

# Chapter 18

## The Dark Side of Digitalization: Digital Mobbing

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### ABSTRACT

*Digital change and transformation, affecting the economic and social context, paved the way for the emergence of many new phenomena and behavior patterns. One of these phenomena is digital mobbing, which is a serious type of digital bullying that harms the individual and forms the dark side of digitalization. In this chapter, the authors explained the phenomenon of digital mobbing, its types, and effects on individuals first. Then they conducted a field research to reveal employees' level of exposure to digital mobbing, its types, level, and suggestions for its prevention via snowball sampling method in Istanbul and Kocaeli with 578 white-collar employees in the healthcare, information technologies, security, and banking sectors through the Turkish adaptation of the "cyber-mobbing" scale developed in Germany. According to the results, they found that the vast majority of employees are exposed to high level and various forms of digital mobbing and they couldn't find authorities to apply for a solution other than legal remedies; so they also suggested for its prevention at last.*

### INTRODUCTION

In modern business world, the effect of globalization brings different kinds of change and, by the help of this change, transformation. Developments in communication and information technologies, change in social expectations, differentiation of production tools, increase in competition, increase in demands and pressures about performance and increase in workflow have deeply affected socio-economic life and led to the emergence of many new phenomena. The mentioned changes have caused the basic systems to be moved to virtual environments. The virtual environment created by information and communication

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-9187-1.ch018

## ***The Dark Side of Digitalization***

technologies has allowed users to be included in a number of artificial/digital worlds. These new worlds have provided different experiences to humankind. The technology created for the benefit of human becomes a necessity in a short period whereas it also comes out to be a harmful environment. So there is also a dark side of digitalization that people should realize and take necessary actions.

In this sense, while focusing on the positive aspects, precautions should also be taken by discussing the negative effects as well. One of the phenomena stated above in the digital environment that people are facing is mobbing, which is a focused, damaging and negative form of communication. (Yıldırım and Ekinci 2020, Uysal Irak, 2019). Mobbing has been labelled with different concepts like harassment. Mobbing, consists of humiliating, insulting, harassing, unethical words and behaviors applied systematically and deliberately to another person who has been targeted by one or more people. Behaviors involving mobbing are stated by Leynman (1996);

- preventing the individual from expressing himself,
- attacks on social relations, attacks on the social personality of the individual,
- attacks on the working life of the individual and
- attacks affecting the health of the individual

The victims experience serious mental, psychosomatic and social disorders when these behaviors are repeated for a very long time and at frequent intervals. This negative behavior changes into a new term called digital mobbing after the information and communication technologies usage got more frequent. Digital mobbing, more rarely also cyberbullying, describes deliberate, systematic and usually long-term aggressive behavior towards other people using digital communication media. It ranges from insults and insults via chat messages to the spread of lies and rumors in messenger groups to the publication of private photos, videos or chat histories of those affected on social networks. For this form of bullying, perpetrators use smartphones, tablets, computers or games consoles - in short, all internet-enabled devices. Digital mobbing can be identified by a group of people gathering on someone using rumor tactics, hints, humiliating, isolating, intimidating, and most of the time, making it look as if the marked person is responsible (blaming of victim).

In the traditional sense of the mobbing, it comprises humiliating, insulting, harassing, unethical statements and behaviors that are systematically and deliberately applied to another person who is targeted by one or more people. In this respect, mobbing includes the prevention of the individual's self-expression, attacks on social relations, attacks on the social personality of the individual, attacks on the work life of the individual and attacks affecting the health of the individual, and such behaviors cause the victims to experience serious mental, psychosomatic and social disorders. Digital mobbing, on the other hand, is a relatively new and serious type of digital bullying in which the individual is exposed to a series of attacks using ICTs, that is, via the internet and/or mobile phone. In other words, in digital mobbing, there is digital emotional harassment/exposure to mobbing through image and video broadcasts, e-mails, chat rooms, text messages, social media environments such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Clubhouse, Whatsapp, Telegram or electronic communication devices such as mobile phones. The most common types of digital mobbing are: insulting on websites or other public platforms, offensive/disturbing messages or correspondence, harassment and threats, blackmailing, disclosing personal secrets, slander, spreading rumors, happy-slapping, posting shameful or private photos and videos on the internet, sharing someone else's photos by manipulating, accessing someone else's online accounts (phishing) and sending messages or making insulting posts that will negatively affect/harm that person or people,

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