



**ÖZEL EĞİTİM ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN İŞ BİRLİĞİ, İŞ YAŞAM KALİTESİ  
DÜZEYLERİ İLE MOBBİNG DURUMLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİNİN  
İNCELENMESİ**

**INTERACTION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS'  
COLLABORATION, QUALITY OF WORK LIFE, AND EXPOSURE TO MOBBING:  
A REVIEW**

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**Öz**

Bu çalışmanın amacı Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'ndeki özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin iş birliği, iş yaşam kalitesi düzeyleri ile mobbing (yıldırma) durumları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmaya 2021-2022 eğitim öğretim yılında KKTC Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığına bağlı okul ve kurumlarda görev alan 153 özel eğitim öğretmeni katılmıştır. Araştırmada nicel yöntemlerden ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada iş birliği, iş yaşam kalitesi ve mobbing düzeyi belirleme ölçekleri kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 25.0 programı kullanılarak çözümlenmeleri yapılmıştır. Veriler incelendiğinde özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin mobbing (psikolojik şiddet) düzeyleri ile mesleki kıdem, eğitim durumu, medeni durum, aylık hane geliri ve günlük çalışma saati değişkenleri arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğu; yaş ve cinsiyet değişkenleri arasında ise anlamlı düzeyde fark olmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Özel eğitim öğretmenlerinin iş birliği, iş yaşam kalitesi düzeyleri ile mobbing(yıldırma) durumları arasındaki ilişki durumu incelendiğinde, İş Yaşam Kalitesi Ölçeği puanları ile İş birliği Ölçeği puanları arasında pozitif yönlü ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde korelasyon olduğu; İş Yaşam Kalitesi Ölçeği puanları ile Mobbing (Psikolojik Şiddet) Ölçeği puanları arasında negatif yönlü ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde korelasyon olduğu saptanmıştır. İş birliği Ölçeği puanları ile Mobbing (Psikolojik Şiddet) Ölçeği puanları arasında negatif yönlü fakat istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde olmayan korelasyon olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Özel Eğitim Öğretmeni, İş birliği, İş Yaşam Kalitesi, Mobbing.

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the interplay among the levels of cooperation, quality of work life, and exposure to mobbing among special education teachers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The research involved 153 special education teachers employed in schools and institutions affiliated with the TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture during the 2021-2022 academic year. Employing a relational survey model, a quantitative approach, the study utilized the Cooperation Scale, Quality of Work Life Scale, and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale. The collected data underwent analysis using the SPSS 25.0 program. The results indicated a significant difference in the exposure to mobbing levels among special education teachers based on variables such as professional seniority, educational background, marital status, and daily working hours. However, no significant differences were observed concerning age and gender in relation to exposure to mobbing. Upon examining the correlation between special education teachers' cooperation, quality of work life, and mobbing experiences, a positive and statistically significant association was identified between the scores of the Quality of

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Work Life Scale and Cooperation Scale. Additionally, a negative and statistically significant correlation was found between the Quality of Work Life Scale scores and the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores.

**Keywords:** *Special education teacher, cooperation, quality of work life, exposure to mobbing.*

## Introduction

The right to education stands as a fundamental human right, explicitly safeguarded by Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights (Akyesilmen, 2014). Consequently, every individual is entitled to the right to education. Furthermore, Article 59 of the Constitution of the TRNC unequivocally asserts that no one shall be deprived of the right to education and training. The TRNC constitution goes a step further by articulating the state's commitment to implementing necessary measures for the education of individuals requiring special education, both within and outside traditional educational settings, with the aim of fostering their meaningful contribution to society (TRNC Constitution, Article 59, 1985). Integral to the process of integrating individuals with special needs into society are special education teachers. Recognizing the pivotal role these educators play, it is imperative to emphasize their need for high professional standards and qualifications in facilitating the education of students with special needs (Demir & Turk, 2020; Doyumgac, Tanhan & K1ymaz, 2021). Consequently, proactive measures should be taken to enhance the training and performance of special education teachers. Elevating the performance and qualifications of special education teachers necessitates a thorough exploration of the concept of special education. The Special Education Services Regulation, formulated in Turkey in 2018, offers the following definition: “Special education involves tailored environments, staffed by specially trained personnel, and educational programs designed to address the educational and social needs of individuals who significantly deviate from typically developing individuals in terms of their individual and developmental characteristics and educational qualifications” (Special Education Services Regulation, 2018). Distinguished by its use of distinct materials, methods, and techniques, special education stands apart from general education (Ataman, 2011). The crucial role of specially trained personnel and, particularly, special education teachers is evident in this domain. To effectively deliver education, special education teachers must collaborate seamlessly with other personnel and operate in pressure-free environments conducive to a high quality of work life. Simultaneously, these teachers require diverse expertise and skills when delivering special education to students (Brownell, Hirsch, and Seo, 2004).

For special education teachers, a commitment to continuous education and personal development is paramount to effectively carrying out their intricate and significant responsibilities. Ongoing development empowers teachers to engage in cooperative work, recognize their competencies, and realize their full potential, thereby maximizing their capacities (Postholm, 2016). Cooperation, in the educational context, is the outcome of events and actions wherein at least two individuals converge with similar perspectives, influencing each other in the process (Ugurlu, 2013). To comprehend the concept of cooperation in an educational context, an examination of the school organization's structure is essential. Schools serve as dynamic spaces where administrators, teachers, and diverse personnel collaboratively work and share experiences (Fullan, 2002). Within the school setting, teachers often foster a culture of cooperation that promotes collaborative development. This approach not only contributes to the personal growth of teachers but also bolsters the overall advancement of the school. The primary aim of such collaborative efforts is to optimize the educational and training processes for students (Goddard, Goddard, Sook Kim, & Miller, 2015).

The success rates within schools are intricately tied to the collaborative dynamics between teachers and administrators, as highlighted by Forsyth, Barnes, and Adams (2006). This relationship stands as a fundamental cornerstone of educational institutions. The interaction and cooperation between teachers and administrators are key factors influencing the

development of the culture within schools (Ozdemir, 2006). Enhancing teachers' cooperation and communication skills is, therefore, a pivotal step towards fostering improved education for students and elevating overall student success. This emphasis on interaction and cooperation is equally significant in the realm of special education. The goal of special education is to meet each student's unique needs, and in order to do this, teamwork and communication are essential. The collaborative effort involves working in harmony with individuals involved in education, considering factors such as the environment, school, and family, during the individualization and adaptation of education and training processes (Vuran, 2014; Sahin & Altun, 2016).

The presence of collaboration in special education not only fosters positive interactions among teachers but also extends to fruitful engagement with students' families and other staff members. Teachers in the field benefit both personally and professionally from these connections, which help them better meet the needs of their students. Additionally, when challenges arise, cooperative efforts offer a more effective avenue for addressing and resolving issues. Consequently, the educational experience for students becomes more successful, effective, and enduring, with shared responsibilities helping minimize negative effects (Morfidi & Bridglall, 2022; Sucuoglu & Kargin, 2014; Sahin & Altun, 2016; Tabak, 2021).

One could argue that a cooperative learning atmosphere in schools promotes a high standard of living at employment. The work-life balance is a critical component of organizational performance and should be a place where people feel comfortable and safe. When the quality of work life is designed to encompass concepts such as justice, happiness, and talent, observable increases in workplace quality and productivity can occur (Keskin, Ergan, Baskurt, & Baskurt, 2021). This comprehensive concept involves positive employee sentiments about their work, favorable workplace arrangements, and the outcomes of their efforts (Aba, 2009). In the contemporary business landscape, quality in work life has evolved into a management philosophy emphasizing physical and psychological comfort for employees, instigating organizational changes, and underscoring the value of every team member (Aydın, Celik & Ugurluoglu, 2011). Among the crucial factors influencing the quality of work life, the stress level of employees holds a prominent position. Work-related stress has the potential to diminish the efficiency of both organizations and employees, adversely impacting the psychological and mental health of individuals under its influence (Aydın, 2002). Stress can manifest as employee reluctance, thoughts of leaving work, feelings of worthlessness, a lack of cooperation, fear of making mistakes, avoidance of tasks, and a decrease in work quality.

Addressing the negative impacts of stress in business life is crucial, emphasizing the significance of precautions to mitigate its effects (Adıguzel, 2008). It becomes evident that workplace quality holds importance not only from an economic perspective but also within the realm of education. Particularly in education, the work life quality of teachers directly shapes the quality of education. While teachers are integral to the educational process, their involvement in activities outside the school can be substantial. However, an increase in responsibilities and workload may, in certain instances, have an adverse effect on the quality of work life (Demir, 2016). Several factors contribute to teachers' quality of work life, falling into two main categories: individual (such as personal characteristics, experience, age, and education) and organizational (including salary, workplace conditions, rewards, and development opportunities) factors (Tozun, Culhacı & Unsal, 2008). Regulations within the education system can significantly influence teacher behavior, as teachers may contend with legal and administrative challenges that constrain their professional development. Therefore, these factors merit consideration in efforts to enhance teachers' quality of work life (Ozer, Nuri & Bağlama, 2023). Furthermore, the quality of work life directly impacts teachers' performance across various domains, including planning, school-family collaboration, and monitoring student development (Erdem, 2008). However, certain teachers, particularly special education

teachers, may face additional responsibilities, potentially leading to a negative impact on their work life quality and even prompting them to exit the profession (Bozgeyik, 2016; Nuri & Ozer, 2023).

Scientific research has brought to light another significant factor contributing to the resignation of teachers and other employees, a phenomenon primarily driven by workplace competition yet defying traditional models due to its multifaceted nature - this phenomenon is known as “mobbing” or “intimidation” (Tınaz, 2006). The act of emotionally excluding, psychologically disturbing, or attempting to intimidate individuals within workplaces has historical roots. However, the complexity of human nature has rendered it challenging for such experiences to surface, transforming mobbing into a nuanced problem that is difficult to comprehend (Laciner, 2006). Rather than confining the mobbing phenomenon to a singular term, various descriptors like "emotional harassment," "psycho-terrorism," "psycho-violence," and "acts of intimidation" have been employed (Cobanoglu, 2005). In this study, these terms are utilized to encapsulate the essence of mobbing. While bullying behavior has long existed in the professional realm, a comprehensive understanding of mobbing only emerged in recent years. Subsequent studies have aimed to differentiate mobbing from other negative behaviors such as harm, disrespect, and mockery (Akgeyik, Delen, Selale, and Umut, 2009).

Mobbing actions exert both material and moral damages on all stakeholders within the workplace. Such behaviors not only diminish the functionality of the workplace but also have adverse effects on trust within the organization. Furthermore, they impede employees from working efficiently, diminishing their overall working capacity (Cemaloglu & Erturk, 2008). Recent studies have noted an increase in mobbing behaviors within the field of education (Celebi & Tascı, 2014; Kıranlı Gungor & Potuk, 2018; Durusu & Cemaloglu, 2019; Akbaşlı, Dıs & Durnalı, 2020). This escalation has a detrimental impact on teachers, students, and all others with whom teachers interact. The fundamental goal of educational institutions is to foster harmonious collaboration among all stakeholders. To achieve this objective, school administrators, teachers, and all employees in various roles must engage in cooperative efforts with mutual respect and care for one another (Bursalıoglu, 2012).

Maintaining harmony in the workplace is especially crucial for special education teachers, given the substantial impact of factors such as cooperation, quality of work life, and mobbing on their qualifications and performance. Special education teaching, in general, entails a more stressful role compared to other teaching branches. A study conducted by Isikhan (2017) delved into the burnout levels of individuals in the special education field, highlighting the multitude of challenges inherent in this domain. Special education personnel grapple with a series of problems stemming from the unique characteristics of children with mental disabilities and their families. Furthermore, the task of educating children with special needs may elevate stress levels among special education teachers. Studies emphasize that these teachers are more susceptible to burnout, particularly contingent on the intensity of direct contact with students (Girgin & Baysal, 2005; Nuri, Demirok & Direktör, 2017; Nuri, Karabıyık & Akun, 2022; Karaca, 2024). Consequently, it can be asserted that special education teachers operate under a heavy workload in this context.

Special education teachers employed in public schools and special education institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and Culture of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) shoulder the significant responsibility of providing both individual and group education to students with special needs. Their duties extend beyond the classroom, involving continuous communication with the families of these students and maintaining vigilance during school hours to ensure the safety of these individuals. Special education teachers collaborate closely with subject teachers and classroom teachers, particularly those in inclusive settings, offering guidance to students within these environments. Additionally, they

play a key role in crafting individual education plans, implementing these plans through regular meetings with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) board and school administration.

In essence, special education teachers constitute a professional group burdened with intense workloads and a multitude of responsibilities. Amidst these challenging duties, the expectations of student families towards special education teachers have increased, particularly during extraordinary periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Cetinkaya Aydın, 2020). However, there is a scarcity of studies addressing the problems and needs encountered by special education teachers during such stressful periods. In light of this, the present research aims to investigate the relationship between the level of cooperation, quality of work life, and exposure to mobbing among special education teachers. The overarching goal is to gather data informing how support initiatives for special education teachers should be strategically directed. To achieve this objective, the study endeavors to answer the following questions:

1. What is the mobbing level of special education teachers?
2. Does the relationship between mobbing levels of special education teachers differ according to age, gender, professional seniority, educational status, marital status, daily working hours and monthly household income?
3. Is there a significant relationship between special education teachers' cooperation, quality of work life levels and exposure to mobbing?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Model**

This study looked into the relationship between special education instructors' levels of cooperation, their satisfaction with their profession, and their experiences with mobbing. A quantitative research method called the relational survey model was used in the study. The purpose of relational survey models is to determine whether and how much there is a relationship between two or more variables (Karasar, 2018).

### **Population and Sample**

The research encompasses special education teachers employed in schools featuring inclusive classes, private special education centers, and those affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and Culture in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The selection of special education teachers employed a non-random sampling method known as the appropriate sampling technique. This technique involves choosing the sample from readily accessible and applicable units due to constraints related to time, financial resources, and labor limitations (Buyukozturk, 2010). The study's sample comprises 153 special education teachers actively working in the TRNC. Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of these special education teachers.

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Teachers**

	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
20-29 years	68	44,44
30-39 years	57	37,25
40 years and above	28	18,30
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	93	60,78
Male	60	39,22
<b>Professional seniority</b>		
1-5 years	76	49,67
6-10 years	28	18,30
11 years and above	49	32,03
<b>Educational status</b>		
Graduate	100	65,36
Postgraduate	53	34,64
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	74	48,37
Married	79	51,63
<b>Daily working hours</b>		
5 hours and under	85	55,56
6 hours or more	68	44,44

It was determined that 44.44% of the teachers participating in the research were between the ages of 20-29, 37.25% were between the ages of 30-39 and 18.30% were aged 40 and over. In addition, 60.78% of the teachers are female and 39.22% are male, 49.67% of the teachers have 1-5 years of seniority in the profession, 18.30% have 6-10 years of seniority in the profession, 32.03% have 11 years or more of seniority in the profession, 65.36% have graduate degree, 34.64% have a postgraduate degree, 48.37% are single, 51.63% are married and 55.56% of them had a daily working time of 5 hours or less and 44.44% of them had a daily working time of 6 hours or more.

## Data Collection Tools

### Socio-Demographic Information Form

The form used to determine demographic characteristics was prepared by the researchers to obtain information about the age, gender, professional seniority, educational status, marital status and daily working hours of the special education teachers participating in the study.

### Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale

The Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale, created by Ehi (2011), was employed to ascertain the degree of mobbing exposure experienced by special education teachers. There are two components to the scale. The scale's first section seeks to obtain teachers' personal data. Teachers were asked a total of five questions to ascertain their gender, marital status, professional seniority, who they witness mobbing from most frequently, and how they respond when they witness mobbing. A 5-point Likert-type rating scale was used to measure the second component of the scale. The Mobbing Scale has three dimensions and thirty-four items. There are thirteen items in the "personal attacks" component of the measure, five in the "attacks on social life" dimension, and fifteen in the "attacks on profession" dimension. The scale has three sub-dimensions, 32 items, and a cumulative variance of .94, according to the findings of the factor analysis. The results showed that the sub-dimensions had values ranging from .49 to .74

for assaults on the profession (16), from .54 to .75 for personal attacks (5), and from .52 to .85 for attacks on social life (13).

### **Quality of Work Life Scale**

To assess the quality of work life, the researchers utilized the Quality of Work Life Scale, initially developed by Van Laar, Edwards, and Easton (2007) and later adapted into Turkish by Ustuner and Akar (2017). This scale employs a 5-point Likert type system. In the linguistic equivalence study, the correlation coefficient between the English and Turkish versions of the scale was determined to be .77. During the pilot application of the Turkish version, the item-total correlation values ranged from .32 to .84, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the overall scale was calculated to be .95.

The structure of the scale, comprising 23 items and 6 factors, was validated through confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis revealed a satisfactory model fit ( $\chi^2/Sd = 402.6657/224 = 1.79$ ; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .05; CFI = .96; NNFI = .95). Additionally, the factor loadings of the sub-dimensions varied between .33 and .97. Examining the reliability of the scale, both test-retest and Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the sub-dimensions and the overall scale were calculated as follows: job and career satisfaction (.78; .73), general well-being (.79; .81), ability to control work (.89; .71), stress in work life (.70; .77), working conditions (.80; .80), family-work life balance (.91; .75), and overall quality of work life (.93; .88).

### **Cooperation Scale**

To assess the level of cooperation among teachers, the Cooperation Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran (2001) and adapted into Turkish by Cerit (2009) was employed. The scale utilizes a 5-point Likert type system. For the construct validity of the scale, factor analysis was conducted. The appropriateness of the data for factor analysis was confirmed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Sphericity tests, yielding significant results with a KMO of .92 and Bartlett Sphericity test ( $\chi^2: 1652.351, p: .000$ ). These findings affirm the scale's suitability for factor analysis. Factor analysis outcomes revealed that Tschannen-Moran's (2001) scale comprises three factors, supporting its three-factor structure. The scale encompasses the factors of cooperation with principals (5 items), cooperation with teachers (9 items), and cooperation with families (7 items). Factor load values for items constituting the cooperation dimension with principals ranged from .566 to .757, those for items related to cooperation with teachers varied between .503 and .851, and values for items within the cooperation dimension with families ranged from .454 to .836.

The variance explained by the factors for the scale was determined as follows: cooperation with principals 26.82%, cooperation with teachers 22.65%, cooperation with families 17.46%, and the total variance was 66.94%. For the reliability study of the Cooperation Scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for each dimension and for the entire scale. The analysis revealed alpha values of .85 for the cooperation with principals' factor (item total correlation between .606 and .708), .76 for the cooperation with teachers' factor (item total correlation between .520 and .639), .89 for the cooperation with families factor (item total correlation between .687 and .774), and an overall alpha value of .92 for the entire scale. The item-total correlation for the trust scale was found to range between .522 and .759.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The scales utilized in this research were disseminated to some teachers between October 4, 2021, and December 3, 2021, adhering to COVID-19 pandemic safety protocols. Data collection was conducted by distributing the scales in person to certain teachers and electronically to others. A total of 153 special education teachers were individually reached via Google Forms. The collected data from the participating teachers were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0. To assess the reliability of participants' responses to the scales, Cronbach's alpha test was applied, yielding an alpha coefficient of .935 for the Quality of Work Life Scale, .959 for the Cooperation Scale, and .962 for the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale. Using frequency analysis, the distribution of research participants' professors according to their sociodemographic attributes was looked at. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to determine if the participant scores on the Quality of Work Life Scale, Cooperation Scale, and Mobbing Scale adhered to a normal distribution. Descriptive statistics were given for these scores. The Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test were two nonparametric tests used for data analysis because the participant ratings on the scales did not show a normal distribution. The Spearman test was used to ascertain the correlations between the special education teachers' scores on the Cooperation Scale, Mobbing, and Quality of Work Life Scale.

## RESULTS

The scores that special education teachers received from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale are given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Scores of Special Education Teachers from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale**

	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Min	Max
Attacks on profession	153	1,45	0,62	1,00	3,50
Personal attacks	153	1,24	0,52	1,00	3,40
Attacks on social life	153	1,14	0,38	1,00	3,54
Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale	153	1,28	0,46	1,00	3,48

Table 2 shows that the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale's attacks on profession subdimension gave special education instructors an average score of  $1.45 \pm 0.62$  points, with a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 3.50. Furthermore, it was found that instructors had an average score of  $1.14 \pm 0.38$  points, minimum 1, highest 3, from the assaults on social life sub-dimension and  $1.24 \pm 0.52$  points, minimum 1, maximum 3.40 points, from the personal attacks sub-dimension. Additionally, it was found that their Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale score, which ranges from 1 to 3.48 points, was an average of  $1.28 \pm 0.46$ .

### Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Age Group

Comparison of the scores received by special education teachers from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale by age group is given in Table 3 using the Kruskal Wallis test.



**Table 3. Comparison of Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Age Group**

	Age	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	M	SO	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Attacks on profession	20-29 years	68	1,45	0,61	1,25	76,36	0,072	0,965
	30-39 years	57	1,47	0,69	1,19	76,80		
	40 years and above	28	1,39	0,45	1,25	78,96		
Personal attacks	20-29 years	68	1,20	0,49	1,00	74,18	0,848	0,654
	30-39 years	57	1,29	0,59	1,00	79,42		
	40 years and above	28	1,23	0,43	1,00	78,91		
Attacks on social life	20-29 years	68	1,19	0,45	1,00	79,52	2,579	0,275
	30-39 years	57	1,08	0,29	1,00	71,52		
	40 years and above	28	1,14	0,33	1,00	82,04		
<b>Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale</b>	20-29 years	68	1,28	0,49	1,08	75,66	0,341	0,843
	30-39 years	57	1,28	0,48	1,08	76,48		
	40 years and above	28	1,25	0,37	1,10	81,30		

Upon examining Table 3, it is evident that there is no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the scores obtained by the special education teachers under investigation from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale sub-dimensions, which include attacks on their social life, career, and personal life, and the overall Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores, based on their age group. Regardless of the age groups of special education teachers, it was found that the overall scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale and the scores of its sub-dimensions-attacks on their person, profession, and social life-were comparable.

#### **Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Gender**

The results regarding the comparison of the scores of special education teachers from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale by gender were obtained using the Mann Whitney U test and are given in Table 4.

**Table 4. Comparison of Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Gender**

	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	M	SO	Z	p
Attacks on profession	Female	93	1,51	0,69	1,19	78,80	-0,633	0,527
	Male	60	1,35	0,47	1,25	74,21		
Personal attacks	Female	93	1,29	0,58	1,00	79,38	-1,079	0,281
	Male	60	1,16	0,41	1,00	73,32		
Attacks on social life	Female	93	1,15	0,38	1,00	75,02	-0,916	0,360
	Male	60	1,12	0,37	1,00	80,07		
<b>Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale</b>	Female	93	1,32	0,51	1,08	78,85	-0,651	0,515
	Male	60	1,21	0,38	1,08	74,13		

When Table 4 was examined, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the general scores of the attacks on the profession, personal attacks, attacks

on the social life and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale of the special education teachers participating in the study according to gender ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Professional Seniority

The results regarding the comparison of the scores of special education teachers from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale by professional seniority were obtained using the Kruskal Wallis test and are given in Table 5.

**Table 5. Comparison of Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Professional Seniority**

	Professional seniority	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	M	SO	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Difference
Attacks on profession	1-5 years	76	1,36	0,46	1,25	73,20	1,157	0,561	
	6-10 years	28	1,55	0,77	1,19	79,84			
	11 years and above	49	1,52	0,71	1,25	81,28			
Personal attacks	1-5 years	76	1,11	0,30	1,00	68,32	10,022	0,007*	1-2
	6-10 years	28	1,39	0,70	1,00	87,38			1-3
	11 years and above	49	1,36	0,63	1,00	84,54			
Attacks on social life	1-5 years	76	1,12	0,31	1,00	74,88	1,254	0,534	
	6-10 years	28	1,21	0,61	1,00	75,09			
	11 years and above	49	1,13	0,29	1,00	81,39			
Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale	1-5 years	76	1,20	0,32	1,08	71,93	2,302	0,316	
	6-10 years	28	1,38	0,67	1,06	78,50			
	11 years and above	49	1,34	0,50	1,11	84,01			

\* $p < 0,05$

Upon reviewing Table 5, a statistically significant difference was identified in the scores of special education teachers participating in the study based on their professional seniority, specifically in the sub-dimension of personal attacks within the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). Special education teachers with 1-5 years of professional seniority exhibited statistically significantly lower scores in personal attacks compared to their counterparts with 6-10 years of professional seniority and 11 years or more of professional seniority. However, no statistically significant difference was found in the scores related to attacks on the profession and attacks on the social life of special education teachers, nor in the general scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale based on professional seniority ( $p > 0.05$ ). It was observed that special education teachers' general scores for attacks on their profession, attacks on their social life, and the overall Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale were similar, irrespective of their professional seniority.

### Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Educational Status

The results about the comparison of the scores of special education teachers from the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale by educational status were obtained using the Kruskal Wallis test and are given in Table 6.

**Table 6. Comparison of Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Educational Status**

	Educational status	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	M	SO	Z	p
Attacks on profession	Graduate	100	1,47	0,62	1,25	81,63	-1,795	0,073
	Postgraduate	53	1,40	0,62	1,13	68,26		
Personal attacks	Graduate	100	1,28	0,54	1,00	81,01	-2,009	0,045*
	Postgraduate	53	1,17	0,48	1,00	69,43		
Attacks on social life	Graduate	100	1,14	0,36	1,00	78,81	-0,924	0,355
	Postgraduate	53	1,14	0,40	1,00	73,58		
<b>Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale</b>	Graduate	100	1,30	0,46	1,08	83,06	-2,346	0,019*
	Postgraduate	53	1,24	0,48	1,04	65,58		

\* $p < 0,05$

Upon reviewing Table 6, a statistically significant difference was evident in the personal attacks and general scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale among the special education teachers in the study, based on their educational status ( $p < 0.05$ ). Graduate special education teachers displayed statistically significantly higher scores in personal attacks and the general Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale compared to their counterparts with postgraduate education. However, no statistically significant difference was observed in the scores related to attacks on the profession and attacks on social life among participating special education teachers, depending on their educational status ( $p > 0.05$ ). The scores of special education teachers with undergraduate and graduate degrees in the sub-dimensions of attacks on their profession and attacks on their social life were found to be similar.

### Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Marital Status

Table 7 presents the findings from the Kruskal Wallis test regarding the comparison of special education teachers' Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores by marital status.

**Table 7. Comparison of Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Marital Status**

	Marital status	n	$\bar{x}$	SS	M	SO	Z	p
Attacks on profession	Single	74	1,53	0,68	1,25	81,85	-1,326	0,185
	Married	79	1,37	0,55	1,19	72,46		
Personal attacks	Single	74	1,26	0,55	1,00	77,48	-0,169	0,866
	Married	79	1,22	0,49	1,00	76,55		
Attacks on social life	Single	74	1,18	0,40	1,00	80,94	-1,417	0,156
	Married	79	1,10	0,35	1,00	73,31		
<b>Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale</b>	Single	74	1,32	0,50	1,11	81,57	-1,249	0,212
	Married	79	1,23	0,42	1,07	72,72		

\* $p < 0,05$

Based on the marital status of the special education teachers in the study, Table 7 showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the general scores of the Mobbing

(Psychological Violence) Scale, personal attacks, attacks on social life, and attacks on the profession ( $p > 0.05$ ). Both married and single special education teachers received similar scores on the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale for attacks on their career, personal attacks, attacks on their social lives, and overall attacks.

### Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Daily Working Hours

Comparison of special education Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale impact scores according to daily working hours is given in table 8 using the Mann Whitney U test.

**Table 8: Comparison of Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale by Daily Working Hours**

	Daily working hours	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	M	SO	Z	p
Attacks on profession	5 hours and under	85	1,51	0,72	1,25	79,61	-0,824	0,410
	6 hours or more	68	1,38	0,45	1,19	73,74		
Personal attacks	5 hours and under	85	1,34	0,64	1,00	82,48	-2,235	0,025*
	6 hours or more	68	1,11	0,28	1,00	70,15		
Attacks on social life	5 hours and under	85	1,17	0,46	1,00	79,26	-0,941	0,347
	6 hours or more	68	1,10	0,24	1,00	74,17		
<b>Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale</b>	5 hours and under	85	1,34	0,57	1,08	80,75	-1,184	0,237
	6 hours or more	68	1,19	0,27	1,08	72,31		

\* $p < 0,05$

Upon reviewing Table 8, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores of special education teachers participating in the study, particularly in the sub-dimension of personal attacks within the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale, based on their daily working hours ( $p < 0.05$ ). The personal attack scores of teachers working 5 hours or less per day were statistically significantly higher than the personal attack scores of teachers working 6 hours or more per day. However, no statistically significant difference was observed in the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale sub-dimensions, namely attacks on the profession and attacks on social life, as well as the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale general scores, based on the daily working hours of special education teachers ( $p > 0.05$ ). Scores for attacks on the profession and attacks on social life, as well as the general Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores, were found to be similar for special education teachers working 5 hours or less daily and those working 6 hours or more.

### Comparison of the Relationship Between Special Education Teachers' Cooperation, Quality of Work Life Levels and Exposure to Mobbing

Table 9 shows the correlations between the special education instructors who took part in the study's Quality of Work Life Scale, Cooperation Scale, and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores.

**Table 9. Relationships Between Special Education Teachers' Scores from the Quality of Work Life Scale, Cooperation Scale and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale**

		Quality of Work Life Scale	Cooperation Scale	Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale
Quality of Work Life Scale	r	1	0,348	-0,548
	p	.	0,000*	0,000*
	n		153	153
Cooperation Scale	r		1	-0,119
	p			0,142
	n			153
Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale	r			1
	p			.
	n			

\* $p < 0,05$

Table 9 shows that among the special education instructors in the study, there is a positive and statistically significant link between the scores on the Quality of Work Life Scale and the scores on the Cooperation Scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests a correlation between higher Cooperation Scale scores and higher Quality of Work Life Scale scores for the participating special education instructors. On the other hand, a statistically significant and adverse link was discovered between the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores of special education instructors and the Quality of Work Life Scale scores ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Special education teachers' scores on the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale decline as their scores on the Quality of Work Life Scale rise. The Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores of the special education teachers and the Cooperation Scale scores show a negative link, but this correlation is not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Put another way, there is a correlation-though not a statistically significant one-between the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale scores and the Cooperation Scale scores of special education teachers.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The work life of special education teachers has a different dynamic than other professional groups, as they undertake the task of serving the most sensitive and needy individuals of society. Special education teachers bear a great responsibility to meet students' special needs, maximize their potential and help them better integrate into society. However, these teachers' experiences in business life are shaped by phenomena such as cooperation, quality of work life and the mobbing (psychological violence) they are exposed to. The challenges faced by special education teachers are not limited to the educational needs of students. At the same time, their cooperation with colleagues, quality of work life and mobbing experiences can affect the general well-being and productivity of these people. In this context, this study aimed to examine the relationship between special education teachers' level of cooperation, quality of work life and exposure to mobbing (Bozgeyikli, 2016). Another importance of this study is that it provides important information to understand and improve the work life experiences of special education teachers. Additionally, by evaluating the effects of negative experiences such as mobbing on cooperation levels and quality of work life, it aims to reveal the measures that can be taken to ensure that this professional group has a better working environment and professional satisfaction.

The study results indicated that there is no significant difference in the general scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale among special education teachers, regardless of their age group, as well as in the scores they received for the sub-dimensions of the scale, including attacks on their profession, personal attacks, and attacks on their social life. A review of the literature revealed consistent findings in studies conducted by Kopru (2022), Cam (2021), Yıldırım (2010), and Akgul (2020), where no significant difference was identified between the age variable and mobbing status. Additionally, Demir (2018) investigated the level of mobbing experienced by teachers and administrators in primary schools and found that individuals between the ages of 29-34 were more exposed to mobbing compared to other age groups. The varying outcomes in different studies suggest that the results may be influenced by the participation of teachers from diverse cultures and environments, and the way these teachers perceive mobbing behaviors.

According to the gender variable, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the general scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale and attacks on their social life, career, or personal life. The gender variable and mobbing status did not significantly differ, according to research by Cam (2021), Akgul (2020), Yıldırım (2010), Yılmaz (2019), and Kovacic, Podgornik, Zorica, and Raspor (2017) with the participation of instructors. Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the gender variable. In their study of 5288 workers across several industries, Hoel, Cooper, and Faragher (2001) discovered that women experienced mobbing more frequently than men. Male educators and administrators use mobbing more frequently than female educators and administrators, according to Erturk's 2007 research. According to the gender variable, Ozen (2009) discovered in his research that female counselors were more likely than male counselors to be victims of mobbing. Male instructors were shown to be more exposed to mobbing when Bulut and Koc (2009) looked at mobbing in secondary school teachers in relation to gender, age, and high school type characteristics. It is evident that various study outcomes are obtained. Given that women actively participate in daily life and that there is no prejudice against them, it is understandable why the gender variable was found to be ineffective in the studies carried out in TRNC. Examining research from the past to the present reveals that, in studies conducted more recently, gender discrimination has been proven to be notably inefficient. In this instance, it might allow us to demonstrate that gender discrimination has declined in the modern era.

According to the findings, there exists a statistically significant distinction in the scores related to personal attacks—a sub-dimension of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale—based on the variable of professional seniority. Specifically, teachers with 1-5 years of professional experience received significantly lower scores in personal attacks compared to those with 6-10 years and 11 or more years of seniority. However, no statistically significant differences were observed in teachers' scores regarding attacks on their profession, attacks on their social life, and their overall scores on the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale in relation to their professional seniority. This outcome aligns with prior research findings. For instance, Demir (2018) reported that teachers with 6-10 years of professional experience faced more instances of mobbing than their counterparts in different seniority groups. Ozturk (2018) indicated a correlation between the duration of working in the profession and susceptibility to mobbing, noting that early-career professionals were more vulnerable. Conversely, Mamac (2019) contradicted this trend, asserting that seniority had no discernible impact on the level of exposure to mobbing. A comprehensive examination of the literature reveals a diversity of outcomes regarding the influence of professional seniority on mobbing experiences. Notably,

some studies suggest that mobbing tends to escalate not in the initial years of employment but rather in subsequent periods. This pattern implies that, as employees accrue experience, they may be more inclined to engage in mobbing behavior, possibly driven by a perception of increased competence and competitiveness among their peers.

Moreover, the study's findings indicate a statistically significant disparity in personal attacks and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale general scores based on the educational qualifications of teachers. Specifically, special education teachers with a graduate degree exhibited significantly higher scores in personal attacks and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale general scores compared to their counterparts with a postgraduate degree. However, no statistically significant difference was observed in the scores of special education teachers across the sub-dimensions of attacks on their profession and attacks on their social life based on their educational levels. This trend is consistent with prior research, where Yıldırım (2010) found that female teachers with higher educational qualifications faced more instances of mobbing than other groups. Conversely, Kaya (2015) reported that teachers with undergraduate and associate degrees were more susceptible to mobbing compared to those with postgraduate degrees. There are also studies with conflicting results, such as Akgun's (2019) assertion that there is no discernible relationship between the mobbing experiences of classroom teachers and their educational levels. Similarly, Ugrasoglu and Caganaga (2017) demonstrated no significant correlation between the level of education and the occurrence of mobbing. Upon examination of the broader research landscape, it appears that recent studies show no clear relationship between educational levels and mobbing levels, whereas earlier studies suggest a varying relationship between mobbing levels and educational qualifications. In the context of this study, it is evident that undergraduate special education teachers experienced higher levels of mobbing compared to their graduate counterparts. This difference suggests that there may be a change in teachers' mobbing perceptions towards the behaviors applied to them due to the recent increase in their workload. In addition, considering that the cooperation levels of special education teachers with a master's degree are high in the study, it can be said that teachers with a high level of cooperation are less exposed to mobbing.

The results of the study indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the sub-dimensions of attacks on the profession, personal attacks, attacks on social life, and the general scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale among special education teachers based on their marital status. This aligns with similar findings in studies conducted by Kopru (2022), Usta (2021), and Cam (2021), all of which reported no discernible relationship between exposure to mobbing and marital status. Furthermore, Cengiz (2010) found no significant association between the marital status variable and mobbing behavior among primary school administrators in the dimensions of attack on social relations, attack on reputation, and attack in terms of duty, but did find a significant relationship in the attack on communication dimension. However, there are contrasting results in other studies. For instance, Solmaz (2015) discovered that mobbing was more prevalent among married employees, while Ozcelik (2015) focused on teachers and reported that single teachers experienced higher levels of mobbing. Additional studies by Bayraktar (2016) and Demir (2018) also found that marital status influenced the occurrence of mobbing. The conflicting results regarding the impact of marital status on mobbing exposure may stem from the diverse social and cultural elements present in the regions where the studies were conducted.

The research revealed a statistically significant difference in the scores related to personal attacks, a sub-dimension of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale, among the special education teachers, based on their daily working hours. Specifically, personal attack scores of special education teachers working 5 hours or less per day were found to be significantly higher than those of teachers working 6 hours or more per day. However, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the sub-dimensions of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale-attacks on one's profession and attacks on social life-and the general scores of the Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Scale based on teachers' daily working hours. Remarkably, upon reviewing the literature, no prior research exploring the relationship between mobbing and working hours was identified. The present study's findings highlight a noteworthy association, indicating that teachers working fewer hours experience higher levels of mobbing in the specific sub-dimension of attacks on individuals. This novel insight could potentially pave the way for further research on the intricate relationship between working hours and mobbing, contributing valuable information to the existing body of knowledge in this field.

The Quality of Work Life Scale and the Cooperation Scale scores among the participating special education teachers showed a positive and statistically significant link, according to an analysis of the study's correlation data. Stated differently, it was discovered that a rise in the Quality of Work Life Scale scores of the participating instructors was correlated with an increase in the Cooperation Scale scores. The present study is groundbreaking for future research endeavors in this area, as no previous studies examining the association between cooperation and quality of work life were found in the literature.

In a related study, Demir (2016) investigated how vocational high school instructors perceived their work-life balance and organizational commitment levels. The results showed that instructors generally had "medium" levels of perception on the quality of their work lives. While interactions with coworkers had a "high" impact on the quality of work life, stress levels, duties and tasks, managerial support, skill usage, and incentives were all rated as "medium." These results are consistent with the current investigation, indicating that interactions with coworkers and, consequently, cooperation are highly impacted by the quality of one's work life.

In the same way, Bozgeyikli (2018) looked at the connection between special education teachers' professional quality of life and their psychological requirements. The Psychological Needs Scale's subdimensions of dominance, relationship, and autonomy were found to be critical components of special education teachers' professional quality of life. The results of the current study confirm the significance of interpersonal relationships in determining the quality of one's working life. Since collaboration depends on having solid interpersonal ties, it follows that there is a substantial correlation between cooperation and the quality of one's working life. To sum up, the findings of this study indicate that special education teachers' job satisfaction and comfort level are positively correlated with their productivity and level of collaboration with coworkers and staff.

The study revealed a negative and statistically significant correlation between the Quality of Work Life Scale scores and Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale scores among special education teachers. Specifically, as the scores on the Quality of Work Life Scale increased, the scores on the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale decreased. This aligns with the findings of Yılmaz (2019), who identified a negative relationship between teachers' exposure to mobbing and their levels of work life quality. Onturk (2019) also explored the link between mobbing behaviors and quality of work life, concluding that academicians subjected



to mobbing experienced lower levels of work life quality. Similarly, Srivastava and Agarwal's study (2020) in India found that teachers exhibited low levels of psychological well-being and work life quality. Yuceturk's investigation in Turkey (2005) portrayed mobbing as a hidden syndrome diminishing the quality of work life and productivity, highlighting that employees subjected to mobbing were unhappy in their professional lives, faced difficulties in focusing on their work, and witnessed a decline in job performance. The impact of malevolent behavior in the workplace on the quality of work life is a consistent theme across these studies. These study findings underscore the direct influence of mobbing on the quality of work life. Considering the potentially heightened stress levels experienced by special education teachers in comparison to their counterparts in other domains, it becomes evident that special attention should be given to the work life quality of these educators (Karaca, 2024). Consequently, there is a need for proactive measures to protect special education teachers from mobbing, acknowledging its detrimental effects on their overall work life quality.

A negative correlation exists between special education teachers' Cooperation Scale scores and Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale scores, although this correlation is not statistically significant. In other words, as the Cooperation Scale scores of special education teachers increase, there is a trend of decreasing scores on the Psychological Violence (Mobbing) Scale, though this relationship does not reach statistical significance. The literature reveals a limited number of studies investigating the connection between mobbing and cooperation. For instance, Akgul (2020) found that an increase in the perception of mobbing is associated with heightened loneliness and negatively impacts social friendships. Similarly, Guven (2019) asserted that individuals subjected to mobbing experience psychological exhaustion, a lack of trust in those around them, and diminished work performance. Kirel (2007) discovered that in institutions lacking a corporate culture and featuring indifferent managers towards mobbing, communication weakens, and harmful competition increases, consequently fostering mobbing behaviors. As a preventive measure, Kirel (2007) suggested that face-to-face communication among individuals can help mitigate mobbing behaviors. Da Fonte and Barton-Arwood (2017) conducted a comprehensive review on the cooperation of both general and special education teachers, exploring their perspectives and strategies. The review revealed that employing strategies to alleviate fears and potential obstacles in school environments effectively prevents the emergence of negative emotions and fosters successful cooperation. Building on this notion, Mercanlioglu (2010) emphasized that mobbing behaviors not only disrupt positive workplace environments but also exact a toll on employees physically and psychologically, potentially affecting individuals, their families, and society as a whole. To establish cooperation in the work environment, it is crucial for the workplace to be emotionally and physically conducive. Eliminating behaviors that create a perception of mobbing is integral to cultivating an environment suitable for cooperation. Although the present study did not identify a statistically significant difference between cooperation and mobbing, it is noteworthy that an increase in the cooperation score was associated with a decrease in the mobbing score. In alignment with findings from other relevant studies, it can be inferred that mobbing behaviors tend to decrease in environments characterized by positive human relations and cooperation. The emphasis on establishing and maintaining positive relationships, as highlighted in the literature and supported by the present study's trends, underscores the importance of fostering cooperative and supportive work environments to mitigate the occurrence of mobbing behaviors.

## ETHICAL INFORMATION REGARDING RESEARCH

Ethics committee approval for the research was received from the Cyprus International University Rectorate Ethics Committee with the decision dated 11.11.2021 and numbered 020-9807.

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