

The Effect of Mobbing Behaviors on Handball Players' Organizational Commitment in Turkish Men's Handball Super League *

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Abstract

This study focused on the field of sports and aimed to examine the effect of mobbing behaviors on the organizational commitment of handball players. The sample of the study consisted of players from handball clubs in the Turkish Men's Handball Super League. In the study, 137 male players from 8 handball clubs participated. As data collection tools, two different scales were used to determine mobbing behaviors and organizational commitment of handball players. To measure mobbing "Negative Acts Questionnaire-Football (NAQ-F)" developed by Yildiz (2015) was used (see appendix). The word football on the scale had been converted to the word handball. The organizational commitment scale proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) and developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) was used to measure organizational commitment. Descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, correlation, and regression analyzes were performed for the data. The analysis results indicated that the handball players' level of mobbing exposure was low, and their organizational commitment was moderate. Other results revealed that mobbing behaviors had a significant and negative effect on the organizational commitment of handball players ($\beta=-.274$; $p<0.01$). According to the results of the study, it can be said that the organizational commitment (team commitment) of handball players who are exposed to mobbing behaviors will decrease. In this context, various suggestions were given to both club managers and coaches at the end of the study.

Keywords: Handball, Players, Mobbing, Organizational Commitment

Mobbing Davranışlarının Türkiye Erkekler Hentbol Süper Liginde Yer Alan Hentbol Oyuncularının Örgütsel Bağlılığı Üzerine Etkisi

Öz

İşyerinde mobbing ve örgütsel bağlılık konuları, çalışma ortamındaki bireyler ve örgütler üzerindeki önemli etkilerinden dolayı, son yıllarda araştırmacılar tarafından üzerinde durulan önemli konular arasında yer almaktadır. Bu çalışmada, spor alanına odaklanılarak, mobbing davranışlarının hentbol oyuncularının örgütsel bağlılığı üzerine etkisinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmada, genel tarama modeli kapsamında ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın örnekleme, Türkiye Erkekler Hentbol Süper Ligi'nde yer alan hentbol kulüplerindeki oyuncular oluşturmıştır. Verilerin toplanması sürecinde kolayda örneklem metodu kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya 8 hentbol kulübünden 137 oyuncu katılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak, mobbing davranışlarını ve hentbol oyuncularının örgütsel bağlılıklarını belirlemeye yönelik iki farklı ölçek kullanılmıştır. Mobbingi ölçmek için Yıldız (2015) tarafından geliştirilen 12 maddelik Olumsuz Davranışlar Ölçeği-Futbol (Negative Acts Questionnaire-Football: NAQ-F) kullanılmıştır. Ölçek maddelerinde yer alan futbol ifadesi hentbol ifadesine dönüştürülmüştür. Örgütsel bağlılığı ölçmek için Meyer ve Allen (1991) tarafından önerilen ve Meyer, Allen ve Smith (1993) tarafından geliştirilen örgütsel bağlılık ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada istatistiksel analiz olarak, tanımlayıcı istatistik, doğrulayıcı faktör analizi, korelasyon ve regresyon analizleri kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, genel olarak hentbol oyuncularının mobbinge maruz kalma düzeylerinin düşük olduğunu, örgütsel bağlılıklarının orta düzeyde olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmanın diğer bulguları, mobbing davranışlarının hentbol oyuncularının örgütsel bağlılığına anlamlı ve negatif etki ettiğini ortaya koymuştur ($\beta=-.274$; $p<0.01$). Çalışmanın sonucuna göre mobbing davranışlarına maruz kalan hentbol oyuncularının örgütsel bağlılığının (takıma bağlılığının) azalacağı söylenebilir. Bu çerçevede, çalışmanın sonunda hem kulüp yöneticilerine hem de antrenörlere çeşitli öneriler verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hentbol, Oyuncu, Mobbing, Örgütsel Bağlılık

* This paper was summarized from the first author's Master Thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Workplace mobbing and organizational commitment have been among the important issues emphasized by researchers in recent years due to their significant effects on employees and organizations in the work environment. The relations between these issues, which are widely discussed in the service sector, have recently begun to be examined within sports organizations.

Sport is a set of individual and team activities with specific rules in the form of a game. Team sports involve more than one player. Therefore, since it is performed in groups, the relationships between individuals in teams have an important place. The quality of these relationships directly affects team performance. Therefore, this study focused on handball players in order to contribute to the sports management literature and discussed the issues of mobbing and organizational commitment, which are among the popular topics of today that affect team performance.

Mobbing is a phenomenon that can be seen in all kinds of business environments, including sports organizations (Karik & Yildiz, 2015; Vveinhardt, Fominiene & Andriukaitiene, 2020; Yildiz, 2018). Leymann (1996) sees mobbing in the workplace as a tool of psychological pressure created by interpersonal competition. However, Leymann states that it is necessary to distinguish psychological attitudes and behaviors from other violent behaviors that occur in the workplace. Mobbing is intentional negative attitudes and behaviors towards a person that are repeated over a period of time and continuously. Therefore, the purpose of mobbing is to emotionally wear out, weaken, intimidate the targeted person or people, and make them feel under constant threat. Leymann (1996) defined 45 different mobbing behaviors and classified them into five groups according to their characteristics. These are "attacks on one's dignity", "attacks on performance", "attacks on communication", "attacks on social conditions", and "threats of physical assault." When any of these behaviors occur due to certain conditions as one-time and limited, it would not be the right approach to call it mobbing. In order for mobbing behavior to be in question, long-term repetition of many behaviors that enter mobbing is required (Yildiz, 2017). People who are exposed to mobbing face a number of problems both psychologically and physically. These problems reduce the performance of the person, thus negatively affecting the performance of the organization (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011).

Organizational commitment is a concept that expresses the emotional rapprochement and integration of the employee with the organization. The most accepted dimension of organizational commitment in the literature was introduced by Allen and Meyer (1990). These are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment dimensions. The employee who has affective commitment identifies with the organization with a strong sense of emotional commitment and is happy to be a member of the organization. Continuance commitment is the desire of the employee to continue his membership in the organization, considering what he will lose when he leaves the organization. Normative commitment is the employee's thinking that he or she has to stay in the organization and having beliefs in this direction (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Employees with organizational commitment have high job satisfaction and high organizational citizenship behavior (Zeinabadi, 2010). These, in turn, increase the performance of the organization (Kasemsap, 2013).

In every environment where there is competition and production is performed in groups, mobbing is an inevitable phenomenon. This phenomenon can also be seen among athletes

(Vveinhardt, Fominiene & Andriukaitiene, 2019). Mobbing behaviors can be seen in handball teams consisting of a certain amount of groups of people, which can have some effects on the players and the team. Mobbing behaviors can be seen in handball teams consisting of a certain amount of groups of people, which can have some effects on the players and the team. One of these may be the issue of organizational commitment, which affects individuals' feelings. Mobbing is a concept that describes the long-term and systematic exposure of individuals to undeserved negative behaviors. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, is a concept that expresses the identification of employees with their organizations. Our study tries to determine what kind of results will emerge by considering the relationship between both issues. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of mobbing behaviors on the organizational commitment of handball players in handball clubs in the Turkish Men's Handball Super League. Mobbing and organizational commitment have been the subject of many studies, including sports. However, there is no study on handball players in the literature. Therefore, examining the players who play handball as a profession in the sports sector in terms of both variables reveals the originality of this study.

METHOD

Sample

The sample of the study consists of handball clubs in the Turkish Men's Handball Super League. Data were collected from male players who played for these clubs and voluntarily participated in the study. In the data collection process, the convenience sampling method was used. With the written permission obtained from 8 handball clubs in the league, 142 forms were hand-delivered to the players by the researcher/pollster, giving importance to confidentiality, and they were collected again by the researcher a week later in the same way. The total number of returned forms was 138, and 1 incomplete and incorrectly filled form was reserved. As a result, 137 forms were found suitable for analysis.

Measurement Instruments

To measure mobbing the "Negative Acts Questionnaire-Football: NAQ-F" developed by Yildiz (2015) was used. The scale has 3 dimensions and consists of 12 items (items 1-6 are "person-related bullying", items 7-9 are "work-related bullying", and items 10-12 are "physically intimidating bullying"). Football expression in the scale item was transformed into handball expression. Thus, the scale was labeled "Negative Acts Questionnaire-Handball (NAQ-H)" (see, appendix). Each item was measured with a 5-point Likert scale, "1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always".

The organizational commitment scale proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) and developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) was used to measure organizational commitment. The scale consists of 18 items and three sub-dimensions (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment). Each item was measured with a 5-point Likert scale with the statements "1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree".

Statistical Analyses

In this study, descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis were used. In addition, evaluations of mobbing and organizational commitment levels were made according to the following score ranges (Table 1):

Table 1. Evaluations of mobbing and organizational commitment levels

Mobbing		Organizational Commitment	
Point ranges	Evaluation	Point ranges	Evaluation
between 1.00–1.79	Very low	between 1.00–1.79	Very low
between 1.80–2.59	Low	between 1.80–2.59	Low
between 2.60–3.39	Middle	between 2.60–3.39	Middle
between 3.40–4.19	High	between 3.40–4.19	High
between 4.20–5.00	Very high	between 4.20–5.00	Very high

Research Ethic

Ethical approval was given to this study by the Ethics Committee of Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Turkey (Decision number: 85; protocol number: 210062; meeting date: January 01, 2022).

Data Collection

This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Turkey. The participants were composed of players competing in the Turkish Men's Handball Super League. Therefore, in order to implement the questionnaire for players, the researcher received permission from the Handball Clubs.

RESULTS

Demographic Properties

We ran descriptive analyses to understand the demographic profile of the samples. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of handball players in detail.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics

Variables		F	%
Marital status	Married	38	27.7
	Single	99	72.3
Age	Less than 18	11	8.0
	19–21	34	24.8
	22–24	33	24.1
	25–27	12	8.8
	28–30	8	5.8
	More than 31	39	28.5
Education	Middle	3	2.2
	Lycée	22	16.1
	Undergraduate	112	81.8

Table 2. Demographic characteristics (continued)

Variables		F	%
Playing time in current team (year)	Under 1	51	37.2
	2-3	46	33.6
	4-5	16	11.7
	6-7	13	9.5
	8-9	5	3.6
	Over 10	6	4.4
Players background (total year)	Under 1	1	0.7
	2-5	3	2.2
	6-9	33	24.1
	10-13	49	35.8
	14-17	16	11.7
Position in the team	Over 18	35	25.5
	I usually can't get into the team roster	4	2.9
	In the team I usually play backup	57	41.6
	I usually play in the top 7 in the team	76	55.5

Test for Validity and Reliability

Since Exploratory Factor Analyzes of NAQ-F and organizational commitment scales were performed before, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used in this study only to confirm the construct validity. The results showed that both scales' indexes had excellent/acceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2001) (Table 3). According to these results, it can be said that the NAQ-F developed for football is also compatible with handball.

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis results of scales

Scales	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
NAQ-H	92.8	51	1.81*	.899**	.845**	.929**	.078**
Organizational commitment	145.5	132	1.10*	.893**	.861**	.985*	.027*

* Perfect fit, ** Acceptable fit

According to the results of the reliability analysis, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the NAQ-H scale was 0.841, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the organizational commitment scale was 0.858. These values show that the scales are "highly reliable".

Exposure to Mobbing and Organizational Commitment Levels of Handball Players

Descriptive statistical results show that the level of exposure to mobbing behavior of handball players is quite low. Organizational commitment of handball players is at a medium level (Table 4).

Table 4. Mobbing and organizational commitment levels of handball players

Variables	χ	SS
Mobbing	1.6930	.62354
Organizational commitment	3.1707	.71729

Correlation Analysis

Table 5 shows the correlations between the variables. There is a significant and negative relationship between mobbing and organizational commitment ($r=-0.255$; $p<0.01$). This value shows that as the mobbing behaviors increase, the team commitment of the players decreases.

Table 5. Results of correlation analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	1					
2. Education	.196*	1				
3. Playing time in current team	.014	-.022	1			
4. Players background (total year)	.738**	.255**	.038	1		
5. Position in the team	.402**	.368**	-.104	.406**	1	
6. Mobbing	-.080	-.096	.045	-.035	-.178*	1
7. Organizational commitment	-.069	-.070	.055	.086	.061	-.255**

** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Table 6 indicates that mobbing behaviors have a significant and negative effect on the organizational commitment of handball players ($\beta=-.274$; $p<0.01$). This result indicates that the research hypothesis is accepted. Accordingly, as mobbing behaviors increase, the team commitment of handball players decreases. Among demographic variables, the significance of "age" and "players background" variables, which were significant in the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis, continued to increase in the second step. Accordingly, unrelated to mobbing behavior, as the age of the players increases, their commitment to their team decreases ($\beta=-.335$; $p<0.01$). As players background of the players increases, their organizational commitment to their teams increases ($\beta=-.328$; $p<0.01$).

Table 6. Results of hierarchical regression analysis between mobbing and organizational commitment

Independent Variables	Organizational commitment					
	Step 1			Step 2		
	Beta	t	P	Beta	t	P
1. Age	-.313*	-2.468	.015	-.335**	-2.733	.007
2. Education	-.127	-1.392	.166	-.139	-1.577	.117
3. Playing time in current team	.058	.676	.500	.064	.779	.438
4. Players background (total year)	.300*	2.338	.021	.328**	2.644	.009
5. Position in the team	.118	1.196	.234	.072	.749	.455
6. Mobbing	-	-	-	-.274**	-3.299	.001
F		1.872			3.491	
R ²		.067			.139	
Adjusted R ²		.031			.099	

Note: Standardized beta values were used, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Examining the issues that arise with the interaction between employees and groups in the business environment has attracted the attention of researchers in recent years, as it affects organizational performance (Yildiz, Kepoglu & Yildiz, 2018). In this context, it is seen that mobbing and organizational commitment issues are intensively researched on employees in various sectors in the literature. On the other hand, scientific research on public or private organization employees in the sports sector is very limited. In particular, no research has been

found in the literature on the players in the handball teams, which is the focus of our study. Therefore, it is thought that this study on handball players will benefit the sports literature in terms of contributing to the clarification of the relations between both subjects.

The findings of our study showed that the level of mobbing exposure of handball players was low and their organizational commitment was moderate. Other findings of the study revealed that mobbing behaviors had a significant and negative effect on the organizational commitment of handball players. The findings of our study showed that the level of mobbing exposure of handball players was low and their organizational commitment was moderate. Other findings of the study revealed that mobbing behaviors had a significant and negative effect on the organizational commitment of handball players. With the advancing age, the decrease in organizational commitment may be caused by the decline in the physical performance of the players over time. On the other hand, as the player's athlete background increases, the increase in their organizational commitment may be the source of the pleasure of their careers.

In the literature, studies conducted in various sectors show that mobbing behaviors have a significant and negative effect on the organizational commitment of the employees. For instance, Beduk and Yıldız (2016) on hospital workers; Pelit and Kılıç (2012) on accommodation establishments workers; Güllü, Yildiz, and Kaya (2020) on physical education teachers; Beduk and Ata (2019) on municipal bus drivers; Demir (2017) on female academics; and Engin, Oğuzhan, and Ünsar (2015) on employees of textile enterprises conducted researches. In all of these studies, it was found that mobbing has a significant and negative effect on organizational commitment. As can be seen from all these research results, there is a consensus in the literature that there are negative relationships between mobbing and organizational commitment.

When the studies in the literature on the relationship between mobbing and organizational commitment on employees working in the sports sector in Turkey are examined, it is seen that these studies are quite limited. In the research conducted by Balta (2019) on the trainers working in the Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports in the Central Anatolia Region, it was found that there is a significant and negative relationship between mobbing and organizational commitment ($r=-0.484$; $p<0.01$). Ceylan and Ünlü (2022) found that mobbing had a significant and negative effect on organizational commitment ($\beta=-0.147$; $p<0.01$) in a study on employees working in Çorum Youth Services and Sports Provincial Directorate. Similarly, in the research of Yildiz, Güllü, and Kaya (2020) on employees working in Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports, mobbing has been found to have a significant and negative effect on organizational commitment ($\beta=-0.331$; $p<0.01$). In the research conducted by Belli and Demirel (2016) on employees working in eight different Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports in the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey, a significant and negative relationship was found between mobbing and organizational commitment ($r=-0.716$; $p<0.01$). In summary, the common point of the studies in the sports sector is that mobbing has a significant and negative effect on the organizational commitment of the employees. These results are similar to those of our study. Apart from these studies, the fact that no research has been found especially on sports teams increases the value of our study. Therefore, the findings of this study, obtained from elite handball players and revealing the significant and negative effect of mobbing on organizational commitment, will contribute to the sports literature.

As a result, considering that mobbing behaviors negatively affect the performance of both employees and organizations, and organizational commitment positively affects the performance of both employees and organizations, it can be said that managers and coaches in handball teams should pay attention to these two issues.

Within the framework of the results obtained in our study, the following suggestions can be given to sports organizations in general and handball clubs in particular:

- First of all, managers and coaches should observe the behaviors within the team. They should not allow possible mobbing behaviors among the players and should also prevent the emergence of such negative behaviors. In order to prevent negative behaviors, the subject of mobbing should be well explained to all team players within the framework of a program. In these explanations, Leymann's typology should be emphasized and it should be emphasized that mobbing behavior, which causes a negative climate, is not moral behavior, but also has legal responsibilities.
- Managers and coaches should develop a set of policies that increase the organizational commitment of the players. In this context, providing job satisfaction by meeting the needs and wants of the players as much as possible (in order to prevent the dissatisfaction of individuals from causing possible aggressive behaviors), and showing fair treatment to everyone in the team can be given as examples.

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Author Contributions: Both authors have made a substantial and intellectual contribution to the study and approved it for publication.

Research Ethic Informations

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APPENDIX – Negative Acts Questionnaire–Handball (NAQ–H)

	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always
1. Rumors are spread about the possibility that you will be leaving or quitting handball totally	1	2	3	4	5
2. Fingers are pointed towards you for any inadvertent errors or mistakes made by the team during training or games	1	2	3	4	5
3. You get excluded in environments other than training and actual game	1	2	3	4	5
4. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life	1	2	3	4	5
5. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	1	2	3	4	5
6. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life	1	2	3	4	5
7. Your skills and abilities are undermined during training and games (you are asked to play at positions do not match your abilities; you do not get any assists during games even if you were in a very good position to score; you are benched frequently and you get very little playing time)	1	2	3	4	5
8. You are not given time off even if you had valid excuses	1	2	3	4	5
9. You are kept under an intense microscope for any of actions during the game or trainings	1	2	3	4	5
10. You experience frequent intentional fouls during games or trainings.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Intimidating actions occur frequently (including vandalizing your locker or room, aggressive bumping or pushing during interactions, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
12. Threats of violence	1	2	3	4	5

EK – Olumsuz Davranışlar Ölçeği–Hentbol (ODÖ–H)

	Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Arasıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
1. Hentbolu bırakacağınız veya başka bir takıma gideceğiniz yönünde dedikodu yayılır	1	2	3	4	5
2. Antrenmanda veya maçta yapılan bir hata haksız yere size mal edilir	1	2	3	4	5
3. Antrenman veya maç dışındaki ortamlarda dışlanırsınız	1	2	3	4	5
4. Kişiliğiniz, davranışlarınız ve özel hayatınız hakkında aşağılanan sözler söylenir	1	2	3	4	5
5. Küçümsenir ve yaptığınız hareketlerde alaya alınırsınız	1	2	3	4	5
6. Size anlak kızmalar ve bağırımlar olur	1	2	3	4	5
7. Antrenman veya maçta yeteneğiniz önemsenmez (oyunda yeteneğin dışındaki bir mevkide oynatılırsınız; oyunda diğer oyuncular tarafından genelde size top verilmez, böylece kendinizi gösterme fırsatı bulamazsınız; yedek bırakılırsınız)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Mazeretleriniz için izin haklarınız kabul edilmez	1	2	3	4	5
9. Antrenman veya maçta sadece olumsuz hareketleriniz gözlemlenerek takip edilir	1	2	3	4	5
10. Antrenmanlarda kasti faullere maruz kalırsınız	1	2	3	4	5
11. Korkutucu davranışlar sergilenir (beden diliyle korkutma, engellenme)	1	2	3	4	5
12. Tehdit ediliyorsunuz	1	2	3	4	5