Chapter 26
Research Concerning Passenger Mobbing on Security Personnel and Its Effect on Their Job Satisfaction in Air Transportation

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to find out the relationship between the degree of security staff being subjected to passenger mobbing and their job satisfaction. As a result of the analysis of data from 919 security staff working at the checkpoints of Turkey İstanbul Atatürk Airport, a significant but inverse relationship is identified between the level of mobbing and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the results of the analysis carried out to find the relationships among the mobbing subdimensions and job satisfaction point to a significant and inverse correlation between "attacks on reputation" and "attacks on communication" mobbing subdimensions and job satisfaction. No relationship is found between the "attacks on physical and psychological health" mobbing subdimension and job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Defined by Leymann et al. in 1984, the mobbing concept, while perceived as a personal problem by some managers, is an important organizational problem that must be resolved, especially in the aviation sector, which does not tolerate errors (Yaman, Vidinlioğlu, & Çitemel, 2010, pp. 1138-39). Its basic service being transportation from one point to another, the aviation sector security precautions are perceived as coercing, cumbersome, and even unnecessary for all the shareholders, especially for passengers. However, the necessity for and the aim of aviation security is much better understood in the light of the illegal events happened in the past (Karimbocus, 2009). Still, the security measures taken at airports top

the list of the factors that lead to negative effects on passenger satisfaction (Sindhav, Holland, Rodie, Adidam, & Pol, 2006, p. 324).

A passenger who may be anxious about missing the plane or even without such worries, a passenger holding the belief that the aviation sector must offer speed and comfort, may directly react towards the security staff that works there. Such behaviors suffered by security staff can be named as mobbing because mobbing is defined as "repeated psychologically violent behaviors aimed directly at a worker or at his or her duty" (Keim & McDermott, 2010, p. 168).

One of the models that is used to explain mobbing is the "Job Demand-Control" model, which was first proposed by Karasek (1979) and later developed by Karesek and Theorell (Notelaers, Baillien, Witte, Einarsen, & Vermunt, 2012). According to this model, employees' stress level is directly related to the degree of their control on their work and the workload they have (Karasek, 1981, p. 696). The concept of "control" in this model refers to the skill level and ability to use it as well as participation in the decisions in performing a task, while "job demand" comprises the speed of performing a certain task besides the qualitative or quantitative amount of the task (Demiral et al., 2007, p. 12). By using the Job Demand-Control Model proposed by the Karasek model, it is proven by the Notelaers et al. study that there is a relationship with workers' levels of exposure to mobbing (2012). Notelaers et al. (2012, pp. 79-80) found that individuals with heavy workloads and low control opportunities perceive a higher degree of mobbing behavior. To this Karasek model the social support dimension was added on later by Johnson and Hall, which involved the social and psychological support that an individual receives from the environment, which describes a heavy workload coupled with low control and further lack of social support as the worst possible situation (Sundin, Hochwälder, & Bildt, 2007, p. 759).

Studies such as Çelik and Peker (2010) and Abualrub and Al-Asmar (2014) found that teachers or nurses in public service are subjected to serious mobbing behavior by the very individuals they try to serve. A similar situation also is the case for the security staff working at airport checkpoints because according to the Karasek model, security staff have high workload and low work control. Furthermore, being the target of passenger dissatisfaction may lead security personnel to be seriously deprived of social support.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimates that the number of passengers in the world will rise from 2.5 billion in 2009 to 3.3 billion in 2014 (Lange, 2013, p. 153). This tendency towards such exponential growth of the aviation system is much more evident in Turkey. As the Turkish base airport, İstanbul Atatürk Airport's domestic-international total number of passengers has increased over 70% in 2013 compared to 2009 (Ministry of Transport Maritime Affairs and Communications). Due to this rising number of passengers, Atatürk Airport has been increasing the passenger check-points (TAV Private Security Services). However, no matter how many check-points there are, the security staff have to check each passenger under 20 seconds on average, and ideally at 16 to 17 seconds. Since exceeding 20 seconds leads to longer waits in line and thus contributes to higher passenger dissatisfaction, this is an undesirable situation (Kirschenbaum, 2013, pp. 40-41).

With high amount of workload and more importantly, high work performance speeds, security staff have very low control over their work processes. As the global regulator of aviation, the Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requires each member state to prepare their National Civil Aviation Security Program. By the help of this program, the security measures in place in that specific country are aimed to be standardized (ICAO, Annex 17: Security, 2011, pp. 1-3). Each member state has to include the security processes in this document and take into account in its practice. The security staff, who have to abide by the national and international regulations and documents have almost no control over these

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