

The impact of increase in use of technology on leadership structure and psychological mobbing

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Abstract

The objective of this research therefore is to examine the impact of the use of technology in business firms on leadership structure and mobbing, and to find out if there is a relationship between leadership structure and mobbing. The data collection techniques that were used in the study were quantitative and the data collection instrument was a questionnaire. The sample for the study included (n=277) Automotive and Textile employees. The sample was selected from small, medium and large enterprises. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results proved that technology had a positive effect on the leadership style and leadership style was positively correlated to mobbing. This research makes recommendations on how to choose the best people for leadership in organizations.

Keywords: Technology, Mobbing, Leadership, Leadership Structure; Information Management

1. Introduction

Today's information age and therefore the developments in information technologies have worn out the traditional management mentality and made it inadequate (Luftman, Lyytinen & Zvi, 2017). This is because information technologies are effective in structuring of management and management strategies (Tomczyk, Martins, Eliseo, Silveira, Amato & Stošić, 2020). For this reason, the organizations are required to handle and evaluate the role of information and information technologies in management processes and corporate processes. The basic condition of being capable to compete is to be innovative and open to change and business firms which are open to change and development and have the ability to manage their staff gain competitive advantage (Wu, Straub & Liang, 2015; Özdemir, 2020). In today's world where competition has gained a great importance, the use of advanced technology, production and transmission of information confront us. Information technologies confront us as an important factor in creating of organizational strategies due to mutual interaction with business processes and business strategies (Mikalef & Pateli, 2017; Pascu, Simo & Vernica, 2019).

Developments in technology have brought globalization along with itself (Özsungur, 2020). On

the other hand, the process of globalization has loaded additional tasks and functions on leadership mentality (Wu, Straub & Liang, 2015). Due to the number of business firms and the level of competition businesses face, companies are required to have a much higher level of qualification for management, vision and goal setting, corporate culture creation, provision of inter-unit communication and many other functions (Marín & Piñeros, 2018; Sarıboğa & Serin, 2020). In today's world, business firms need to have these qualifications and work hard towards competences, to survive. In order to prevent the failure of the business firms, the person(s), who has/have taken the leadership role, must have sufficient equipment and qualifications. Managers may act based on their past experiences. However, existence in the global field constitutes a quite different situation.

While the rapid dissemination of technology and information in today's world causes major changes in the structure of goods and services in business firms and also affects the sector and the employees working in the sector, the development, dissemination and use of technology and information also causes important changes in the roles and business processes of leaders, management and employees in business firms (Iyengar, Sweeney & Montealegre, 2015). The use of IT in firms apart from information dissemination could include knowledge transfer, absorption capacity improvement, assessment of work and

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electronic human resource management also known as e-HR (Iyengar et al., 2015; Marler & Parry, 2016). These rapid changes and competition in the business firms cause mobbing behaviors to come along and increase.

Tatar & Yüksel (2019) explained mobbing as a prolonged form of aggressive attitude, sarcasm, verbal abuse, or a negative activity directed towards a particular person in a particular time period. According to Rasool, Wang, Zhang & Samma, (2020), mobbing, which could also be referred to as psychological violence or harassment, is not only unethical, but also has the potential to make an individual develop Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This was supported by the research of Abdi & Sharyati (2019). Gardner et al. (2016) conducted a research on workplace bullying and mobbing through the use of technology. In the research, they concluded that cyber bullying is less frequent than workplace bullying, and cyber bullying was more frequent on employees in managerial position than those on lower levels. Farley, Coyne and D'Cruz (2018) also conducted a research on the use of technology at work places and how mobbing takes place with the help of those technologies. According to Farley et al. (2018), bullying through technology is more prevalent in adults than in teens or children. Women are the most bullied when it comes to workplace mobbing (Kara, Kim, & Uysal, 2018; Dagnaw, Yirdaw & Asrat, 2020). Dussault & Frenette, (2015) and Coban (2019) however explained that transformational leadership makes mobbing rare in organizations.

Mobbing leads to burnout (Karsavuran & Kaya, 2017) and may cause employees to underperform in their daily duties at work (Qureshi, Iftikhar, Janjua, Zaman, Raja & Javed, 2015). In some cases, employees who face mobbing activities are not innovative in the way they offer their services (Özsungur, 2020). In a study by Kowal & Gurba, (2015), where employees in the field of IT were studied to find the existence mobbing activities in the IT field, ethical climate, which is the responsibility of superiors was recommended as a means to reduce mobbing activities in the workplace. Several researchers have researched the influence of technology on mobbing activities in work places (Stone, Deadrick, Lukaszewski & Johnson, 2015) and several other studies have considered how technology has impacted the structure of organizations (Iyengar et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2015; Marín & Piñeros, 2018). From the research of previous literature, there is no research that combined that covers how technology affects

leadership structure and mobbing. The aim of this research therefore is to examine the influence of the use of technology on leadership structure and psychological mobbing. The research also checks the correlation between leadership structure and psychological mobbing, under a technology-using firm.

To aid the direction of this research, the researchers developed the following questions:

RQ1: Does the use of technology have a positive or negative impact on working?

RQ2: Does technology have a negative or positive impact on leadership?

RQ3a: Is mobbing existent in organizations?

RQ3b: Is mobbing effective on leadership?

RQ4: Is there a relationship between mobbing and leadership style?

2. Methodology

2.1 Method of Research

Quantitative Data Collection techniques were used in the study and the analysis used both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. The data collection instrument was a Likert-scale questionnaire that was modelled after Yidirim and Yildirim (2008) and mobbing scale was created with literature on technology and intimidation.

2.2 Sample

Bursa is the fourth largest city which takes an important place in the industry of Turkey. The sample for the study were selected through purposive sampling from automotive business firms, in which the technology is considered to be very important, and textile business firms, in which the technology is considered to be less important than automotive. The study was completed with 277 people, who agreed to participate in the study on the day of application, by obtaining verbal consent from the employees in the business firms that allowed the study to be conducted after obtaining the ethical committee and corporation permission.

2.3 Data Collection Forms

In the study, the questionnaire, which was created and structured by researchers in company with ethnographic observation and literature, contained 16 questions concerning demography features and 18 questions for leadership-technology and bullying, and the mobbing criteria were used. Mobbing scale is a six- Likert-type mobbing scale developed by Yildirim and Yildirim in the year 2008 consisting of 33-item sub dimensions such as isolation of individuals from work, and the

assault on professional status, the assault on personality and directly-made negative behaviors. If the number obtained after dividing the total point taken from the scale by the number of items, is one and over, it shows that the person is exposed to mobbing intentionally. For validity and reliability of the selected scale, the items showed statistically significant correlation of ($p < 0.01$) and the Cronbach's α for internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.93.

2.4 Analysis

The demographic information of the participant group was examined using primarily descriptive

statistics. Percentages were used to analyze the responses and the correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between mobbing and organizational leadership.

2.5 Ethical Aspect of Research

The objective and method of the study was stated and then it was applied to the Near East University Ethics Committee Presidency, and the approval of the ethics committee was obtained with the number of YDÜ/SB/2017/2.

3. Results

Table 1. Response Distribution to the question "Does Technology Have a Positive/Negative Impact on Working?"

		n	%
Does Technology Have a Positive Impact on Working?	Yes	251	90,6
	No	26	9,4
Does Technology Have a Negative Impact on Working?	Yes	67	24,2
	No	210	75,8
Total		277	100,0

While the rate of the respondents who stated that technology has a positive impact on working is 90.6%, the rate of those who stated that it has a

negative impact is 24,2%. This means that majority of the respondents believed that the use of technology had a positive impact on work process.

Table 2. Response Distribution to the question "Does Technology Have a Positive/Negative Impact on Leadership?"

		n	%
Does Technology Have a Positive Impact on Leadership?	Yes	233	84,1
	No	44	15,9
Does Technology Have a Negative Impact on Leadership?	Yes	93	33,6
	No	184	66,4
Total		277	100,0

While the rate of the respondents who stated that technology has a positive effect on the Leadership is 84.1%, the rate of the respondents who stated that it had a negative effect is 33.6%.

This shows that majority of the respondents believed that technology had a positive effect on leadership.

Table 3. Response Distribution to the questions "Have you encountered Mobbing in any manner? and Is Mobbing Effective on Leadership?"

		n	%
Have you encountered Mobbing in any manner?	Yes	106	38,3
	No	171	61,7
Is Mobbing Effective on Leadership?	Yes	179	64,6
	No	98	35,4
Total		277	100,0

While 38.3% of the respondents stated that they encountered mobbing in some way, those, who constitute more than half of the respondents such

as 64.6% stated that mobbing has an impact on Leadership.

Table 4. Results of Correlation Analysis on Mobbing and Leadership Styles

	Correlation	Mobbing	Leadership
Mobbing	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	1	-.110
	Sig.	-----	.068
	Number of Respondents	277	277
Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	-.110	1
	Sig.	.068	-----
	Number of Respondents	277	277

As it was seen, it was found that there was a low positive relationship between mobbing behaviors and leadership style ($r = -0.110$, $p = 0.068$). In accordance with the results of Correlation analysis, we can say that leadership styles of the managers of automotive and textile companies increase the mobbing behavior. It is foreseen that the level of mobbing will decrease in case the managers of the companies change their leadership styles.

4. Discussion

While the rate of the persons, comprising almost all of the respondents, who stated that technology has a positive effect on work is 90.6%, the rate of the persons stated that it has a negative effect on work is 24.2%. Statistically significant high point averages were determined in sub dimensions of "persistence" and "going beyond itself" point averages of the employees working in management position in the public administration, and of "self-management" and "cooperation" of those working as subcontractor. Technology's impact on work cannot be overestimated. As can be seen in the results of this research, technology has a positive impact on work. The use of technology in work processes and procedures do not only speed the work process but also makes it easier and more efficient. This findings in this research supports the research of Wu et al. (2016) and Dussault et al. (2015). Most organizations these days have adjusted their work process to include the usage of technology, in order to meet up with the fast-paced business world. The use of technology therefore in business strategies, processes and procedures, as well as how the organization manage its employees is very necessary in order to position them well against their competitors.

The second question this research sought to answer was 'Does technology have a negative or positive impact on leadership'. To this question, most respondents believed that technology has a good or positive impact on the leadership. Few respondents however believed that technology has a bad effect on leadership. Leadership is an aspect of a business which determines how the business would be run and how the employees would be

managed as well as the work process. Technology speeds up work procedure and makes leadership more effective and easier. This finding is in collaboration with the findings of the research of Dussault et al. (2015), Marler et al. (2016) and Głod, (2019). The research of Mittal and Dhar, (2015) explained how transformational research can improve the leadership style of organizations. Dussault et al. (2015) also explained that transformational leadership possesses the ability to create an environment that does not support mobbing of employees. From the research of Li, Liu, Belitski, Ghobadian & O'Regan, (2016), transformational leadership is possible through e-leadership, where e-leadership is the use of technology to assist leaders in the management of organization. From all these researches, it is evident that transformational leadership which is possible through the use of technology, possesses the ability to reduce psychological mobbing. This supports the results of our research's second question.

The third question for this research was divided into two sub-questions. The first question sought to answer the question of 'Is mobbing existent in organizations?' This question was answered in table 3. From the answers the respondents gave to the question of whether they had experienced mobbing at the workplace, 106 respondents, representing 38.6% of the total respondents had experienced some form of mobbing behaviour at their workplace. This meant that mobbing is existent in organizations and people actually experience mobbing activities in the Automotive and Textile industries. It is important to note that mobbing activities has an effect on the victims both at work and in their daily activities. This means that there is a possibility of reduction in the efficiency of workers who face mobbing, which may in turn reduce the overall performance of the organization. This finding supports the research of Yildirim et al. (2008), Farley et al. (2018) as well as Özsungur (2020).

The second sub question under research question 3 was 'Is mobbing effective on leadership?' 169 of the respondents believed that mobbing was effective on leadership. Most of the

time, mobbing is directed towards employees. There are however rare cases where mobbing is directed towards managers or leadership of a firm. This is evident in the research of Gaudine, Patrick, & Busby, (2019). Employees usually engage in upward mobbing when they feel they are not being treated fairly or when they want better conditions of service. The answer for this subquestion of our research therefore expands the literature on how leadership could face mobbing activities from subordinates.

The fourth question for this research was 'Is there a relationship between mobbing and leadership style?' The correlation coefficient of mobbing activities and leadership style which was taken for this research showed that although there exists a relationship between the mobbing and leadership style, the relationship was not so significant (0.068). Although the results of this finding support the findings of previous research (Dussault et al. 2015; Marin et al., 2018; Joudi, 2019), the significance level cannot be overlooked. Mobbing is related to leadership style but leadership style may not necessarily have so much effect of mobbing. This means that there are other factors which affect mobbing other than leadership style and we therefore recommend further studies into what causes mobbing. Nonetheless, from the results of this research, we can conclude that mobbing has a relationship with leadership style.

In order to increase the efficiencies of the business firms; the leaders, managers and employees need to make an effort and endeavor beyond doing what is required (Tasar, Tengilimoglu, Ekiyor & Guzel, 2020). In order to achieve this, the employees should be motivated by using the right human resources methods. In order for employees to be motivated for their jobs, they must have a high level of performance as their attention deficit was removed, they had regular sleep and rested. In order to achieve this, they must have developed spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical abilities and should not have any problem. In a period, in which information and technology are in the forefront in business firms; the employees' overcoming the physical, biological, social and psychological limitations at all levels in business firms is not a situation that individuals can realize on their own. A good motivation helps them to achieve their goals. However, all these situations cannot prevent the bullying behavior (mobbing) which is always present in the business firms but not mentioned or not realized and which is rapidly spreading each passing day.

5. Conclusion

From the results of this research, we can conclude that technology has a positive influence on work in organizations especially automotive and textile industries. The results also proved that technology has a positive impact on leadership. From the respondents, we found out that mobbing activities are still prevalent in organizations and the response to the final research question also proved that leadership style is correlated to mobbing activities. In summarizing the findings of this research and comparing the results to other research findings, we can conclude that technology affects leadership style, and a transformational leadership style can prevent or reduce mobbing activities in organizations.

It is a certain fact that the use of technology is irreplaceable and indispensable at the present time. The technology, which takes an especially important place in life, can also bring along mobbing on individuals. Inclusion of individuals to in-company trainings plays an important role in preventing the mobbing especially in areas where technology is intensively used such as individuals' use of technology and communication, problem solving, conflict resolutions and crisis. In our country, there is a mentality of working, on which tradition of obedience to the supervisor in position of manager is dominant. Existence of such a mentality facilitates the work of the person and persons who will apply mobbing. The mentality, on which tradition of obedience to the supervisor is dominant, is considered to be the reason why "persistence" points of the public employees in the management position are high. Education contributes to person to learn and implement the right and wrong, and not to confine itself with those it has by getting aware of itself, and also contributes its personal development with the developing technologies. Moreover, it is thought that the person will not do any mobbing behavior because of the education or in case he/she does any, it will be minimized by the education provided in the business firm, and that he/she will do the necessary actions against it, in case he/she is exposed to mobbing.

This research recommends that individuals who are placed in management positions are well trained and evaluated in terms of personality structure and to take into account their work experience as well as how well they can use the technology. With the increase in technology in enterprises, communication and leadership structures have become much more important in the development of management. It is a fact that

there will also be increases in mobbing with the increase in competition between technology and employees. The increase in technology should have positive effects on leadership and prevent mobbing.

Resources

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