of sector, private sector workers show more OCB than public sector workers. Interestingly the level of turnover intention is higher in private sector than public. Lastly, the levels of mobbing and turnover intention differ in terms of academic qualification. It was found that well educated workers perceive more mobbing than others and they are more likely to intend to turnover.

We found the level of mobbing as *very low*, the level of OCB as *high* and the level of turnover intention as *very low*.

As we conducted the survey to workers in the province of Erzurum, the data is limited to this sample. Further researches can be applied in different organizations, provinces and also countries to generalize the findings.

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