

Examining the Relationship between Academic Mobbing and Meaningful Work in Universities¹

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between academic mobbing and meaningful work according to the views of academics. The research sample of the study consists of 489 academicians working at various state universities in Turkey. Research data were collected through e-mail using academic mobbing and meaningful work scales. The t-test was used for pairwise comparisons between variables. One-way ANOVA was preferred in triple or more comparisons. Pearson correlation test was used to reveal the relationship between academic mobbing and meaningful work. Also, regression analysis was used to determine whether academic mobbing predicts meaningful work. According to the results of the research, while the academics found their professions to be moderately-high-level meaningful, they stated that they perceived academic mobbing at a medium-low level. It was observed that there were differences in the high motivation dimension of the meaningful work according to the gender variable and that there were differences between the views of male and female academicians in all dimensions of academic mobbing, except for the dimension of attacks on social relations. According to the gender variable, it was observed that there were differences between the opinions of female and male academics in the high motivation dimension of meaningful work and in all dimensions of academic mobbing except the dimension of attacks on social relations. According to the title variable, it was found that academicians with a high title in all dimensions, except for high motivation, found their works more meaningful. Still, the perception of academic mobbing did not differ according to the title. In addition, it was found that there is a significant and negative relationship between academic mobbing and meaningful work. What is more, academic mobbing was found to predict meaningful work. Based on these results, some suggestions have been made for practitioners and researchers conducting similar studies.

Keywords: Academic Mobbing, Academician, Meaningful Work, University



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INTRODUCTION

Individuals spend most of their time as members of an economic, cultural, or religious organization in the modern world built on social and psychological interactions. According to [Steger, Dik, and Duffy \(2012\)](#), individuals search for meaning in life in general and organizational life. [Hackman and Oldham \(1975\)](#) also define meaningful work as employees' perception of their work as valuable, helpful, and meaningful, stating that they do not see the work they do only as a means of making money but rather attach importance to their work. Because working just to survive does not make work meaningful. Therefore, meaningful work is related to motives beyond basic needs ([Martela & Steger, 2016](#)). To achieve both individual goals and contribute to the realization of organizational goals, it is essential that they feel happy and cooperate in the organization. Since individuals spend a significant part of their daily lives in the organizational environment, individuals may not always be happy or cooperative as a natural consequence of organizational life. Reasons such as greed and competitive environment, problems at the management level, jealousy or individual goals lead to organizational conflicts. The fact that these conflicts cannot be adequately managed also causes many psycho-social problems. Mobbing, accepted as a moral and legal situation that negatively affects organizational productivity, is one of these problems. According to [Tinaz \(2011\)](#), mobbing is a situation that is constantly present in organizational life and that everyone can be exposed to regardless of demographic differences. Mobbing, although its presence is felt, it is a chaotic phenomenon that cannot be expressed clearly due to the complex nature of social relations and is almost avoided to be revealed. In addition, mobbing can be encountered in almost all kinds of organizations and sectors, from bureaucratic organizations to non-governmental organizations, from large-scale factories to small businesses where not many people work, and from the health sector to the education sector.

Meaningfulness, characterized as a tool in organizing life, is the harmony of the goals, values, and relationships in the individual's life ([Vogler & Pahl, 1994](#)). Meaningful work is related to the fact that the work done serves a greater purpose than individual interests ([Martela & Steger, 2016](#)). According to [Fairlie \(2011\)](#), for the work to gain meaning, the work must be in harmony with the self and identity of the individuals working there. In addition, the more the individual values of the employees and the requirements of the work are compatible with each other, the more meaningful the work increases ([May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004](#)). From this point of view, meaningfulness stems from the membership of the employees in a social community and their individual identity and adaptation to the organization and the work ([Fairlie, 2011](#)). In addition, for individuals to find meaningfulness in their work, it is necessary to have some characteristics. The work itself is the primary element that ensures meaningful work ([Hackman & Oldham, 1975](#)). In this sense, the academic profession, which provides the opportunity for individuals to improve themselves constantly, is one of the professions with high meaning in terms of deep searching for meaning and purpose ([Rosovsky, 1990](#)). Although individuals' attitudes towards their works and the meaning they attribute differ, finding the work they do meaningful will contribute to the academics' higher quality research, more qualified projects, and more innovative ideas, and will increase their performance in terms of publication and citation. On the other hand, mobbing and similar negative organizational experiences will cause academicians to not evaluate their profession as a meaningful one in their minds and to turn academic professions into any profession that helps to sustain life. Naturally, this will gradually decrease the depth of the academic profession and decrease the intellectual performance of the academician ([Hagedorn, 2012](#)).

Organizational mobbing, with its general definition, is when one or more employees bring some employees together against another employee with or without their demands, engage in acts that damage his reputation and create a stressful organizational environment, forcing the victim to quit the work ([Davenport, Schwartz & Elliott, 1999](#)). [Leymann \(1996\)](#), on the other hand, defined mobbing as hostile and immoral behaviours systematically carried out by others to put the employee in a helpless situation. The distinguishing feature of mobbing, as psychological violence, from the ongoing conflicts between two employees, is that it consists of behavioral patterns that develop systematically, are long-lasting, and cause various harms to the employee in terms of results ([Baillien & De Witte, 2009](#)). The purpose of mobbing, which can be applied to the employee by his managers, subordinates, or other employees with the same status, is to harm the mental integrity of the employee. In this regard, it is aimed that the victim loses their self-confidence, loses their self-esteem, and leaves the organization.

(Duffy & Sperry, 2007). From another point of view, it is not only the perpetrator of mobbing who attacks the victim. In this type of behaviours, mobbing forces other employees who influence them to attack the target employee in order for the attack to be more effective. This situation makes the victim much more helpless. (Davenport et al., 1999).

According to Ahmad, Kalim, and Kaleem (2017) and Keashly and Neuman (2010), universities are at the forefront of organizations with the highest risk of mobbing due to uneven power distribution. However, there is much human interaction. According to Keim and McDermott (2010), mobbing at the university is related to the organization's hierarchical structure, and academics working at lower levels are more exposed to mobbing than those with higher status. According to Orhan (2009), behaviours such as mobbing are frequently encountered in universities in Turkey. Some of them are recruiting staff to departments that are not needed instead of needed departments, preventing academic advancement, teaching non-expertise courses, spreading gossip, and putting pressure on others to make decisions against target academics. Many problems, especially in Turkey and around the world, cause academic mobbing in universities, such as the need of those with administrative duties to prove their power, and the exclusion of those with different political views due to the concern of academic staff (McKay, Arnold, Fratzi, & Thomas, 2008), and the superior-subordinate relationship that emerges according to the academic title, the organizational structure's tolerance to mobbing (Baillien & De Witte, 2009), competition among academic staff and envy of their colleagues' success, status and role differences, difficulty in promotion and appointment criteria, demanding academic career, non-renewal of contracts, problems in personnel rights (Keashly et al. Neuman, 2010), the strict hierarchical structure, the extraordinary powers of the rectors (Lewis, 2004), due to the hierarchical structure, administrators can make practices that are undemocratic and against the law and academic norms (Keim & McDermott, 2010), the career advancement of academics is often left to the personal initiative of superiors (Çögenli & Asunakutlu, 2016). The phenomenon of academic mobbing damages the institutional image of universities, where objectivity and free thought should prevail. Also, it causes an increase in the number of academics working with loyalty and dependency instead of self-confident academics who can think freely (Westhues, 2008). In addition, the process that develops with the increasing difficulty of the relationships that academics experience in their organizations and the increasing belief that something is going wrong confronts academics with the problem of burnout. Despite these problems, academicians who do not quit their professions are alienated from their professions. Moreover, long sick leave, absenteeism, work change and a decrease in working performance can be counted among the most common effects of mobbing in universities (Lewis, 2004).

Teaching profession has always been seen as meaningful work for societies and individuals in the historical process. In this context, it can be said that the search for deep meaning and purpose should be experienced intensely in the academic profession. In academics, whose duty is to teach and research, it is meaningful to individuals because it is a profession that works with people rather than objects. It provides a positive change in people's lives. An oppressive atmosphere and organizational conflicts are the leading obstacles for academicians to find their work meaningful (Hagedorn, 2012). From this point of view, it is thought that academic mobbing, which is the subject of the research, caused by an oppressive atmosphere and organizational conflicts, will negatively affect the academics' view of their work as meaningful. Because academic mobbing consists of complex and obsessive behaviours such as unfair accusation, humiliation, exclusion, and social harassment that academicians do to emotionally wear out their other colleagues (Beng, 2010). These behaviours cause academicians not to perceive their profession as meaningful and to see it as just a profession. Therefore, it leads to a gradual decrease in the depth of academia and decreases in performance. It can be said that academics, who are the focus of the study, work in a complex organizational environment considering their relations with other academics, students, and university/faculty administration on the one hand and their professional development and academic career studies on the other. From this perspective, it is thought that it will be helpful to determine how meaningful the academicians working in such an environment find their work and to determine whether mobbing, which is one of the pathological features of organizational life, really prevents this situation of attribution.

On the other hand, when the related literature is analyzed, it is seen that although mobbing has been relatively studied in academician samples, the two variables, which are thought to be important for

all occupational groups, have been studied mostly in teacher samples and with different variables in the education sector. This situation has been a motivating factor for this research, which deals with both variables together, to be carried out on academicians. Therefore, this study, which is expected to contribute to the management and organizational behaviours literature, aims to examine the relationship between academic mobbing and job meaningfulness. Within the framework of this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. At what level do academicians find their works meaningful?
2. What is the level of academicians' perceptions about academic mobbing in universities?
3. Do academicians' perception levels of meaningful work and mobbing differ according to gender, age, and title demographic variables?
4. Is there a statistically significant relationship between meaningful work and academic mobbing?
5. Does academic mobbing statistically predict meaningful work?

METHOD

In this study, since the relationship between academic mobbing and meaningful work was examined, the relational screening model was used. The relational screening model is called the model that determines whether there is any change between two or more variables and if there is a change, it aims to determine its level (Karasar, 2007). This model consists of arrangements made on a sample to be taken from the universe to reach a common opinion about a universe consisting of many people (Yildirim & Şimşek, 2016). The dependent variable of the study is the significance of the profession, and the independent variables are academic mobbing and demographic characteristics of academicians such as gender, age, and title.

Population and Sample

The research population consists of 113432 academicians working in the faculties of state universities in Turkey in the 2020-2021 academic year (HEIMS, 2021). Accordingly, the minimum number of people to be reached at the 95% confidence level was calculated as 383 using the sample size calculation formula. While determining the research sample, the convenience sampling technique was used. The convenience sampling technique is carried out by reaching the universe units that the researcher can easily reach (Karasar, 2007). Data were collected from 489 academicians through e-mail in the study. In Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the academicians participating in the research are as follows.

Table 1. Distribution of participants regarding demographic variables

| Variable | Category | f | % |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 298 | 60,9 |
| | Female | 191 | 39,1 |
| Age | x<30 | 32 | 6,5 |
| | 31-40 | 178 | 36,4 |
| | 41-50 | 171 | 35,0 |
| | 51<x | 108 | 22,1 |
| Title | Research Assist. | 95 | 19,4 |
| | Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 38,0 |
| | Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 22,3 |
| | Prof. Dr. | 99 | 20,2 |
| Total | | 489 | 100 |

As can be seen in Table 3.1, 298 of the academic staff participating in the study are male, and 191 are female. 32 of them are under the age of thirty, 178 are between the ages of thirty-one and forty, 171 are between the ages of forty-one and fifty, and 108 are over the age of fifty-one. 95 of the participants are Research Assistants, and 186 of them are Assist. Prof. Dr., 109 of them are Assoc. Prof. Dr. and 99 of them are Prof. Dr.

Data Collection Tools

Academic mobbing scale: Developed by Çögenli and Asunakutlu (2014), the scale consists of 5 dimensions and 23 statements, and these are “attacks on self-disclosure and communication, attacks on social relations, attacks on reputation, attacks on professional status, and attacks on the psychological health of the person”. A total score can be obtained from the scale. There are 6 expressions in the first dimension, 4 in the second, 3 in the third, 7 in the fourth, and 3 in the fifth dimension. There is no reverse coded expression in the scale. The scale is evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type rating. Goodness of fit values of the scale were determined as $\chi^2/sd= 1.92$, RMSEA= .077, CFI= .97, IFI= .81, NFI= .94, NNFI= .96, SRMR= .061 (Çögenli & Asunakutlu, 2014). In the present study, the scale’s validity was not repeated because it had been done in a similar sample before (Çögenli & Asunakutlu, 2014); only its reliability was recalculated. According to the results of the reliability analysis, it was seen that the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients ranged from .78 to .89.

The meaningful work scale: The scale developed by Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012) was adapted into Turkish by Akin, Hamedoğlu, Kaya, and Sarıçam (2013). The scale consists of 3 dimensions and 10 statements. The first dimension, positive meaning, was represented by the 1st, 4th, 5th, and 8th statements, the second dimension, the meaningful work, was represented by the 2nd, 7th, and 9th statements, and the third dimension, high motivation, was represented by the 3rd, 6th, and 10th statements. A total score can be obtained from the scale. The third statement in the scale is reverse coded. The scale is evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type rating. Goodness of fit values of the scale were determined as $\chi^2/sd= 2.15$, RMSEA= .087, CFI= .98, IFI= .98, NFI= .94, NNFI= .96, SRMR= .057 (Akin et al., 2013). In the present study, since the validity studies of the scale had been done in similar samples before (Akin et al., 2013), it was not repeated; only its reliability was recalculated. According to the results of the reliability analysis, it was seen that the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients ranged from .83 to .91.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected in the online system with the consent of the academicians. The analyses carried out to solve the research problems are as follows: (i) The average scores and standard deviations obtained from the scale dimensions were examined to determine the academicians’ views on meaningful work and their perceptions of academic mobbing. The rating ranges used in the statistical analysis of academicians’ scores on meaningful work and academic mobbing are given in Table 2. (ii) The independent sample t-test was used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the meaningful work and the scores obtained by the academics from the academic mobbing scales according to the gender variable, and the One-Way ANOVA test was used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences according to the age and title variables. (iii) Correlation analysis was conducted to examine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between meaningful work and the scores they get from academic mobbing scales. A correlation value of 0.29 and below indicates a low level of relationship, a value between 0.30 and 0.70 indicates a moderate relationship, and a value between 0.71-1.00 indicates a high level of relationship (Büyükoztürk, 2017). (iv) Multiple linear regression analysis was used to check whether academics’ academic mobbing scores predicted the meaningful work scores statistically.

Table 2. Rating ranges of scales

| Range | Likert-type | Level |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1.00-1.79 | (1) Never | Low |
| 1.80-2.59 | (2) Rarely | Medium-Low |
| 2.60-3.39 | (3) Sometimes | Medium |
| 3.40-4.19 | (4) Often | Medium-High |
| 4.20-5.00 | (5) Always | High |

FINDINGS

1. Descriptive Findings regarding Dependent and Independent Variables

The first descriptive finding in Table 3 is related to the meaning of the work. Accordingly, it has been determined that the academicians' scores in the dimensions of positive meaning and meaningful work are high. In contrast, their scores in the dimensions of high motivation and the meaning of the work (total) are medium-high.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis results regarding the meaningful work and academic mobbing dimensions

| Dimension | f | Mean | SD | Level |
|---|-----|------|------|-------------|
| Positive Meaning | 489 | 4,33 | 0,62 | High |
| The Meaningful Work | 489 | 4,23 | 0,72 | High |
| High Motivation | 489 | 3,39 | 0,48 | Medium-High |
| The Meaningful Work (Total) | 489 | 4,02 | 0,53 | Medium-High |
| Attacks on Self-Presentation and Communication | 489 | 1,85 | 0,82 | Medium-Low |
| Attacks on Social Relationships | 489 | 2,03 | 1,04 | Medium-Low |
| Attacks on Reputation | 489 | 1,82 | 0,83 | Medium-Low |
| Attacks on Professional Status | 489 | 1,80 | 0,83 | Medium-Low |
| Attacks on the Psychological Health of the Individual | 489 | 1,90 | 0,94 | Medium-Low |
| Academic Mobbing (Total) | 489 | 1,87 | 0,81 | Medium-Low |

Another descriptive finding in Table 2 is related to academic mobbing. Accordingly, it was determined that the scores in attacks on self-presentation and communication, attacks on social relationships, attacks on reputation, attacks on professional status, and attacks on the psychological health of the individual dimensions were medium-low, and academic mobbing (total) scores were medium-low.

2. Findings regarding Demographic Variables

2.1. Findings regarding Gender Variable: As seen in Table 4, as a result of the analyses made for the gender variable, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the opinions of male and female academics in the dimensions of high motivation from the dimensions of the meaningful work, and attacks on self-presentation and communication, attacks on reputation, attacks on professional status, attacks on the psychological health of the individual and academic mobbing (total) from the dimensions of academic mobbing. In the high motivation dimension, male academics see their professions as more meaningful than female academics.

Table 4. Independent sample t test results regarding gender variable

| Dimension | Gender | f | Mean. | SD | DF | p |
|---|--------|-----|-------|------|-----|-------------|
| Positive Meaning | Male | 298 | 4,33 | 0,62 | 487 | 0,85 |
| | Female | 191 | 4,34 | 0,61 | 407 | |
| The Meaningful Work | Male | 298 | 4,26 | 0,71 | 487 | 0,28 |
| | Female | 191 | 4,19 | 0,75 | 389 | |
| High Motivation | Male | 298 | 3,44 | 0,45 | 487 | 0,00 |
| | Female | 191 | 3,31 | 0,51 | 370 | |
| The Meaningful Work (Total) | Male | 298 | 4,04 | 0,51 | 487 | 0,24 |
| | Female | 191 | 3,99 | 0,54 | 389 | |
| Attacks on Self-Presentation and Communication | Male | 298 | 1,78 | 0,75 | 487 | 0,01 |
| | Female | 191 | 1,97 | 0,90 | 353 | |
| Attacks on Social Relationships | Male | 298 | 1,99 | 1,02 | 487 | 0,24 |
| | Female | 191 | 2,10 | 1,08 | 389 | |
| Attacks on Reputation | Male | 298 | 1,76 | 0,78 | 487 | 0,03 |
| | Female | 191 | 1,93 | 0,89 | 364 | |
| Attacks on Professional Status | Male | 298 | 1,73 | 0,76 | 487 | 0,02 |
| | Female | 191 | 1,91 | 0,91 | 352 | |
| Attacks on the Psychological Health of the Individual | Male | 298 | 1,82 | 0,86 | 487 | 0,02 |
| | Female | 191 | 2,03 | 1,04 | 350 | |
| Academic Mobbing (Total) | Male | 298 | 1,80 | 0,75 | 487 | 0,02 |
| | Female | 191 | 1,98 | 0,88 | 359 | |

p<.05

In contrast, female academics think that they are subjected to academic mobbing more in the mobbing dimensions of attacks on self-presentation and communication, attacks on reputation, attacks on professional status, attacks on the psychological health of the individual and academic mobbing (total). Also, according to Table 3, no statistically significant differences were found between the opinions of female and male academics in the dimensions of positive meaning, meaningful work, and meaningful work (total), which are among the dimensions of meaningful work, and attacks on self-presentation and communication, which are among the dimensions of academic mobbing. In other words, it can be said that the opinions of female and male academics are similar to each other in these dimensions.

2.2. Findings regarding Age Variable: Table 5 shows no statistically significant differences in positive meaning and high motivation dimensions of the meaningful work according to age. In these dimensions, it can be said that academics attribute a similar level of meaning to their professions. However, statistically, significant differences were found in the dimensions of meaning added by work and meaningful work (total) according to age. Games-Howell test, one of the Post-Hoc tests, was conducted to determine the difference between the groups. According to the test results, in the dimensions of meaningful work and meaningful work (total), academics aged 41-50 see their professions as more meaningful than academics aged 31-40.

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA results regarding the age variable

| Dimension | Age | f | Mean | SD | F | p | Difference |
|---|-----------|-----|------|------|------|-------------|------------|
| Positive Meaning | (1) x<30 | 32 | 4,25 | 0,55 | 1,91 | 0,12 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 4,26 | 0,56 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 4,41 | 0,61 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 4,35 | 0,71 | | | |
| The Meaningful Work | (1) x<30 | 32 | 4,13 | 0,67 | 4,02 | 0,00 | 2<3 |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 4,10 | 0,77 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 4,36 | 0,64 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 4,27 | 0,76 | | | |
| High Motivation | (1) x<30 | 32 | 3,35 | 0,49 | 0,96 | 0,40 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 3,36 | 0,45 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 3,39 | 0,48 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 3,46 | 0,51 | | | |
| The Meaningful Work (Total) | (1) x<30 | 32 | 3,94 | 0,46 | 2,66 | 0,04 | 2<3 |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 3,94 | 0,51 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 4,09 | 0,51 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 4,06 | 0,58 | | | |
| Attacks on Self-Presentation and Communication | (1) x<30 | 32 | 1,83 | 0,79 | 2,28 | 0,07 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 1,90 | 0,82 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 1,91 | 0,86 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 1,67 | 0,73 | | | |
| Attacks on Social Relationships | (1) x<30 | 32 | 2,04 | 0,98 | 0,56 | 0,64 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 2,06 | 1,05 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 2,07 | 1,08 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 1,92 | 1,00 | | | |
| Attacks on Reputation | (1) x<30 | 32 | 1,97 | 0,73 | 1,08 | 0,35 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 1,84 | 0,87 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 1,85 | 0,85 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 1,71 | 0,74 | | | |
| Attacks on Professional Status | (1) x<30 | 32 | 1,83 | 0,80 | 2,89 | 0,03 | 4<3 4<2 |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 1,85 | 0,84 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 1,87 | 0,88 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 1,60 | 0,68 | | | |
| Attacks on the Psychological Health of the Individual | (1) x<30 | 32 | 1,82 | 0,88 | 0,60 | 0,60 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 1,93 | 0,97 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 1,94 | 0,98 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 1,81 | 0,81 | | | |
| Academic Mobbing (Total) | (1) x<30 | 32 | 1,88 | 0,72 | 1,73 | 0,15 | |
| | (2) 31-40 | 178 | 1,91 | 0,83 | | | |
| | (3) 41-50 | 171 | 1,92 | 0,86 | | | |
| | (4) 51<x | 108 | 1,71 | 0,71 | | | |

p<.05

Within the scores given by the academics on the mobbing scale, statistically, significant differences were not found in the dimensions of attacks on self-presentation and communication, attacks on social relations, attacks on reputation, attacks on the psychological health of the individual and academic mobbing (total), but statistically significant differences were found only in the dimension of attacks on professional status. Games-Howell test, which is one of the Post-Hoc tests, was performed to determine the difference between the groups. According to the results of the test, it was found that the scores of academics over the age of 51 were lower than the scores of academics aged 31-40 and 41-50. Accordingly, it can be said that in the dimension of attacks on professional status, academics over the age of 51 have lower mobbing perceptions than academics aged 31-40 and 41-50. In other dimensions, academics have similar academic mobbing perceptions regardless of age.

2.3. Findings regarding the Title Variable: As seen in Table 6, in the high motivation dimension, which is one of the dimensions of meaningful work, statistically, there is no difference between the scores of the academicians according to their titles. Also, in the high motivation dimension, academics find their professions meaningful at similar levels regardless of their title.

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA results regarding the title variable

| Dimension | Title | f | Mean | SD | F | p | Difference |
|---|-----------------------|-----|------|------|------|-------------|------------|
| Positive Meaning | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 4,22 | 0,61 | 6,48 | 0,00 | 1<3 |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 4,24 | 0,61 | | | 1<4 |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 4,46 | 0,58 | | | 2<3 |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 4,49 | 0,63 | | | 2<4 |
| The Meaningful Work | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 4,14 | 0,83 | 2,88 | 0,03 | 2<4 |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 4,15 | 0,72 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 4,33 | 0,65 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 4,35 | 0,69 | | | |
| High Motivation | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 3,39 | 0,46 | 0,94 | 0,42 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 3,36 | 0,50 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 3,39 | 0,45 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 3,46 | 0,50 | | | |
| The Meaningful Work (Total) | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 3,94 | 0,54 | 4,43 | 0,00 | 1<4 |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 3,95 | 0,53 | | | 2<4 |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 4,10 | 0,49 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 4,14 | 0,51 | | | |
| Attacks on Self-Presentation and Communication | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 1,86 | 0,89 | 0,92 | 0,42 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 1,90 | 0,79 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 1,85 | 0,84 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 1,74 | 0,76 | | | |
| Attacks on Social Relationships | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 2,01 | 1,06 | 0,97 | 0,40 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 2,08 | 1,07 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 2,09 | 1,01 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 1,88 | 1,01 | | | |
| Attacks on Reputation | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 1,91 | 0,83 | 0,53 | 0,66 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 1,81 | 0,84 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 1,82 | 0,84 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 1,76 | 0,79 | | | |
| Attacks on Professional Status | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 1,90 | 0,87 | 1,81 | 0,14 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 1,82 | 0,85 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 1,82 | 0,82 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 1,64 | 0,73 | | | |
| Attacks on the Psychological Health of the Individual | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 1,89 | 0,96 | 1,38 | 0,24 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 2,00 | 0,98 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 1,83 | 0,96 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 1,79 | 0,79 | | | |
| Academic Mobbing (Total) | (1) Research Assist. | 95 | 1,91 | 0,84 | 1,05 | 0,36 | |
| | (2) Assist. Prof. Dr. | 186 | 1,91 | 0,82 | | | |
| | (3) Assoc. Prof. Dr. | 109 | 1,88 | 0,81 | | | |
| | (4) Prof. Dr. | 99 | 1,74 | 0,74 | | | |

p<.05

Statistically, significant differences were found between the scores in the dimensions of positive meaning, meaningful work, and meaningful work (total). Games-Howell test, one of the Post-Hoc tests,

was performed to determine the difference between the groups. According to the test results, in the positive meaning dimension, statistically significant differences were found between the scores of research assistants and associate professors and professors and also between the scores of assistant professors and associate professors and professors. Considering this finding, it can be said that professors and associate professors find their professions more meaningful than research assistants and assistant professors in the positive meaning dimension. In the dimension of meaningful work, statistically significant differences were observed between the scores of assistant professors and professors. In addition, it can be said that professors find their professions more meaningful than assistant professors in the dimension of the meaningful work. In the dimension of meaningful work (total), statistically significant differences were found between the scores of research assistants and doctoral faculty members and the scores of professors. Based on this finding, it can be said that professors find their professions more meaningful than research assistants and assistant professors in the dimension of meaningful work (total). When the results of the analyses related to the title variable were examined in terms of mobbing, there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of academics in any dimension. Therefore, it can be said that the mobbing perceptions of academics with different titles are similar to each other.

3. Findings Related to the Correlation Between Dependent and Independent Variables

According to the findings given in Table 7, it is determined that there are low level and negative statistically significant relationships between all dimensions of mobbing and all dimensions of meaningful work.

Table 7. Correlation analysis results regarding the meaningful work and academic mobbing dimensions

| Factors | Mob-1 | Mob-2 | Mob-3 | Mob-4 | Mob-5 | Mob-Sum |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Mw-1 | -.236** | -.211** | -.229** | -.252** | -.227** | -.252** |
| Mw-2 | -.230** | -.178** | -.210** | -.221** | -.184** | -.222** |
| Mw-3 | -.151** | -.132** | -.141** | -.133** | -.140** | -.152** |
| Mw-Sum | -.245** | -.206** | -.231** | -.242** | -.217** | -.248** |

Mw-1: Positive Meaning, Mw-2: The Meaningful work, Mw-3: High Motivation, Mw-Sum: Meaningful Work-Total, Mob-1: Attacks on Self-Presentation and Communication, Mob-2: Attacks on Social Relationships, Mob-3: Attacks on Reputation, Mob-4: Attacks on Professional Status, Mob-5: Attacks on Psychological Health of the Individual, Mob-Sum: Mobbing-Total

** 0,01

Based on this finding, it can be said that as the mobbing perceptions of academicians begin to increase, the meaning they attribute to their work will decrease partially, or the meaning that academicians attribute to their work will partially increase as their mobbing perceptions begin to decrease.

4. Findings Regarding the Testing of the Research Model

According to Table 8, a positive and low-level ($R=.263$, $R^2=.069$; $p<0.01$) relationship was found between positive meaning and academic mobbing dimensions. However, the model was statistically significant ($F=11.12$; $p=0.00$) and explained 7% of the total variance in the positive meaning dimension of academic mobbing. A positive and low-level ($R=.249$, $R^2=.062$; $p < 0.01$) relationship was found between the meaningful work and the dimensions of academic mobbing. In addition, the model was statistically significant and explained 6% of the total variance in the positive meaning dimension of academic mobbing. A positive and low level ($R=.161$, $R^2=.028$; $p=0.01$) relationship was found between high motivation and academic mobbing dimensions. In addition, the model was statistically significant ($F=3.98$; $p=0.01$) and explained 3% of the total variance in the positive meaning dimension of academic mobbing. A positive and low level ($R=.263$, $R^2=.069$; $p<0.01$) relationship was found between the meaningful work (total) and academic mobbing dimensions. In addition, the model was statistically significant ($F=11.13$; $p=0.00$) and academic mobbing explained 7% of the total variance in the meaningful work.

Table 8. Regression Analysis Results (Academic Mobbing Independent – The Meaningful Work Dependent)

| The Meaningful work | Academic Mobbing | B | SE | R | R ² | F | p |
|---------------------|------------------|-------|------|------|----------------|-------|-------------|
| Mw-1 | Constant | 3.513 | .032 | .263 | .069 | 11.12 | .000 |
| | Mob-1 | -.084 | .060 | | | | |
| | Mob-2 | .059 | .048 | | | | |
| | Mob-3 | -.022 | .054 | | | | |
| | Mob-4 | -.126 | .067 | | | | |
| | Mob-5 | -.047 | .040 | | | | |
| Mw-2 | Constant | 3.413 | .039 | .249 | .062 | 9.89 | .000 |
| | Mob-1 | -.198 | .071 | | | | |
| | Mob-2 | .125 | .058 | | | | |
| | Mob-3 | -.053 | .064 | | | | |
| | Mob-4 | -.116 | .079 | | | | |
| | Mob-5 | -.012 | .048 | | | | |
| Mw-3 | Constant | 2.484 | .026 | .161 | .028 | 3.98 | .001 |
| | Mob-1 | -.074 | .047 | | | | |
| | Mob-2 | .009 | .038 | | | | |
| | Mob-3 | -.025 | .043 | | | | |
| | Mob-4 | .028 | .053 | | | | |
| | Mob-5 | -.038 | .032 | | | | |
| Mw-Sum | Constant | 3.137 | .028 | .263 | .069 | 11.13 | .000 |
| | Mob-1 | -.119 | .051 | | | | |
| | Mob-2 | .064 | .041 | | | | |
| | Mob-3 | -.033 | .046 | | | | |
| | Mob-4 | -.071 | .057 | | | | |
| | Mob-5 | -.032 | .034 | | | | |

Mw-1: Positive Meaning, Mw-2: The Meaningful work, Mw-3: High Motivation, Mw-Sum: Meaningful Work-Total, Mob-1: Attacks on Self-Presentation and Communication, Mob-2: Attacks on Social Relationships, Mob-3: Attacks on Reputation, Mob-4: Attacks on Professional Status, Mob-5: Attacks on Psychological Health of the Individual.

p<.05

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

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According to the descriptive results of the research, academicians rate academics as moderately high level significant. In terms of dimensions, it belongs to the highest mean positive meaning dimension. The fact that the positive meaning dimension has a high average indicates that the academicians consider only the academic profession as essential and value their profession without taking other meaningful factors into account (Hagedorn, 2012). In the study conducted by Balcı, Akar, and Öztürk (2019), it was concluded that academicians found their work completely meaningful in parallel with the results of this research. However, in the studies by Seçkin (2018) and Öntürk (2019), it was reported that academicians found their work partially meaningful. It is thought that this situation is due to the individuality of the meaningful work and the different cultural structure of each university. Another descriptive result of the research is that academicians evaluate the academic mobbing they experience at university at a medium-low level. Thus, in some previous studies conducted in Turkey (Asri, 2019; Cayvarlı & Şahin, 2015; Elkıran & Çoruk, 2017; Güven-Sarı, 2018), it was concluded that the mobbing perception of academics is at a low level. Academicians should have low mobbing perceptions. Because academicians who do not feel mobbing on themselves can put forward more innovative ideas with more qualified projects and research, their publication and citation performances can increase. In the present study, it is thought that the fact that the data collected during the pandemic period was especially effective in the low level of mobbing perceptions of academicians. Because during the pandemic, academics often worked from home and interacted much less with others than under normal circumstances. Therefore, they may not have felt pressure on them and have not been exposed to mobbing much.

In the study, it was concluded that male academicians see their professions as more meaningful than female academicians in terms of high motivation. However, in a study conducted by Vural, Güney, and Metin-Orta (2021), it was stated that gender did not affect finding work meaningful. On the other hand, in the study of Toptaş (2018) on teachers, it was stated that female teachers found their work more meaningful. It is thought that this differentiation is due to the fact that all three studies were conducted

on different occupational groups. When the results of the study regarding the gender variable are analyzed from the perspective of academic mobbing, the average of female academicians' mobbing perception in the dimensions of academic mobbing (total), attacks on self-disclosure and communication, attacks on reputation, attacks on professional status and attacks on the psychological health of the individual is higher than the averages of male academics. In some studies, similar to the current study, it was determined that female academicians have higher mobbing perceptions (Cayvarlı & Şahin, 2015; Lampman, 2012; Öntürk, 2019; Simpson & Cohen, 2004; Şanlı, 2018; Yeloğlu & Karahan, 2016). The reason why female academicians have a higher perception of mobbing may be due to the fact that women are more sensitive than men. Also, because Turkey has a patriarchal society, men can control power by taking more part in the management staff. In addition, there are also studies (Asri, 2019; Elkiran & Çoruk, 2017; Adewumi & Danesi, 2017; Prevost & Hunt, 2018; Güven-Sarı, 2018) in which no significant difference could be detected in the mobbing perception of academics by gender.

According to the results of the study for the age variable, academicians aged 41-50 see their work as more meaningful than academics aged 31-40. This result is in line with the research findings of Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012) that older employees find their professions more meaningful than younger employees. In this sense, since individuals in their forties enter a more stable period in their work and private lives (Erikson, 1994), it can be said that academicians' perception of meaningful work in their professions has also increased. When the results of the study were examined in the context of academic mobbing, it was seen that the perception of mobbing in the dimension of attacks on the professional status of the person was lower than the academicians between the ages of 51 and 47 and those between the ages of 41-57. The results of the study are in line with the results of some previous studies. Thus, Leymann (1996) found that academicians between the ages of 21-40 had higher mobbing perceptions, Aktop (2006) determined that academics between the ages of 36-40 had higher mobbing perceptions, and Orhan (2009) found that academicians between the ages of 31-35 had higher mobbing perceptions, Cayvarlı and Şahin (2015) found that younger academicians had higher mobbing perceptions, Şanlı (2018) determined that academicians between 31-40 years had higher mobbing perceptions. In contrast, Çögenli and Asanakutlu (2016) found that academics aged 60 and over were less exposed to mobbing. Lampman (2012) and Ahmad, Kalim, and Kaleem (2017) concluded that academics in their forties are more at risk than academics in their fifties, while Prevost and Hunt (2018) concluded that younger academics are at higher risk than older academics. In fact, as Dentith, Wright, and Coryell (2015) stated, this may be because older faculty members are involved in mobbing by abusing the power they have gained over time, depending on their careers, or that they are not mobbed because of the power they have.

Moreover, among the reasons for this situation are the fact that young academics are overloaded with more work than necessary (excessive course hours, secretarial professions that are considered drudgery), fewer research tasks are given to improve themselves, and they are inexperienced (Ahmad et al., 2017; Lewis, 2004). However, young academics may perceive mobbing at a higher level as constantly trying to prove themselves to rise in their careers (Özyer & Orhan, 2012; Simpson & Cohen, 2004). The older academicians, who are at the top of their careers, have a low perception of mobbing due to factors such as knowing the laws and regulations better, having a good command of the business environment, and having a good command of the business environment more life experiences than younger ones. In some studies (Asri, 2019; Elkiran & Çoruk, 2017; Yeloğlu & Karahan, 2016), no significant relationship was found between mobbing perception and the age variable. This may be due to a libertarian organizational environment that provides opportunities for academics to work comfortably and advance in their profession.

When the results of the study regarding the title variable were evaluated in terms of meaningful work, it was seen that the higher the titles of the academicians, the more meaningful their work was. Although there is no finding that can be compared with the meaningful work and the title variable in the literature, it was stated in the research conducted by Özkan (2017) that the level of meaningful work increases as the level of education increases. In this sense, it is thought that since the education level of the academicians with a high title will be higher, their level of competence at work and the freedom to take the initiative are also higher. Accordingly, it is thought that this causes the perception of the meaning of the work. When the analyses on the title variable in terms of academic mobbing were

examined, it was concluded that the academicians' mobbing perceptions were similar. Thus, in line with the results of this study, Şenerkal (2014), Güven-Sarı (2018), Asri (2019) and Öntürk (2019) also found that there is no significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of mobbing and the title. Westhues (2008), on the other hand, suggested that mobbing is independent of the title, that every academician who has a large number of publications, is famous, has a good salary and record, and is beautiful/handsome can be exposed to mobbing. As a result of the study, the fact that no relationship could be found between title and academic mobbing also supports the idea that academics at the universities surveyed continue to work under similar conditions and show respect to each other. However, Cayvarlı and Şahin (2015), Çögenli and Asanakutlu (2016), Şanlı (2018) and Öntürk (2019) concluded that the title variable is influential on mobbing perception. In the study of Çayvarlı and Şahin (2015), it was seen that academicians working as experts and research assistants, according to their titles, faced more mobbing than others. Also, Çögenli and Asanakutlu (2016) determined that academicians with the titles of Lecturer, Instructor and Expert are more likely to be exposed to mobbing than those with the title of Professor Doctor. In the studies conducted by Şanlı (2018) and Öntürk (2019), it was concluded that research assistants have a high level of mobbing perception. In other words, as the degrees of academicians' titles increase, their perception of mobbing decreases (Simpson & Cohen, 2004; Adewumi & Danesi, 2017). As Westhues (2008) states, academics with low titles can sometimes be exposed to mobbing through the abuse of power and authority by academics with higher titles than themselves. In addition, this situation may be due to the fact that the course load and working conditions of the academicians with a low title are heavier than those with a higher title, and they have various difficulties in making an academic career.

When the results of the analysis on the relationship between meaningful work and academic mobbing are evaluated, in accordance with their theoretical structures, it was observed that there were negative and low-level significant relationships between the two variables. Moreover, according to the findings from the regression analysis, academic mobbing predicts the significance of the work at rates ranging from 3% to 7%. Based on these results, it can be argued that as the mobbing perceptions of academicians increase, the meaning they attribute to their work will decrease partially. When their mobbing perceptions decrease, the meaning they attribute to their work will increase relatively. Thus, while meaningful work includes positive emotions and thoughts, (academic) mobbing consists of negative experiences. The fact that the level of relationship is significant but low raises the possibility that the relationship between them is indirectly provided by some mediator or other regulatory variables such as organizational culture, motivation, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, Cartwright and Holmes (2006) and Yaman and Sarıçam (2015) concluded in their research that there is a negative relationship between mobbing sub-dimensions and meaningful work.

In this sense, it can be said that behaviours such as humiliation, discrimination, and exposure to communication barriers, which are mobbing practices, will reduce the meaning that academicians attribute to their work and alienate them from their profession. In this respect, it is necessary to understand the act of mobbing, which is one of the obstacles in front of the academicians to see their work as meaningful and finding solutions. First, the effects of academics, who have power in the fields of activity of universities, on organizational culture, the views of dominant groups, and the daily life experiences of victims and perpetrators should be considered. In addition, based on the results of this study, Psychologist or psychiatrist support can be provided to female academicians who think that they are more exposed to academic mobbing so that they can cope with mobbing. Regarding mobbing behaviours that negatively affect the meaningfulness of academics, university-specific measures can be taken. In addition, repeating the current research topic with a larger sample group in the future or investigating it with other mediator and regulatory variables can contribute to the field of management sciences.

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Üniversitelerdeki Akademik Mobbing ile İşin Anlamlılığı Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi²

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Özet

Bu araştırmada, akademisyenlerin görüşlerine göre akademik mobbing ile işin anlamlılığı arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'deki çeşitli devlet üniversitelerinde çalışan 489 akademisyen oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma verileri mobbing ölçeği ve işin anlamlılığı ölçeği kullanılarak e-posta yoluyla toplanmıştır. Değişkenler arasındaki ikili karşılaştırmalarda t-testi, üçlü ve daha fazla karşılaştırmalarda tek yönlü varyans analizi, akademik mobbing ile işin anlamlılığı arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koymada Pearson korelasyon testi ve akademik mobbingin işin anlamlılığını yordayıp yordamadığının tespiti için regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, akademisyenler işlerini orta-yüksek düzeyde anlamlı bulurlarken, akademik mobbingi orta-düşük seviyede algıladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Cinsiyet değişkenine göre işin anlamlılığının yüksek motivasyon boyutunda, akademik mobbingin ise sosyal ilişkilere yönelik saldırılar boyutu hariç tüm boyutlarında kadın ve erkek akademisyenlerin görüşleri arasında farklılıklar olduğu görülmüştür. Akademisyenlerin yaşlarına göre işin kattığı anlam, işin anlamı (toplam) ve mesleki duruma yönelik saldırılar boyutlarında görece yaşlı akademisyenlerin işlerini daha anlamlı buldukları ve akademik mobbingi daha az hissettikleri belirlenmiştir. Unvan değişkenine göre işin anlamlılığının yüksek motivasyon hariç tüm boyutlarında unvanı yüksek olan akademisyenlerin işlerini daha anlamlı buldukları, buna karşın akademik mobbing algısının unvana göre farklılaşmadığı bulgulanmıştır. Ayrıca, akademik mobbing ile işin anlamlılığı arasında anlamlı ve negatif yönde bir ilişki ile akademik mobbingin işin anlamlılığını yordadığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuçlar referans alınarak hem uygulayıcılara hem de benzer çalışmalar yürütecek araştırmacılara yönelik bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akademik Mobbing, Akademisyen, İşin Anlamlılığı, Üniversite



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Genişletilmiş Özet

Problem: Sosyal ve psikolojik etkileşimler üzerine kurulu modern dünyada bireyler zamanlarının çoğunu ekonomik, kültürel veya dinsel bir örgütün üyesi olarak geçirmektedirler. Steger, Dik ve Duffy'e (2012) göre bireyler hem hayatın geneline hem de örgütsel yaşama yönelik bir anlam arayışı içerisindeyler. Hackman ve Oldham (1975) da çalışanların yaptıkları işi, sadece para kazanma aracı olarak görmediklerini işlerine bir önem atfettiklerini belirterek, işin anlamlılığını çalışanların işlerini değerli, yararlı ve anlamlı olarak algılamaları olarak tanımlamaktadırlar. Çünkü sadece hayatta kalmak için çalışmak, işi anlamlı kılmamaktadır. Bu yüzden işin anlamlılığı temel ihtiyaçların üzerindeki güdülerle alakalıdır (Martela ve Steger, 2016). Gerek bireysel hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek gerekse de örgütsel hedeflerin gerçekleşmesine katkı sağlamak üzere günlük yaşantısının önemli bir bölümünü örgütsel ortamda geçirdiklerinden, bireylerin kendilerini örgütte mutlu hissetmeleri ve iş birliği içinde olmaları önemlidir. Ancak örgütsel yaşamın doğal bir sonucu olarak bireyler her zaman mutlu veya iş birliği içinde olmayabilirler. Hırs ve rekabet ortamı, yönetim kademesindeki sıkıntılar, kıskançlık veya bireysel hedeflerin ön plana çıkması gibi nedenler örgütsel çatışmaları doğurmaktadır, bu çatışmaların doğru bir şekilde yönetil(e)memesi de birçok psiko-sosyal sorunların ortaya çıkmasına sebep olmaktadır. Bu sorunların başında ise örgütsel verimliliği olumsuz etkilediği kabul edilen, ahlaki ve hukuki bir durum olarak mobbing gelmektedir. Tınaz'a (2011) göre mobbing, örgütsel yaşamda sürekli var olan, demografik farklılık gözetmeksizin herkesin maruz kalabileceği bir durumdur. Mobbing, varlığı hissedilmesine rağmen sosyal ilişkilerin karmaşık doğasından dolayı net bir şekilde ifade edilemeyen, adeta ortaya çıkarmaktan kaçınılan, kaotik bir olgudur. Ayrıca, bürokratik örgütlerden sivil toplum örgütlerine, büyük ölçekli fabrikalardan birkaç kişinin çalıştığı küçük işletmelere, sağlık sektöründen eğitim sektörüne kadar hemen hemen her türden örgüt ve sektörde mobbinge karşılaşılabılır.

Eğitim-öğretim, doğası itibarıyla tarihsel süreçte toplumlar ve bireyler açısından daima anlamlı bir iş olarak görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, derin bir anlam ve amaç arayışının akademisyenlik mesleğinde yoğun olarak yaşanması gerektiği söylenebilir. Görevi öğretmek ve araştırmak olan akademisyenlik de nesnelere ziyade insanlarla çalışılan bir meslek olduğu ve insanların hayatında olumlu bir değişim sağladığı için bireylere anlamlı gelmektedir. Akademisyenlerin işlerini anlamlı bulmasının önündeki engellerin başında ise baskıcı bir atmosfer ve örgütsel çatışmalar gelmektedir (Hagedorn, 2012). Bu perspektiften araştırmamızın konusu olan, baskıcı bir atmosferin ve örgütsel çatışmaların ortaya çıkardığı akademik mobbingin akademisyenlerin işlerini anlamlı görmelerini olumsuz etkileyeceği düşünülmektedir. Çünkü akademik mobbing, akademisyenlerin diğer meslektaşlarını duygusal olarak yıpratmak amacıyla yaptıkları haksız yere suçlama, küçük düşürme, dışlama ve sosyal taciz gibi karmaşık ve takıntılı davranışlardan oluşmaktadır (Beng, 2010). Bu davranışlar akademisyenlerin mesleklerini anlamlı olarak algılamamasına ve akademisyenliği sadece bir işten ibaret olarak görmelerine dolayısıyla da akademisyenliğin derinliğinin giderek azalmasına ve performans düşüşlerine sebep olmaktadır. Araştırmamızın odağında olan akademisyenlerin bir yandan diğer akademisyenler, öğrenciler ve üniversite/fakülte yönetimi ile ilişkileri diğer yandan da mesleki gelişimleri ve akademik kariyerleri için yaptıkları çalışmalar düşünüldüğünde karmaşık bir örgütsel ortamda görev yaptıkları söylenebilir. Bu bakımdan, böyle bir ortamda çalışan akademisyenlerin işlerini ne kadar anlamlı bulduklarının tespit edilmesi ve örgütsel yaşamın patolojik özelliklerinin başında gelen mobbingin bu değer atfetme durumuna gerçekten engel teşkil edip etmediğinin saptanmasının faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Diğer taraftan, alanyazın incelendiğinde görece olarak mobbingin akademisyen örneklemelerinde çalışılmış olmasına rağmen tüm meslek grupları için önemli olduğu düşünülen iki değişkenin eğitim sektörü özelinde daha çok öğretmen örneğinde ve farklı değişkenlerle çalışıldığı görülmüştür. Bu durum, her iki değişkeni bir arada ele alan bu araştırmamızın akademisyenler üzerinde gerçekleştirilmesi için motive edici bir unsur olmuştur. Dolayısıyla yönetim ve örgütsel davranış alanyazınına katkı sağlaması beklenen bu araştırmamızda akademik mobbing ile işin anlamlılığı arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç çerçevesinde ise şu sorulara cevaplar aranmıştır:

1. Akademisyenler işlerini ne düzeyde anlamlı bulmaktadırlar?
2. Akademisyenlerin üniversitelerdeki akademik mobbinge ilişkin algıları ne düzeydedir?
3. Akademisyenlerin işin anlamlılığı ve mobbinge ilişkin algı düzeyleri cinsiyet, yaş ve unvan demografik değişkenlerine göre farklılık göstermekte midir?

4. İşin anlamlılığı ile akademik mobbing arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki var mıdır?
5. Akademik mobbing işin anlamlılığını istatistiksel olarak yordamakta mıdır?

Method: Bu araştırmada, akademik mobbing ile işin anlamlılığı arasındaki ilişki incelendiği için ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. İlişkisel tarama modeli, iki veya daha fazla değişken arasında herhangi bir değişikliğin olup olmadığını belirleyen ve eğer bir değişiklik varsa düzeyini belirlemeyi amaçlayan modele verilen isimdir (Karasar, 2007). Bu model, çok sayıda kişiden oluşan bir evren ile ilgili ortak bir kanaate varmak için evren içerisinden alınacak bir örneklem üzerinden gerçekleştirilen düzenlemelerden oluşmaktadır (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2016). Araştırmanın bağımlı değişkeni işin anlamlılığı, bağımsız değişkenleri ise akademik mobbing ile akademisyenlerin cinsiyet, yaş ve unvan gibi demografik özellikleridir. Araştırmanın evreni, 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılında Türkiye'deki devlet üniversitelerinde çalışan akademisyenlerden, örnekleme ise bu üniversitelerdeki 489 akademisyenden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın örnekleme belirlenirken kolay ulaşılabilir örneklem tekniğinden faydalanılmıştır. Kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme tekniği, araştırmacının kolay bir şekilde ulaşabileceği evren birimlerine ulaşması şeklinde gerçekleştirilir (Karasar, 2007). Araştırmada Çögenli ve Asunakutlu (2014) tarafından geliştirilen Akademik Mobbing Ölçeği ile Steger, Dik ve Duffy'nin (2012) tarafından geliştirilip Akın, Hamedoğlu, Kaya ve Sarıçam (2013) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanan İşin Anlamlılığı Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Veriler akademisyenlerden gönüllülük çerçevesinde çevrimiçi sistemde toplanmıştır. Araştırma problemlerinin çözümüne yönelik gerçekleştirilen analizler şöyledir: (i) Akademisyenlerin işin anlamlılığına yönelik görüşlerinin ve akademik mobbing algılarının belirlenmesi için ölçek boyutlarından aldıkları ortalama puanlar ve standart sapmalar incelenmiştir. (ii) Akademisyenlerin işin anlamlılığı ile akademik mobbing ölçeklerinden aldıkları puanlar arasında cinsiyet değişkenine göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar olup olmadığını belirlemek için bağımsız örneklem t testi, yaş ve unvan değişkenlerine göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar olup olmadığını belirlemek için ise tek yönlü varyans analizi uygulanmıştır. (iii) Akademisyenlerin işin anlamlılığı ile akademik mobbing ölçeklerinden aldıkları puanlar arasında istatistiksel olarak herhangi bir anlamlı ilişkinin var olup olmadığını incelemek için ikili korelasyon analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. (iv) Akademisyenlerin akademik mobbing puanlarının işin anlamlılığı puanlarını istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde yordayıp yordamadığını kontrol etmek için de çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır.

Sonuçlar: Araştırmanın betimsel sonuçlarına göre akademisyenler, akademisyenliği orta yüksek seviyede anlamlı olarak değerlendirmektedirler. Boyut bazında ise en yüksek ortalama pozitif anlam boyutuna aittir. Pozitif anlam boyutunun yüksek ortalamaya sahip olması akademisyenlerin diğer anlam faktörlerini hesaba katmaksızın sadece akademisyenlik mesleğini önemli olarak gördüklerini ve mesleklerine değer verdiklerini göstermektedir. Araştırmanın bir diğer betimsel sonucu ise akademisyenler üniversitede yaşadıkları akademik mobbingi orta-düşük seviyede değerlendirmeleridir. Nitekim daha önce Türkiye'de yapılan bazı araştırmalarda da akademisyenlerin mobbing algısının düşük düzeyde olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Akademisyenlerin mobbing algılarının düşük olması istenilen bir durumdur. Çünkü üzerlerinde mobbing hissetmeyen akademisyenler daha nitelikli proje ve araştırmalar ile daha yenilikçi fikirler ortaya koyabilirler, buna bağlı olarak yayın ve atıf performansları yükselebilir. Araştırmada erkek akademisyenlerin yüksek motivasyon boyutunda işlerini kadın akademisyenlere göre daha anlamlı gördükleri sonucuna varılmıştır. Araştırmanın cinsiyet değişkenine ilişkin sonuçları akademik mobbinge perspektifinden incelendiğinde ise kadın akademisyenlerin akademik mobbing (toplam), kendini gösterebilmeye ve iletişime yönelik saldırılar, itibara yönelik saldırılar, mesleki duruma yönelik saldırılar ve kişinin psikolojik sağlığına yönelik saldırılar boyutlarındaki mobbing algısı ortalamaları erkek akademisyenlerin ortalamalarından daha yüksektir. Kadın akademisyenlerin mobbing algısının daha yüksek olması, kadınların erkeklere göre daha hassas olmalarından ve ülkemizin ataerkil bir toplum yapısına sahip olması nedeniyle yönetim kadrosunda erkeklerin daha çok yer alarak gücü kontrol edebilmelerinden kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Araştırmanın yaş değişkenine yönelik sonuçlarına göre 41-50 yaş üstü akademisyenler 31-40 yaş arası akademisyenlere göre işlerini daha fazla anlamlı görmektedirler. Araştırma sonuçları akademik mobbing bağlamında incelendiğinde ise 51 yaş üstü akademisyenlerin 31-47 yaş arasındaki ve 41-57 yaş arasındaki akademisyenlere göre kişinin mesleki durumuna yönelik saldırılar boyutundaki mobbing algısının daha düşük olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmanın unvan değişkenine ilişkin sonuçları işin anlamlılığı açısından değerlendirildiğinde akademisyenlerin unvanları yükseldikçe işlerini daha fazla anlamlı buldukları görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda unvanı yüksek olan

akademisyenlerin eğitim düzeyleri de yüksek olacağından, işteki yetkinlik düzeylerinin ve inisiyatif kullanma özgürlüklerinin de daha fazla olduğu ve bunun işin anlamlılığı algısına yansıdığını düşünülmektedir. Akademik mobbing açısından unvan değişkenine ilişkin analizler incelendiğinde ise akademisyenlerin mobbing algılarının birbirine benzediği sonucuna varılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda unvan ve akademik mobbing arasında herhangi bir ilişkinin bulunmaması, araştırma yapılan üniversitelerdeki akademisyenlerin eşit şartlar altında çalışmalarını sürdürdükleri ve birbirlerine saygı gösterdikleri fikrini de desteklemektedir. İşin anlamlılığı ile akademik mobbing arasındaki ilişkiye yönelik analiz sonuçları değerlendirildiğinde kuramsal yapılarına uygun olarak iki değişken arasında negatif yönlü düşük düzeyde anlamlı ilişkilerin olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca regresyon analizinden elde edilen sonuçlara göre akademisyenlerin mobbing algıları arttıkça işlerine yükledikleri anlamın kısmen azalacağı, bununla birlikte mobbing algıları azalınca da işlerine yükledikleri anlamın görece artacağı ileri sürülebilir. Çünkü işin anlamlılığı olgusu içerisinde olumlu duygu ve düşünceler barındırırken, (akademik) mobbing olumsuz deneyimlerden oluşmaktadır. İlişki düzeyinin anlamlı ancak düşük olması, aralarındaki ilişkinin örgütsel kültür, motivasyon, örgütsel bağlılık ve örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışı gibi bazı aracı veya düzenleyici başka değişkenlerle dolaylı olarak sağlandığı ihtimalini gündeme getirmektedir.

Öneriler: Mobbing uygulamalarından olan aşağılama, ayrımcılık ve iletişim engellerine maruz bırakma gibi davranışların akademisyenlerin işlerine yükledikleri anlamı azaltacağı ve onları mesleklerine yabancılaştıracağı söylenebilir. Bu açıdan akademisyenlerin işlerini anlamlı görmelerinin önündeki engellerden biri olan mobbing eyleminin anlaşılması ve çözümler bulunabilmesi için öncelikle üniversitelerin faaliyet alanlarında güç sahibi olan akademisyenlerin örgüt kültürü üzerindeki etkileri, baskın grupların görüşleri ile mağdur ve failerin günlük yaşam deneyimlerinin dikkate alınması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca bu araştırma sonuçlarından yola çıkılarak akademik mobbinge daha fazla maruz kaldığını düşünen kadın akademisyenlere mobbinge başa çıkabilmeleri için psikolog veya psikiyatrist desteği sağlanabilir. Akademisyenliğin anlamlılığını olumsuz etkileyen mobbing davranışlarına yönelik olarak üniversiteye özgü tedbirler alınabilir. Ayrıca mevcut araştırma konusunun daha geniş bir örneklem kitlesiyle ileriki yıllarda tekrarlanması veya aracı ve düzenleyici başka değişkenlerle araştırılması yönetim bilimleri alanına katkı sağlayabilir.