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An Intergenerational Comparison of Reactions to Mobbing at Workplace

Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

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ABSTRACT

As different generations have started taking place within the business life simultaneously, it has become crucial for organizations to create a baseline that would satisfy all the employees in every aspect. Based on this fact, this study aims to shed light onto the perceptions and reactions of 3 different generations (Generations X, Y and Z) towards mobbing in order to offer insights that could help practitioners to manage workforce diversity in terms of generations. In this respect, data from 32 participants from different generations were collected and their reactions to mobbing were compared, based on a two-step research process in which, firstly, two different scenarios were offered to the participants, one reflecting a high-mobbing situation whereas the other demonstrated a lower mobbing atmosphere and the possible reactions of participants were collected. Secondly, a survey that followed the scenarios to observe the responses of the participants of each generation to the mobbing situations given in a list was conducted. The results show that for generations Y and Z, the social environment in the company can be considered as a part of their private lives and they are more likely to quit their jobs if this environment is not provided in a healthy way. Generation X is found to have a sharp distinction between professional and private life, and they are more resilient to mobbing than other generations as long as it doesn't affect their work style and productivity.

Keywords: *mobbing, psychological violence, scenario technique, generation X, generation Y, generation Z*

JEL Codes: *M12, M14*

İşyerinde Psikolojik Şiddete Karşı Tepkilerin Kuşaklararası Karşılaştırılması

ÖZET

Farklı kuşakların aynı anda iş hayatında yer almaya başlamasıyla birlikte, organizasyonların tüm çalışanları her açıdan memnun edecek bir temel oluşturması büyük önem kazanmıştır. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma, kuşaklar bazında işgücü çeşitliliğini yönetmede uygulayıcılara yardımcı olabilecek içgörüler sunmak için 3 farklı kuşağın (X, Y ve Z Kuşakları) psikolojik şiddete yönelik algı ve tepkilerine ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, iki aşamalı bir araştırma sürecine dayalı olarak, farklı kuşaklardan 32 katılımcının verileri toplanmış ve psikolojik şiddete karşı tepkileri karşılaştırılmıştır. Katılımcılara öncelikle biri düşük diğeri ise yüksek psikolojik şiddet atmosferi yansıtan iki farklı senaryo verilerek tepkileri kıyaslanmış, ikinci olarak ise, bir liste

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halinde verilen mobbing durumlarına her kuşağın katılımcılarının verdikleri yanıtları gözlemlemek için bir anket çalışması yürütülmüştür. Sonuçlar, Y ve Z kuşakları için şirketteki sosyal çevrenin özel hayatlarının bir parçası olarak görülebileceğini ve bu ortam sağlıklı bir şekilde sağlanmadığı takdirde işten ayrılma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir. Profesyonel ve özel yaşam arasında keskin bir ayrım yapan X kuşağının, çalışma tarzlarını ve üretkenliklerini etkilemediği sürece psikolojik şiddete diğer kuşaklara göre daha dayanıklı oldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *mobbing, psikolojik şiddet, senaryo tekniği, X kuşağı, Y kuşağı, Z kuşağı*

JEL Kodları: *M12, M14*

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INTRODUCTION

For the first time in the current decade, employees from different age groups, i.e. generations, join the workforce at the same time. Although it can be seen that many generations work together in companies today, it can be observed that Generation X, Y and Z make up the most of the workforce in companies due to the departure of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers into retirement. In addition to Generations X and Y, who have been in the business for years, the clearly different Generation Z, which has been added over time, entails the obligation of employees to constantly adapt to new ideas and ways of working.

Although diversity is an element that companies value and pay attention to when creating an employee portfolio, generations may exhibit different behaviors among themselves, and intergenerational conflict in high-stress environments can emerge as a problem that cannot be solved easily. In cases where these conflicts cannot be resolved, there are often situations in the company where employees from one generation abuse employees from the other generation and try to remove them from the workforce. The reactions to this behavior, which is to be kept as low as possible by human resources (HR) management and department heads in the interests of good internal employee management, vary greatly depending on the generation of employees.

The aim of this article is to observe and compare the reactions of each generation if the employee portfolio is not well managed, the right social environments cannot be created and mobbing, i.e. psychological violence, occurs among employees of different generations. It aims to offer an agenda to prevent mobbing in companies with mixed-generational workforces before it occurs, and to add a new perspective to the literature by linking these two issues, the relevance of which has not previously been explored. In this respect, the purpose is to understand how the reactions of employees of different generations alter when they are exposed to mobbing at work and to offer solutions which, in return, helps to protect the sustainability of the organization in terms of human capital.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. The Concept of "Mobbing"

The word mobbing comes etymologically from the Latin "mobile vulgus" meaning indecisive crowd and means disruptive, violent gang-like structures (Tınaz, 2006).

One of the first definitions of the term mobbing was made by Heinz Leymann as "negative communicative actions directed against a person (by one or more others) and which occur very often and over a longer period of time and thus characterize the relationship between perpetrator and victim." (Leymann, 1993: 21).

In general, workplace mobbing is when an employee acts hostile towards another employee for a period of time. Workplace mobbers (abuser/ perpetrator) typically have a higher position and the power to justify their actions, but because mobbing is such a general concept, no single act is enough to define an employee as a perpetrator. Additionally, academics have defined mobbing as a tactic used in work life. Mobbing basically refers to hostile behavior both from individual to individual and from group to individual. These behaviors are usually performed for a specific purpose.

Leymann was the first scholar to define such behaviors in professional life as mobbing, so some of the most valid studies in this field are still in his possession and form the basis of mobbing studies conducted today (Tınaz, 2006).

After Leymann's research, an interest in mobbing began to develop, first in the Scandinavian countries and then in other European countries, particularly Germany. As a result of this growing interest, research into mobbing also intensified in the 1990s and 2000s, and several scholars began to look more deeply into mobbing.

1.1.1. Types of Mobbing

With the increasing research on mobbing, this term is studied under different subtitles and divided into different types. The most general reason for this distinction is that each social environment where mobbing takes place requires different communication skills and, therefore, needs to be assessed differently (Drüge et al., 2015).

In literature, mobbing is generally categorized under three types: physical mobbing, verbal mobbing and psychological/social mobbing. Besides these three types of mobbing, the concept of cybermobbing has also emerged with the increasing effect of easy internet access and technological devices such as mobile phones (Demirtaş and Karaca, 2018).

In their study, Andresen and Buchanan (2017) reported that the most common type of mobbing in business is verbal mobbing with 95%, followed by social or psychological mobbing with 24% and physical mobbing with 5% (Andresen and Buchanan 2017).

Physical mobbing is a type of mobbing in which the abuser is in direct physical contact with the victim (Ray, n.d.). This type of mobbing is the most obvious form of hostile behavior in the workplace, so it is the version of mobbing that is easier for the victim to prove when going to court to exercise their legal rights (Riebel, 2011). The perpetrators' hostile behavior toward the victim may include sexual harassment, hitting, kicking, spitting, slapping, etc. (Gordon, n.d.).

Verbal mobbing, on the other hand, is one of the most common types of mobbing in business and it is difficult to punish the perpetrator because the victim has to go to the judicial authorities with concrete evidence to prove it. Most of the time, the perpetrator waits until he/she is alone with the victim. Even if the victim is heavily bullied, they may not be able to prove it. In another version of verbal mobbing, the abuser can also use mobbing by taunting the victim and not realizing how these attitudes affect the other party. In this case, the victim may not be sure if they were bullied because of the communication problem between the two parties. The most common examples of verbal mobbing are verbal abuse, insults, verbal threats, humiliation, making fun of the victim in a way that demoralizes the person and lowers their self-esteem (Haller and Gümüş, 2018).

After verbal mobbing, social or psychological mobbing is the most common type of mobbing in business life. Generally, the abuser uses not only social mobbing, but also verbal mobbing. As social mobbing behavior also includes verbal mobbing behavior in some cases, a clear distinction cannot be made. Basically, the victim is excluded from the social environment of the company and does not feel comfortable within the team. The most common examples of social mobbing are badmouthing the victim, gossip, avoiding communication, blaming the person and making fun of the team (Laser, 2020).

1.1.2. Forms of Mobbing

Although the types and forms of mobbing may appear similar, they are not the same thing. While the types of mobbing are differentiated according to the type of hostile behavior the perpetrator has towards the victim, the forms of mobbing are a form of sub-branching made according to the status of the abuser and the victim in the workplace. The forms of mobbing observed in the company can be categorized as vertical mobbing and horizontal mobbing (İbicioğlu et al.,2009).

In horizontal mobbing, perpetrators and victims on the same level in the company hierarchy. It usually occurs between colleagues or groups who are in the same team or have frequent contact with each other. Horizontal mobbing can occur with a variety of hostile behaviors, but research has shown that

the most common is forcing the victim to do a specific job (Smith, 2019). In some cases, the abuser gets the support of the rest of the group and the victim feels completely excluded from the social environment. For this reason, although the perpetrators work in similar positions as the victim, in contrast to vertical mobbing, the psychological effects can be much more devastating as the person sees the hostile behavior directly from their peers (Pascu, 2015).

On the other hand, vertical mobbing has two versions in the corporate hierarchy, where supervisors show hostile behavior towards subordinates and subordinates show hostile behavior towards supervisors (Brunke, 2017). Mobbing by superiors towards subordinates is the most common form of mobbing in business. This form can also be called "bossing". Because the manager or supervisor generally has the right to make decisions about subordinates, he/she can more easily rule over the victim. In addition, the perpetrator can provide false information about the victim to higher managers and use the asymmetric power relationship between the parties to his/her own advantage. In companies where this form of mobbing occurs, the victim does not usually resign, instead there are more frequent dismissals because the supervisor can make direct decisions about the victim (Pür, n.d.). The most common methods used by the abuser are to give the victim meaningless tasks and get them to perform, constantly monitor their behavior in the workplace, and humiliate the person in front of other colleagues (Stam, n.d.).

In the second type, mobbing by subordinates towards superiors, those who hold a managerial position in the corporate hierarchy or occupy a higher position than the perpetrators are exposed to the psychological violence of their subordinates. This form is the rarest form of mobbing. The reasons for this situation can be diversified with examples such as feelings of jealousy, inability of employees to accept and not want the new leader, emotional attachment to the former leader and desire for that person to come back (Özalp Yıldız and Develi, 2020).

1.1.3. Negative Effects of Mobbing

Although mobbing is generally considered as a problem based on the negative effects it bears on the psychology of employees, it is not correct to say that only the employees are the victims. Companies are social structures. Although the employee exposed to mobbing is directly affected because he/she is the target of hostilities, the company is also indirectly affected by mobbing among employees (Leymann, 1996).

The majority of the negative outcomes of mobbing are the ones which directly affect the victim. These include problems such as depression, lack of attention, alienation from the organization, decreased motivation and performance. The hostile behavior of the perpetrators often leads to social isolation of

the victim, various impairments to their mental health and long-lasting mobbing cases that management or human resources cannot solve efficiently continue with the termination process (Sloan et al., 2010).

Contrary to popular belief in society, mobbing also has many negative organizational outcomes. After the victim leaves the workplace, other employees who continue working in the same work environment may experience significant loss of motivation, reduced job satisfaction, or poor performance. In addition to this situation, if mobbing is not prevented in a timely manner by relevant authorities, this situation can turn into a cultural norm and the hostile behaviors towards the employees can be repeated in a cycle towards other employees (Yapıcı Akar et al., 2011).

The organizational impacts and consequences of workplace mobbing include decline in trust in the organization and managers, decrease in attendance, increase in costs, additional costs due to new hires and the adjustment process of new employees, early retirement and severance claims, organizational image problems and loss of successful and hardworking employees (Pelit and Pelit, 2014).

1.2. The Concept of "Generation"

A generation includes all people of roughly the same age [with a similar social orientation and view of life] (Duden, 2022).

The main reason for the emergence of the concept of generation is the division of society into different parts in order to measure people's opinions on different issues and get an idea of how they react to different views. While society is categorized according to various characteristics, the inclusion of individuals in groups made up of those born in the similar years has emerged as the most common and easiest method of division. The most important reason why age is the determining factor in dividing generations is that the person shares similar thoughts with people who were born in close years. Furthermore, similar events in people's life cycles cause similar thoughts on certain issues (Doherty et al., 2015).

Although the most important factor in separating the generations is age, i.e. the years of birth of people, different elements are actually used in the categorization to refine the categories. Generations with different characteristics such as working methods, political ways of thinking and mentalities are compared with each other and an attempt is made to create a stereotype for each generation (Weindl, 2017).

1.2.1. The Demarcation of Generations

Although the delineation of generations varies according to many factors such as place or the discipline studied, the most widely used classification is as in the table (Table 1) below (McCrindle and Wolfinger, 2009; Schmitz-Veltin and Frisoli, 2015).

Table 1. Demarcation of Generations

Generation	Birth range	Characteristics
Silent Generation	1925-1945	Respect for authority High technical knowledge Perfectionism
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	Hardworking and disciplined Competitive Freedom is important
Generation X	1965-1979	High financial comfort High level of education Less attachment to authority
Generation Y	1980-1994	More fun, creative and optimistic High problem-solving skills
Generation Z	1995-2010	High error tolerance Digitization and globalization More flexible perspective
Generation Alpha	2010-today	Non-adult generation Less social skills (future estimates)

1.2.1.1. The Silent Generation

The silent generation is also commonly referred to as the war generation because they experienced the Great Depression (1929-1939) between 1925-1945 and immediately afterwards the Second World War (1939-1945), which swept the entire world. During this period, population growth declined and infant mortality increased due to the decline in living standards (Pekçetaş and Gündüz, 2018).

This generation, which has suffered a lot during the time of birth, growing up and entering the workforce, has a very high need for financial security and respects authority as a characteristic more than other generations (Sprague, 2008).

The silent generation today is the generation that has largely retired from working life and is the oldest of the modern generations. The main reason why this generation is called the silent generation is that it is largely influenced by the military system and accepts authority rather than resisting it, tacitly accepting criticism from its superiors (Kyles, 2005).

As a result, one can say that the most important characteristic that distinguishes the silent generation from the following generations is their respect for authority, their perfectionism and their extensive technical knowledge (Koschik, 2019).

1.2.1.2. Baby Boomers

While it is not clear when generations begin and end, it is generally accepted that the baby boomer generation consists of people born between 1946 and 1964. The term baby boom, which basically gives the generation its name, came about as a result of the soaring birth rates in the United States after World War II. Especially in countries like Germany, which were severely affected by the socioeconomic consequences of the war, this boom only started ten years later (Klaffke, 2014).

This generation was raised by the silent generation, who were perfectionists, disciplined, hardworking and respectful of authority in business, so some of their work ethics were inherited by this generation. In addition to these characteristics of the silent generation, the baby boomer generation is a very competitive and confident age group due to the population explosion (Kedl and Welpacher, 2019). In addition, although they have some peculiarities of the silent generation, they are much more innovative and insightful in social and business life compared to the previous generation, since important innovations such as television, which influenced world history, emerged in the youthful period of the Baby Boomer Generation (Yusof et al.,2019).

1.2.1.3. Generation X

Because Generation X is a generation in between compared to other generations, its start and end dates are among the most uncertain ones. However, the consensus in the classification process is that Americans born between 1965 and 1980 make up this generation, and some sources include those born before 1985 in the X Generation as well (McKenna, 2022).

The people of this generation grew up influenced by the office culture and financial comfort created by the baby boomers before them. In addition, Generation X is the first to experience a dual-income household: due to their size, they are far removed from their parents in domestic life, their attachment to authorities is less than that of previous generations and they value individuality more.

Unlike the silent generation and the baby boomers, they are less homogenous because it is a time when there are no unifying events like active wars or economic crises. Because of this, they have identified the inner workings as their battlefield, have low attachment to managers and companies, and believe that their they are deprived of information or that they cannot always make the right decisions. As such, it can be said that the X generation is the first generation to reject traditional work patterns (Mitchell and Orwig, 1998).

1.2.1.4. Generation Y

Generation Y is the world's first global generation, also referred to as Millennials or WWW generation due to the advent of the internet in their childhood or adolescence. They are similar to Generation X in that they grew up in baby boomers or dual-income households. It is among the widely accepted traits that they are funnier, talented and optimistic than any previous generations, especially because they grew up much more free and social compared to the silent generation and the baby boomers (Ekşili and Antalyalı, 2017).

Generation Y, who grew up with a similar wealth of information in most parts of the world, are independent of most political and ideological views. In the age of globalization, they have a more open-minded and liberal mindset as they are exposed to different cultures with the ease of traveling between countries. Also, because they grew up under the supervision of very caring parents, they value the opinion of their parents or bosses at work and need help from others to solve problems. In this direction, it can be stated that the concept of mentoring has for the first time actively entered everyday life in this generation (Park and Park, 2018).

Millennials have come to the fore in management in recent years, with most baby boomers and Generation X slowly retiring from the workforce. On the other hand, the work values and work ethic of Generation Y are very different from the previous generations. They have adopted a more ambitious, creative and confident leadership approach and want to be valued by their managers, empowered to make decisions and take advantage of new learning opportunities that come their way (Naim and Lenka, 2018).

1.2.1.5. Generation Z

In the intergenerational classification introduced since the early 20th century, the latest generation to enter the workforce is the Z generation. Although some members of this generation have entered the business world, there is another group that is still in the growth phase, so scholars have not yet reached a consensus on which years the Z generation covers. However, it is generally accepted that the Z generation is the generation born between 1995 and 2010.

The characteristic that distinguishes Generation Z, which is heavily influenced by the Internet, is that it is a generation that was born into the Internet and high technology. Generation Z, who finds it difficult to distinguish between the digital and real worlds, can communicate with all parts of the world very quickly with the rapid development of social media after the 2000s, and for this reason, it is the generation most affected by the globalization trend (McDonald's Ausbildungsstudie, 2019).

Generation Z does not have the money freedom that previous generations had because unlike Generations X and Y, they are not in a developing economy. As a result of social media, their attention span is very short, they tend to be quick consumers, they are creative and efficient, they also love their individuality because they socialize in a virtual environment using technology, and they are not like that able to work in a team like Generation Y. Since Generation Z managers have a much more universal point of view, they try to be open to every idea, attach great importance to dialogue between subordinates and superiors, believe that unlike other generations, failure is acceptable, but instead of giving up when they fail, they try to work harder and achieve the goals they want to achieve. Furthermore, instead of choosing a specific company, they focus on their career with a more flexible perspective by prioritizing their own values (Magano et al., 2020).

1.2.1.6. Generation Alpha

The Alpha generation is estimated to include the generation born between 2010 and 2025. As they have not yet reached adulthood and have not entered the labor market yet, only future estimates are made. These assumptions are that Generation Alpha will be the most tech-savvy generation ever, they can't imagine the lack of social networks, they will be less dependent on human relationships, and because they are the children of Generation X, Y and Z, they will be highly educated and have higher problem-solving skills (Bejtkovský, 2016).

2. THE STUDY

Each generation has different characteristics. These characteristics not only affect people's social skills, but also their working lives. Different methods of different generations, in business life and especially in management, determine the work culture of the eras.

The fact that the period between 2000 and 2020 that we are currently in is the first period in which many generations are in business at the same time causes the different work ethics of these generations to come into conflict (Robertson, 2019). For example, it may be perfectly acceptable for a manager to scold an employee loudly, and it is normal for the silent generation, the same situation may be completely unacceptable for a Generation Z employee.

Mobbing, a relatively new concept that emerged in the late 1990s, can become a very difficult theme to control in organizations with such a multi-generational workforce, as each generation responds to events according to its own characteristics.

The aim of this study is to measure the reactions of participants from Generations X, Y and Z to different scenarios of mobbing and to make a comparison among the reactions of these generations.

2.1. Methodology and Sample

In this study, scenario technique and survey method are used together to collect data. The scenario technique or scenario analysis is generally intended to provide a free and unrestricted view of the subject under study in the face of possible future situations in companies. When creating scenarios, care is taken to be as consistent and objective as possible. The most important reason why this method is preferred today is that it provides direct access to the opinions of the participants and thus the data collected can be better compared with each other (Weinbrenner, n.d.)

When using the scenario technique, at least two scenarios are generally created, one of which is positive while the other scenario describes a negative or less positive situation than the other scenario. Thus, it is observed whether people's expectations contradict with each other or with themselves, and an attempt is made to show an optimal view accepted by all (Niklas, 2018).

On the other hand, surveys are one of the most widespread and oldest data collection methods in academic research. The reason is that surveys are generally the easiest and cheapest data collection tools. They can be conducted both online and in person, qualitative data can be obtained as well as quantitative data, and it offers standardized data.

In this study, which compared Generations X, Y and Z's responses to mobbing, a combination of these two techniques is applied. First of all, two different scenarios were prepared by the researchers based on literature review and were presented to the participants. They were asked if each situation could be regarded as "mobbing" in order to establish the generational boundaries in defining "mobbing". Following that they were asked to state how they would react and what kind of an action they would take if they were in the shoes of the person in the scenario. Finally, they were asked to convey their opinions on some predetermined examples of mobbing as to rate those actions with regard to their severity in terms of mobbing.

The rationale for choosing the scenario technique is to see where different generations diverge in their responses to mobbing scenarios at different levels and to allow participants to express their opinions clearly and use their own phrases without getting caught up and feel constrained in any way while the data is being collected. The survey technique that follows the scenarios consists of observing the responses of the participants of each generation to certain mobbing situations given in a list which demands the participants to evaluate these situations based on a ranking scale.

This study was carried out on a sample group of 32 people, consisting of 10 people from Generation X, 11 people from Generation Y and 11 people from Generation Z. It was a prerequisite that the participant had at least 6 months of professional working experience, and the number of participants

from each generation and gender were kept similar to create a homogenous sample. All of the participants worked in services sector, at white-collar positions.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Comparison of Responses to Low-Level Mobbing Scenario

First of all, a low level mobbing scenario was given to participants and their responses were collected. The first scenario is as follows:

"Ali* has just started working at a leading software company. Since there is no planned training process in the team Ali is part of, he has to take training from the team members. The team members do not show enough interest in Ali during the training that can ensure him to work without help. Even though Ali thinks he doesn't have enough knowledge at the end of the educational process, they expect him to do things he can't fulfill. Given this situation, Ali feels inadequate for the job and when he says so, communication within the team leads to negative reactions towards Ali. At the end of 3 months he meets with his manager and is told that he has been underperforming and that he cannot be accepted as a successful employee. Although Ali believes that this situation is due to insufficient training, he is not sure if he can report this situation to his manager because if he complains to his manager about his teammates, communication within the team may deteriorate."

*Ali is one of the most commonly used male names in Turkey./ For female participants another widely used female name "Ayşe" was used within the scenario.

The generational assessment of the participants to the above scenario is given in Table 2 below. From the table it can be deduced that Generation Z has very low or no tolerance for mobbing, while Generation X does not see low levels of mobbing as workplace violence.

Table 2. Low Level Responses 1

Do you consider the behavior of the team members towards Ali to be mobbing (psychological violence at work)?		
	Yes	No
Generation X	1	9
Generation Y	4	7
Generation Z	11	0

From the numbers in the table, we can see that Generation Y members struggle to draw boundaries between mobbing and non-mobbing situations and a comment by a participant goes in line with this:

"Whether or not this is mobbing should be examined under two headings. First, team members should be given enough time to train Ali. If the team members nevertheless gave a careless and disinterested

upbringing, it may be because they didn't take Ali seriously because of his experience, saw him as a threat for the future, or because of personal dislike, they treated him subjectively and unethically. In this case, mobbing against Ali can be concluded. In the second case, unless Ali has previous experience in other companies related to his job, then it is a managerial error to expect Ali to perform adequately without adequately providing the necessary training."

Although participants could not agree on whether or not the situation experienced in the scenario was mobbing, all said that their motivation and productivity would be negatively affected if they were the person experiencing the scenario. This shows that the notion of generation is not a key factor in the impact of workplace conflict and hostility on quality of work.

Following that they were asked what their reaction and action would be. The answers given by participants in this situation are divided into three main groups according to their similarities or main themes in Table 3 below. Parallel to the answers to the first question, it is evident that due to the high tolerance of Generation X to mobbing, the reporting rate of the negative situation to the superior is low.

Table 3. Low Level Responses 2

	What would you do if you were in Ali's place?		
	Look for new job	Report to management	Work harder to reduce mobbing
Generation X	0	3	7
Generation Y	3	6	2
Generation Z	8	3	0

Additionally, a Generation X participant responded as below, indicating that Generation X are closer to seeing hostility in a new workplace as normal:

"Because I was starting a new job, I would initially spend most of my energy adapting to the company (understanding processes, mastering company culture, specializing in my job/role and solidifying my communication with the team/supervisor). I would sacrifice my personal time for that. I would try not only to make my efforts visible to my colleagues and my manager, but also to show that I value my colleagues (and change their hard thinking about me) by getting their opinions."

The most important difference between Generation Z and the two previous two generations is that instead of trying to solve such a situation, they want to leave the company by treating this situation as a signal of the company culture, i.e. they give up. As can be seen from Table 3, eight of the eleven participants said they would leave the job immediately.

On the other hand, participants from Generation Y do not have a clear common view because they are an in-between generation. However, in the responses given, they indicated that reporting this situation to their supervisors was a step that should be taken prior to leaving the workplace.

"I would like to inform the superiors that the persons responsible for providing the training have not done what should have been done."

"Convinced that the company is a first class company, I would speak to my manager first and then to Human Resources. I would try to explain that I was not good at the job due to lack of training. If I didn't get a result, I would quit the job."

3.2. Comparison of Responses to High-Level Mobbing Scenario

Secondly, a higher level mobbing scenario was given to participants and their responses were collected. The second scenario is as follows:

"Ali has just started working at a leading software company. Everyone in the team he has joined has known each other for a long time and they have a close social circle where they meet also outside of work. They have never taken Ali into this group and they have not included him in their social lives both on and off work. This situation makes Ali feel very left out. At Ali's first presentation, one of his teammates makes a snide remark in front of the managers and other teams that Ali is not doing his job right. Ali feels very bad about this situation and is very ashamed in front of his managers."

The above situation was given to the same participants and the responses to the same questions were compared with the answers in Scenario 1. The generational assessment of the participants to the above scenario is as follows:

Table 4. High Level Responses 1

Do you consider the behavior of the team members towards Ali to be mobbing (psychological violence at work)?		
	Yes	No
Generation X	1	9
Generation Y	8	3
Generation Z	11	0

As can be seen in Table 4 above, the change in the level of mobbing also affected the responses of participants from different generations.

One of the members of Generation X noted that the level of hostile behavior had increased but did not directly characterize this situation as psychological violence at work and responded as follows:

"It's not what we expect as professional behavior in work life."

Apart from the answer above, all other members of Generation X still think the situation is not mobbing. Below is the response of another Generation X participant. Although this participant felt the situation was negative, he argued that mobbing did not exist:

"It's not mobbing if his colleagues don't accept him into their social environment. Exceeding the respect limit for criticism may be perceived as mobbing, but it is not enough."

This situation shows that Generation Xers are reluctant to label it as mobbing, even when they encounter hostile behavior at work and feel uncomfortable in the situation.

Participants from Generation Y clearly rated the behavior in Scenario 2 as mobbing, in contrast to Scenario 1. As can be seen from Table 4, most of the participants labelled this situation as mobbing. This shows that Generation Y, who place more value on sincerity and social connections, can make clearer decisions in a situation such as social exclusion. All Generation Z participants defined the situation experienced in Scenario 2 as mobbing.

In Scenario 2, as expected, all employees indicated that their motivation and productivity would decrease. In addition to this situation, two Generation X participants expressed their feelings about this situation as follows.

"I would try to think that this situation would change and that my friends would accept me over time."

"I don't need to be friends with my colleagues. Not being included in their social life is not a problem for me. I wouldn't mind if there was mutual respect. I also wish for this respect in the presentation. It's okay to say my mistakes, but the way it's done it is very important."

Comparing the main idea of the answers of the participants of Generations shows that sociability and friendly relations in business are not very important for Generation X. So one can say that in contrast to the following generations, work and private life are regarded as two distinct phenomena in this generation.

The participant, imagining that they experienced Scenario 2, gave more detailed answers to the third question than they provided for Scenario 1, and a fourth option came about that was not previously mentioned in Scenario 1. As can be seen in Table 5, in contrast to Scenario 1, most of the participants, regardless of generations, indicated that they would try to resolve this situation within the team by contacting their colleagues. When the same question was asked in Scenario 1, participants did not make as much effort to solve the problem as in Scenario 2 because mobbing was less related to social life at work.

Table 5. High Level Responses 2

	Look for new job	Report to management	Work harder to reduce mobbing	Communicate with colleagues
What would you do if you were in Ali's place?				
Generation X	0	2	6	2
Generation Y	3	4	0	4
Generation Z	4	2	0	5

Six of the Generation X participants, who continue the work habits of the silent generation and baby boomers in business, said they thought of creating understanding among their peers by working hard in the face of this situation, even though they were exposed to a high level of mobbing as in Scenario 2. Experiencing Scenario 2, Generation Xers' comments summarize this generation's perspective on social exclusion in the workplace.

"Since it's a corporate location, I've taken care of my work as best I can, success always brings new friendships."

"I would never give up. That would motivate me even more."

As mobbing increases, it is surprising that the number of Generation Y participants who want to quit their jobs has remained the same. Four of the participants indicated that they would prefer to resolve this situation by informing their managers. The remaining participants indicated that they would rather resolve this situation by talking to their teammates without complaining to management or Human Resources.

"I would try to socialize with my teammates."

"I'd admit my mistake, but I'd say you can't talk to me like that. I want to emphasize that we should respect each other."

"After the presentation, I would speak directly with the person who gave me a bad comment."

The reason why Generation Y members reduced reporting the issue to senior management andtried to solve it within the group is that this generation places great value on social environments. The reason for the decline in the number of complaints from participants in Generation Y to the management can be regarded as a desire to be included in the social environment of the team.

In the lower scenario of mobbing, Generation Z had the lowest tolerance for hostile behavior in the workplace, i.e. psychological violence. In this high-level mobbing scenario, the likelihood that they would quit their job has decreased. The number of participants who wanted to communicate with the

manager has also decreased and nearly half of the members of Generation Z indicated that they would try to resolve this situation by talking to their teammates.

3.3. Survey Results

As the final step, the participants were given a list of actions which were treated as examples of mobbing. The participants rated those actions in the questionnaire given to them according to the rating system given below (Table 6).

Table 6. Meanings of the Codes

0	Undecided	Not sure if this behavior is mobbing
1	No mobbing	Don't think it's mobbing
2	Low mobbing	Can be ignored
3	Moderate mobbing	Negatively affects work life but would not result in job quit
4	High mobbing	Could result in job quit

The table below (Table 7) shows how many participants from each generation evaluated the level of mobbing in each of the example given. The examples in the table were selected from the 45-item psychological violence example list (Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror- LIPT45) prepared by Heinz Leymann (Leymann, 1990; 1993.)

Table 7. Ratings for Possible Mobbing Actions

	Answers of Participants Generation X					Answers of Participants Generation Y					Answers of Participants Generation Z					
Mobbing Action	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	
Being exposed to offensive jokes	0	4	4	2	0	0	2	2	5	1	0	0	2	5	4	**Number of Participants**
Ignorance of opinions and suggestions	2	4	2	2	0	0	1	4	5	1	0	0	0	6	5	
Loud abuse in front of other teammates	2	0	2	4	2	0	0	2	5	4	0	0	0	4	7	
Underestimating work, being seen as unimportant	0	0	2	5	3	0	0	3	3	5	0	2	3	4	2	
Criticism towards professional skills	0	0	2	2	6	0	0	2	3	6	0	0	1	2	8	
Being forced to work in isolation from other teammates	0	0	6	2	2	0	0	0	4	7	0	0	2	4	5	
Being forced to do tasks below capacity	0	2	2	6	0	0	2	5	3	0	0	2	4	4	1	

Being forced to do tasks beyond capacity	0	4	4	2	0	0	0	2	5	4	0	0	2	4	5	
Being exposed to unsubstantiated claims	0	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	4	7	0	0	0	2	9	
Being not invited to extra-work social activities in which the whole team participates	0	4	4	2	0	0	0	3	3	5	0	0	0	4	7	

The reactions to some of the example actions are evaluated in detail below.

Being exposed to offensive jokes:

None of the members of Generation X, as reflected in their reactions to scenarios in which they separate their work and personal lives, did not define this situation as high-level mobbing. Four of the participants indicated that it was not mobbing, the other four indicated that it was low-level mobbing. Along these lines, it can be concluded that the X Generation is resistant to behaviors that affect social life. It is clear that Generation Y and Z participants see this situation as a bigger problem.

Ignorance of opinions and suggestions:

The highest score given to this example by participants from Generation X, who are not as open to other ideas as Generations Z and Y and who do not feel the need to voice their own opinions as much as the other two generations, is moderate mobbing. On the contrary, the Generation Y and Z participants, who have a high need to speak their mind and feel heard in the workplace, viewed this situation as much more serious. Ten of the participants across two generations state that this can even lead to quitting job.

Underestimating work, being seen as unimportant:

From the participants' points on the examples above and the responses they gave to the scenarios, it can be deduced that Generation X has a higher tolerance for mobbing, as well as Generation X's perfectionism and the importance they place on their work are characteristic features of this generation. Given this information, while Generation X is a generation that is more resilient to psychological violence in the workplace, as indicated by questionnaire responses, they have a very low tolerance for situations where work ethics are humiliated, such as the example above. The score that Generation Z gave to this situation is surprising, as only two of the participants described this situation as high-level mobbing. Generation Y performed more similarly to Generation X in this example.

In short, from the survey results and the responses to the scenarios, it became clear that different generations' tolerance for mobbing will diverge depending on the general character of that generation, but that each generation is particularly sensitive to certain types of hostile behavior.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article, the reactions of Generations X, Y and Z members were measured and compared with regard to the mobbing scenarios presented to them and possible mobbing actions that could occur. The aim of this comparison was to make an assessment of how employees of which generation would react to mobbing in companies with a multi-generational employee portfolio and to provide a faster solution to the causes of conflicts between employees of different generations for managers or HR managers who want to prevent this situation in advance.

As a result of the research, it was found that Generation X employees have the work habits of the silent generation and the baby boomers that came before them when compared to the Y and Z generations. Because this generation has a strong separation between work and social life, they have a higher tolerance for situations such as mobbing at work and try not to personalize the problems as much as possible. In addition, although they are resistant to mobbing types such as social exclusion, with their inheritance from the silent generation and the baby boomers, they can react severely when directly exposed to mobbing regarding their characteristic traits such as diligence, professionalism, or their technical knowledge and their professional competence are underestimated.

With regard to the data obtained from the research and the literature review, it can be concluded that Generation Y is the generation whose reaction to mobbing is the most unpredictable. The reason for this is that Generation Y, which has traits like creativity, people skills and hard work, has the traits of the next Generation Z as well as Generation X. Gen Y participants, whose tolerance for conflict in the workplace is lower than that of Generation X, position their work and social life closer together despite not being very close to their peers, Generation Y workers who expect friendship and want to build a social circle will find that their motivation and productivity plummet when they are left off the team, and they indicate that they will try to feel accepted by their peers.

Generation Z, which entered the workforce today in the 2020s, is the generation with the lowest tolerance for mobbing. While this generation is a generation that would rather try again by learning lessons than give up in the face of failure, this is only valid for the business arena. Generation Z members, who see business life as a direct part of their social lives, tend to resign and prefer to work at another company if they feel excluded from the social environment and their teammates show hostile behavior towards them.

As a result, companies need to understand that every generation treats mobbing differently and they should educate employees of different generations about other generations' perspectives, such that a behavior which a Generation X employee does not consider as mobbing can be regarded as mobbing by a Generation Z member. Especially training in communication skills, workplace harassment and conflict resolution may act preventive and developmental measures which may increase organizational tolerance and may facilitate organizational coherence in terms of human capital (Perez-Larrazabal et al., 2019).

A major limitation of the research can be stated as the fact that Generation Z has entered the workforce very recently, and due to this, their expectations and their idealized workplaces are much more different from older generations. For example, a recent graduate may have no monetary obligations to make his/ her living. Therefore, their freedom to change job, or flexibility to quit may support their higher intolerance against mobbing. On the other hand, the older generations who have much more to lose if they quit, may tend to be more tolerant against mobbing due to their previous investments in the current job, in the current company, or their need to live off. Companies should be aware of this fact and should apply precautions which assure that such employees are not violated by their colleagues or superiors.

Mobbing of any type cannot and shall not be legitimized through no excuses and companies should act responsibly and value human capital above all the other assets in order to sustain the coexistence of different generations in harmony.

İşyerinde Psikolojik Şiddete Karşı Tepkilerin Kuşaklararası Karşılaştırılması

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Kurumlarda farklı kuşaklardan bireylerin birlikte çalışmaya başlaması organizasyonlar için yönetilmesi gereken bir çeşitlilik olarak önem kazanmaya başlamıştır. Yıllardır iş dünyasında yer alan X ve Y kuşaklarına ek olarak özellikle Z kuşağının da yakın zamanda çalışma hayatına girmesiyle beraber, örgütlerin farklı yaş gruplarından çalışanlarının ihtiyaç, istek, beklenti ve tepkilerini anlamaları daha da zorlaşmıştır.

Kuşaklar kendi aralarında farklı davranışlar sergileyebilmekte ve yüksek stresli ortamlarda kuşaklar arası çatışma kolayca çözülemeyecek bir sorun haline gelebilmektedir. Bu çatışmaların çözülemediği durumlarda, bir kuşaktan çalışanların diğer kuşaktan çalışanları istismar ederek, onları iş gücünden uzaklaşmaya sevkettiği durumlarla karşılaşılmaktadır. Farklı cinsiyetler, ırklar, inançlar gibi farklı yaş grupları da psikolojik şiddete ve yıldırma eylemlerine maruz kalabilmektedir. En basit haliyle "bir başkasına yönelik aşağılayıcı, küçük düşürücü, düşmanca davranışlar sergilemek" olarak nitelendirilebilecek olan psikolojik şiddet, işten ayrılma niyetini etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden birisi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. İnsan kaynakları (İK) yönetimi ve birim yöneticileri tarafından iyi bir personel yönetimi için mümkün olduğunca düşük tutulması gereken bu davranışın algılanış biçimi ve bu davranış karşısında verilen tepkiler, çalışanların nesline bağlı olarak büyük değişimler gösterebilmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, farklı kuşaklardan çalışanların psikolojik şiddete maruz kaldıklarında bunu nasıl algıladıklarını ve verecekleri tepkilerin nasıl değiştiğini anlamaya yönelik bir çalışma ortaya koymaktır. Bununla beraber, organizasyonun insan sermayesi açısından sürdürülebilirliğini korumaya yardımcı olabilecek çözüm önerileri sunmak sunmak hedeflenmektedir.

Kavramsal Çerçeve

Bu çalışmanın teorik kısmında kısaca "psikolojik şiddet" ve "kuşak" kavramlarının tarihçelerine yer verilmekte, psikolojik şiddet türleri ve biçimleri anlatılmakta ve bu davranışların hem çalışan hem de örgütler üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri alanyazına dayanarak özetlenmektedir. Ardından Sessiz Kuşaktan başlayarak, Alfa Kuşağı dahil olmak üzere kuşaklar tanımlanmakta ve kuşaklar içi belirgin özellikler aktarılmaktadır. Ayrıca kuşaklar arasındaki farklar çalışma değerleri, sosyal yaşam, teknolojiyle ilişkileri vb. özellikler açısından da kıyaslanarak, özellikle iş hayatındaki tutumlarına ilişkin bilgiler sunulmaktadır.

Araştırma

Bu çalışmada, metot olarak senaryo tekniği ve anket yöntemi birlikte uygulanarak farklı kuşaklardan çalışanların farklı düzeyde psikolojik şiddet içeren durumlarda verecekleri tepkileri analiz etmek amaçlanmıştır. Öncelikle araştırmacılar tarafından literatür taramasına dayalı olarak düşük ve yüksek psikolojik şiddet durumunu yansıtan iki farklı senaryo hazırlanmış ve katılımcılara dağıtılmıştır. Ardından senaryodaki kişinin yerinde olsalar nasıl tepki vereceklerini ve nasıl bir eylemde bulunacaklarını belirtmeleri istenmiştir. Anket bölümünde ise, önceden belirlenmiş bazı psikolojik şiddet örneklerine ilişkin görüşlerini iletmeleri ve bu eylemleri ciddiyetlerine göre derecelendirmeleri istenmiştir.

Çalışma X Kuşağından 10, Y Kuşağından 11 ve Z Kuşağından 11 katılımcıdan oluşan 32 kişilik bir örneklem grubu üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcıların en az 6 aylık iş tecrübesine sahip olması ön koşul olarak belirlenmiş ve homojen bir örneklem oluşturmak için her kuşaktan ve cinsiyetten katılımcı sayısı benzer tutulmuştur.

Sonuç

Sonuçlara bakıldığında, Y ve Z Kuşaklarının, organizasyondaki sosyal çevreyi özel hayatlarının bir parçası olarak değerlendirdikleri ve buna paralel olarak, bu alandaki ilişkileri sağlıklı bir şekilde yürümediği takdirde işten ayrılma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. İş hayatı ve özel yaşam arasında keskin bir ayrım yapan X kuşağının ise, çalışma tarzlarını ve üretkenliklerini etkilemediği sürece, psikolojik şiddete diğer kuşaklara göre daha dayanıklı oldukları tespit edilmiştir. X kuşağının işyerinde psikolojik şiddete karşı toleransının daha yüksek olduğu ve sorunları kişiselleştirmemeye çalıştıkları anlaşılmaktadır. Z kuşağı mensuplarının ise, psikolojik şiddete karşı toleransı en düşük olan, daha sert tepki veren ve sosyal çevreden dışlandığında istifa etme eğiliminde olan bireyler oldukları gözlenmiştir.

Tartışma

Bu çalışmada X, Y ve Z Kuşağı üyelerinin kendilerine sunulan psikolojik şiddet senaryoları ve karşılaşabilecekleri olası psikolojik şiddet eylemlerine yönelik tepkileri ölçülerek karşılaştırılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda X Kuşağı çalışanlarının çalışma alışkınlarının Sessiz Kuşağın ve Bebek Patlaması (Baby Boomer) Kuşağının çalışma alışkanlıklarına benzer olduğu görülmüştür. Bulgular, X Kuşağının sosyal dışlanma gibi psikolojik şiddet eylemlerine karşı daha dirençli olduklarını, fakat kişisel özelliklerini hedef alan davranışlar ile karşılaştıklarında daha sert tepkiler gösterme eğilimine girdiklerini ve teknik bilgi ve yetkinliklerinin hafife alındığı durumlarda reaksiyon verdiklerini göstermektedir.

Y Kuşağı çalışanlar için ise, iş yerinde sosyal çevrenin ve arkadaşlık ilişkilerinin X Kuşağına kıyasla daha önemli olduğu görülmüştür. Kabul görmek bu kuşak için önemlidir ve dışlanma durumunda üretkenliklerinde düşüş yaşanması olasıdır. Bu kuşağa mensup çalışanların, grup/ ekip tarafından psikolojik şiddete maruz kaldıkları durumlarda, iş arkadaşları ile iletişim kurarak çözüm yolu arama eğilimde oldukları gözlenmiştir. Z Kuşağı ise iş hayatını sosyal hayatın doğrudan bir parçası olarak görmekte ve bu sebeple, psikolojik şiddet veya dışlanma davranışlarıyla karşılaştıklarında iş hayatından ayrılma ve istifa etme eğilimi göstermektedir.

Farklı kuşakların farklı beklentileri olduğu gibi, olaylar karşısında tepkileri de çeşitlidir. Bu bağlamda organizasyonların çalışan çeşitliliğini anlayarak herkesi kapsayıcı politikalar benimsemesi, çatışmaları önleyebilen proaktif uygulamalar yürürlüğe alması ve çalışan esenliğini koruyucu tedbirler belirlemesi gerekmektedir. Psikolojik şiddet organizasyonları bu bağlamda en zorlayan ve yönetilmesi en güç alanlardan birisidir. Özellikle farklı kuşakların bir arada çalışmaya başlamasıyla beraber, farklı değerler, farklı iş yapış biçimleri, farklı hayat tarzları birbiriyle çatışmaya ve kişiler arası uyumsuzluklar iş hayatına yansımaya başlamıştır. Bu bağlamda kuşaklar arası farklılıkların yönetimi de en az cinsiyet, ırk, din, kültür gibi diğer farklılıklar kadar büyük önem arz etmektedir. Bu nedenle kurumların çalışanlarını psikolojik şiddet konusunda eğitmesi, kuşakları ayrıştırıcı değil birleştirici uygulamalar benimsemesi ve şirket içinde eşitliği temel alan uygulamalar devreye alması gerekmektedir.

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