Mobbing Behaviors Against Demonstrators and Assistant Lecturers Working at Assiut University

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Abstract: Mobbing is an antagonistic behavior with unethical communication directed systematically at one individual by one or more persons in the workplace. This study aims to identify the mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University. A cross-sectional descriptive survey was used in this study. The current study was conducted at six faculties, i.e. the Faculties of Commerce, Social Work, Law, Engineering, Nursing and Medicine. A stratified random sample technique was used on (535) demonstrators and assistant lecturers. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data which included socio-demographic data and the mobbing behavior questionnaire. The main results of this study indicated that 57.9 % of the participants were females and 42.1% were males. The main type of types of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers was attacks on their professional status (53.7% and 44.3%, respectively). 49.6% of demonstrators and 43.4% of assistant lecturers responded psychosocially to mobbing behaviors. Thesis supervisors and departmental heads (18.7% and 18.1%, respectively) considered the main sources of mobbing behaviors against the studied participants. This study recommended that an educational program should be applied to managers, demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University about the advantage of the open managerial approach, their legal rights, stress management techniques, how to respond appropriately and the measures to prevent the development of mobbing behaviors.

Key Words: Mobbing; Violence; Psychological harassment; Bullying; Assistant lecturers; Demonstrators.

1. Introduction:

Work-related violence continues to be a major concern in the majority of professions and mobbing is one of the frequently encountered forms of work-related violence *(Cooper et al., 2011)*. Mobbing is defined as negative actions directed to a person by one or several other persons in the workplace at a certain time, and the person exposed to mobbing usually has difficulties defending him or herself against these actions because of different reasons *(Zapf and Einarsen, 2001)*. Mobbing is a serious problem, and an unkind communication way, applied to one person by one or several persons in a systematic and direct way. The person who is exposed to it stays in a helpless and undefended position *(Leymann, 1996)*.

Yildirim et al., (2007) mentioned that mobbing is an antagonistic behavior with unethical communication directed systematically at one individual by one or more individuals in the workplace.

The term mobbing has been used synonymously with violence, bullying, psychological harassment, suppression, attack, social isolation, threatening, and discrimination in the business life and workplace trauma *(Godin, 2004 and Farrell et al., 2006)*.

Workplace bullying is sometimes referred as mobbing *(Leymann, 1990)*. On the other hand, mobbing is different from "conflict or disagreement" among people. Mobbing is an extreme form of group bullying in which one or more employees covertly attacks another. The goal is to ostracize, isolate, undermine and eliminate the persons being targeted *(Westhues, 2003).*

The concept "mobbing" is relatively unknown, but not unknown in work life and includes workplace terrorizing, pressure, frightening, belittling and psycho-terror or abstract violence. It has been accepted that mobbing activities occur in places of work almost everywhere in the world. However, it is very difficult for employees to avoid the effect of these actions that they face in the workplace. The causes of these difficulties are not completely understood under the definition of mobbing *(Zapf, 1999 and Wornhom, 2003).*

These behaviors can be directed towards an individual by facility managers, supervisors, and coworkers in the same position or by subordinates *(Leymann, 1996, Einarsen, 2000, Fox and Stallworth, 2003).*

Mobbing and bullying are secretive, targeted, and widespread forms of abuse in the workplace

(European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2002). The reasons for this behavior are still unknown; it appears to occur more frequently in the health care and educational sectors. Targets, often the most creative members of organizations, experience emotional and financial costs *(Sloan et al., 2010).* Universities have a highly complex structure. This complex structure, along with the nature of decision making mechanisms, could lead up to mobbing *(Farrington, 2010).*

The duration of mobbing behaviors must continue for six months and occur at least once a week *(Leymann, 1996).* Other researchers suggest that if the duration of mobbing is less than six months and it occurs less than once a week, it is sufficient to be exposed to mobbing *(Zapf and Eirnarsen, 2001).*

Developing organizational strategies to combat mobbing and satisfying work environment is imperative *(American Hospital Association, 2002; Cropanzano and Wright, 2001).* To minimize the number of cases, the issue of mobbing must first be thoroughly investigated *(Einarsen and Skogdstad, 2011).*

Supervisors and administrators should be educated about mobbing and the importance of focusing on both organizational and individual needs. They should have a broader lens through which they can monitor the work-life climate of the organization, such as walking around, observing, listening, talking, and asking questions *(Sargin and Cdvdlddağ, 2013).* Feeling helpless to intervene to prevent mobbing behaviors may reinforce the culture of abuse. This phenomenon is so complex that it can be addressed only through change in organizational culture. A framework for a multi-level analysis and remediation should be presented *(Sloan et al., 2010).*

Community health nurses have an important role to end workplace violence. In primary prevention the nurse should stop violence before it occurs; so education a stress management technique plays a major part. In secondary prevention the nurse must assess, diagnose and treat victims and perpetrators of violence. In tertiary prevention the nurse must rehabilitate individuals, families, groups or communities and includes both victims and perpetrators of violence *(Nies and Mcewen, 2011).*

Significance of the study:

The phenomenon of mobbing has not been fully confronted, researched and studied up till now *(Sloan et al., 2010).* But the concern over the presence of work-related violence and its impact on an individual's well-being continues to be a major concern in the nursing profession *(Hutchinson, 2009).* The mobbing phenomenon is considered an important topic of research within the field of nursing and medicine *(Cassell, 2010; Clark and Springer, 2010).*

The study of the types, sources and frequency of mobbing behaviors encountered in the workplace has attracted noticeable attention recently *(Uzun, 2003, Oztunc, 2006, Kisa, 2008, Efe and Ayaz, 2010, Pinar and Ucmak, 2010).* Especially in the last ten years the concept of mobbing□ has increasingly drawn the attention of studies on personal relations in the workplace *(Agervold, 2007, Girardi et al., 2007, Nolfe et al., 2007).*

Mobbing has been shown to negatively affect the physical and psychological health, development of workers and organizations by increasing the rates of leave, absenteeism, lowering morale, causing anger, burnout, underperformance and deterioration of corporate image and relationships among workers *(Zapf et al., 2010).* The person who is exposed to mobbing behaviors is left without help, without protection and alone in the workplace. This victim experiences physiological, psychological and social problems *(Yildirim and Yildirim, 2007).* The victims of mobbing suffer from several psychological stresses such as anxiety, depression, irritability and self-hate. The majority of victims exhibit various psychosomatic symptoms *(Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001).*

A few articles and documented data were implemented on mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers at Egyptian universities. Therefore, the researchers felt it necessary to study and shed light on the types, sources, response and effects of mobbing behaviors on the victims, and also to know what the participants did to escape from mobbing behaviors.

Aim of the study:

This study aims to identify the types, sources, response and behaviors to escape mobbing which occurs against demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University.

2. Subjects and Methods
Research design:

A cross-sectional descriptive survey was used in this study.

Settings:

This study was conducted at six faculties, three faculties from every strata. They were the Faculties of Commerce, Social Work and Law from the theoretical strata, and the Faculties of Engineering, Nursing and Medicine from the practical strata.

Sample:

A stratified random sample was used to recruit the study participants. The target populations of this

study were male and female demonstrators and assistant lecturers in the previously mentioned settings. The sample involved a total of (535) participants classified as follows: (225) of them were males and (310) were females. In addition, (332) were demonstrators and (203) were assistant lecturers.

Data collection tools:
Tool (1): Self-administered questionnaire:
This tool included the following two main parts:

(1) Socio-demographic data sheet:
It was developed by the researchers to collect data about the participants' age, sex, marital status, job classification, faculty type and years of experience.

(2) Mobbing behavior questionnaire:
This tool was adopted from (*Leymann, 1990, Zapf et al., 1996, Niedl*, *1996*, *Davenport et al., 1999, Fox and Stallworth, 2003*). It consisted of the following questions:
(A) Types of mobbing
It includes 33 questions used to assess the types of mobbing behaviors. It is divided into four main parts: 1- isolation form work (11 items), 2- attack on professional status (9 items), 3- attack on personality (9 items) and 4- direct negative behaviors (4 items).
(B) Sources of mobbing behaviors:
This part included questions regarding whether they were mobbed by the dean of faculty, vice-deans, head of the department, thesis supervisors, colleagues at the same level, teaching staff in the department, employees and students.
(C) Response to mobbing behavior:
These responses were divided into three main categories: 1- psychosocial reactions (15 items), 2- physiologic reactions (8 items) and 3- counter-productive behaviors (8 items).
(D) Participants behaviors to escape from mobbing:
This part included (10) questions about the different actions that participants did to escape the mobbing behaviors they faced such as taking revenge on the person who behaved like this or cursing the ones who acted like this.

The participants were asked to report the mobbing behaviors they had faced in the previous six months on a five-point Likert scale ranging from**:** 4 (always), 3 (very often) , 2(often) , 1 (sometimes) and zero (never).
Methodology:
I) Preparatory phase and administrative design:
1- The questionnaire was translated into Arabic by the researchers to suit the Egyptian culture. Also, it was revised and refined to remove any possible lack of clarity and ambiguity of wording or phrasing. The

questionnaire was produced in a dual language (Arabic and English).

After the construction of the tool, it was revised by a jury consisting of three professors of Community Health Nursing, Nursing Administration, and Psychiatric Medicine, so, the content validity was obtained and the alpha chronbach's reliability was 0.95.
2- Before embarking on the study, official letters were sent by the Dean of Faculty of Nursing to the Deans of Faculties included in this study as previously mentioned. These letters briefly explained the purpose and nature of this study. The researchers met all deans to take their written approval, explaining to them the purpose and data collection methods of the study.
3- Ethical committee: The approval of the ethical committee was obtained to implement this study.
4- Pilot Study:
After developing the tool, a pilot study was carried out on (10) participants: (5) demonstrators and (5) assistant lecturers. The individuals who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the sample. The aim of the pilot study was to test the feasibility and clarity of the tool and also to estimate the time required to fill in the questionnaire. According to the result of the pilot study, some necessary modifications were made to avoid the ambiguity of the questionnaire and the reconstruction of the tool was done.
II) Data collection:
A) Ethical consideration:
At the initial interview, each demonstrator and assistant lecturer was informed of the purpose and nature of the study, and the researchers emphasized that participation would be voluntary; hence every member had the right to participate or refuse to be included in the study. The consent for participation was taken orally. In addition, the confidentiality of the data was maintained, explained and also printed in the questionnaire .
B) Field work:
Data was collected in the period from the 1st of October 2012 until the 1st of February 2013. Participants were asked if they were interested and agreed to participate in the study. The researchers explained the main parts of the questionnaire. After that, the questionnaire forms were distributed and the participants were asked to complete the questionnaires. The researchers demonstrated any difficulty that the participants might face during answering the questionnaires.

The researchers were committed to take different specialties from the colleges which already had many programs and specialties such as the Faculties of Commerce and Engineering.

The average time taken for completing each questionnaire was around 10-15 minutes depending on

the participant's responses to the questions. Finally, the researchers thanked the participants for their cooperation.

C) Statistical analysis:

- Collected data were coded and verified prior to data entry. The entered data were revised before conducting the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation, etc..) were calculated using SPSS PC version 16.

- Chi-square test was used to compare differences in the distribution of frequencies among different groups; it is considered significant when P< 0.05.

D) Obstacles of the study:

A number of obstacles need to be acknowledged:

- The refusal rate was high at certain faculties.
- Few participants left some parts of the questionnaire unanswered, and this obligated the researchers to revise each questionnaire form and exclude those with incomplete answers.
- Some participants did not fully trust the confidentiality of the survey and were concerned that their answers could be identified or might be accessed by the Head of the Department or their Dean of the Faculty. So, the researchers excluded the sheets which took the same answer.

3. Results:

Table (1) shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the studied participants. It was found that nearly two thirds (62.8%) were 23-27 years old, more than half (57.9 %) were females and 42.1% were males.

As regards job classification, about two thirds (62.1%) were demonstrators and 37.9% were assistant lecturers, 65.4% of them were from theoretical faculties and 34.6% were from practical faculties. The highest percentage (62.8%) of the sample had work experiences ranging from 1 to < 6 years.

Table (2) demonstrates the types of mobbing behaviors against the sample under study in the previous six months. As regards the mobbing behaviors that cause isolation from work, it was found that about three quarters of them (73.2%) reported that their decisions and recommendations were criticized and rejected, (72.3%) were frequently exposed to interruption while they were speaking, and (71.7%) mentioned that they did not take any opportunity to prove themselves.

It was noticed that the distinct percentage regarding the attacks on professional status was found in a form of constantly found mistakes/errors in their work (81.3%), followed by making them responsible for more work than they can manage (79.0%).

Regarding the mobbing behavior directed to the personality of the participant, more than half were exposed to being talked about in a degrading and dishonoring manner in front of others, being belittled in a non-verbal way in front of others and saying untrue things about them (59.0 %, 56.4%, 54.5%, respectively). On the other hand, the minority of them (4.8%) mentioned that they were exposed to physical violence. Moreover, a statistically significant relation was found between gender and all types of mobbing behaviors.

Figure (1) reveals the total types of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers. 53.7%, 44.1%, 36.0% & 6.8% respectively among the studied demonstrators exposed to attacks on their professional status, behaviors causing isolation from work, attacks on personality and direct negative behaviors. Moreover, 44.3% of assistant lecturers attacked on their professional status, 33.9% experienced behaviors causing isolation from work and nearly one quarter attacked on their personality.

Table (3) demonstrates that thesis supervisors and departmental heads (18.7% and 18.1%, respectively) were considered the main sources of mobbing behaviors against the participants under study. Meanwhile, there is a statistically significant relation between the sources of mobbing behaviors against males and females, and between the participants from practical and theoretical faculties, single and married.

Concerning the psychosocial responses to mobbing behaviors, table (4) indicates that the majority mentioned that they replayed mobbing behaviors over and over in their minds and felt extremely sad when they remembered the antagonistic behaviors towards themselves (82.8%, 82.4%, respectively). Of them the percentage of females is higher than males. Moreover, (76.4%) felt tired and stressed.

Above two thirds of the subjects (68.6%, 65.2%, 62.6% respectively) responded physiologically to mobbing behaviors in the form of sleep disturbance, headache and eating too much or having a poor appetite.

As for the responses on work productivity, it was revealed that 62.2% of the studied participants had difficulty in concentration at jobs, and 62.0% spend most of their time making things unrelated to their work. Moreover, more than half (59.8%) were less attached to their work. In additions, there is a statistically significant relation between both males and females in relation to their responses to mobbing behaviors which were (psychosocial at P.0.001, physiologic P.0.006 and counter-productive work behaviors at P.0.002).

Regarding the total responses to mobbing behaviors as reported by demonstrators and assistant lecturers, figure (2) shows (49.6% & 43.4% respectively) of demonstrators and assistant lecturers responded psychosocially, 45.0 % & 32.0 % of demonstrators and assistant lecturers responded by physiologic reactions respectively. About one third of demonstrators and assistant lecturers responded by counter-productive work behaviors. More than one third of demonstrators and about two fifths of assistant lecturers taken actions to escape from mobbing behaviors

Table (5) revealed the actions taken by the studied participants to escape from mobbing behaviors. It was observed that a high percentage (80.7%) reported that they became more careful with their work to avoid criticism, while (80.1%) stated that they were working harder and were more organized. Moreover, 73.2% rectified the injustice they faced by talking face to face with the person. More than half (53.2%) reported the negative behaviors to their superiors. A statistically significant difference was found between male and female behaviors to escape from mobbing at (P.0.000).

Table (6) illustrates the difference between the types of mobbing behaviors and participants' responses in relation to the type of faculty, marital status and job classification. A significant relation was observed between participants' work at practical and theoretical faculties regarding the types of mobbing behaviors they encountered in the form of direct negative behaviors at P (0.001). Also, there was a significant relation between participants' work at practical and theoretical faculties regarding their actions to escape from mobbing at P (0.000).

In relation to the difference between single and married participants, a statistically significant relation was found between them in their psychosocial, physiologic responses and their actions to escape mobbing at P (0.000, 0.000, 0.000, respectively). Table (6) also indicates a statistically significant relation between demonstrators and assistant lecturers in the types of mobbing behaviors they encountered which cause isolation from work P (0.000), attack on professional status P (0.001) and attack on personality P (0.000), and also in their psychosocial reactions to mobbing P (0.05), physiologic reactions to mobbing P (0.001) and their actions to escape from mobbing behaviors P (0.03).

Table (1): Distribution of the studied demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University regarding their socio-demographic characteristics

| Socio-demographic characteristics	Demonstrators and assistant lecturers No. = 535	
	No.	%
Age / years :		
23 < 28 years	336	62.8
28 < 33 years	166	31.0
33 – 37 years	33	6.2
Mean ± SD	26.6 ± 3.3	
Sex :		
Male	225	42.1
Female	310	57.9
Marital status:		
Single	290	54.2
Married	245	45.8
Job classification:		
Demonstrators	332	62.1
Assistant lecturers	203	37.9
Type of faculty:		
Practical	185	34.6
Theoretical	350	65.4
Years of experiences:		
1- < 6 years	336	62.8
6-15 years	199	37.2
Mean ± SD	4.9 ± 3.3	
Total	535	100 %

Table (2): Types of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University in the previous six months

#Mobbing behaviors	Male (225)		Female (310)		Total (535)		Mean Score ± SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Causing isolation from work							
Behaving as if you are not seen or are not there in the work environment	135	60.0	218	70.3	353	65.9	1.2 ±1.3
Not answering your request to meet, talk and reading thesis	141	62.7	222	71.6	363	67.8	1.4±1.6
Not answering your letters and emails	130	57.8	216	69.7	346	64.6	1.3±1.4
Taking work from you that is your responsibility and giving it to someone in a lower position than you	107	47.6	145	46.8	252	47.1	1.1± 0.7
Not giving you an opportunity to prove yourself	134	59.6	250	80.6	384	71.7	1.4±1.8
Not informing you about organized social meetings	121	53.8	235	75.8	356	66.5	1.2±1.4
Having your decisions and recommendations criticized and rejected	159	70.7	233	75.2	392	73.2	1.2±1.5
Being inspected by people in a lower position than you	65	28.9	115	37.1	180	33.6	0.82± 0.4
Frequently interrupting you while speaking	154	68.4	233	75.2	387	72.3	1.2± 1.5
Hiding from you information, documents and materials that are necessary for your work	138	61.3	207	66.8	345	64.4	1.2± 1.4
Pressurizing you to resign or change your position	52	23.1	85	27.4	137	25.6	0.83±0.4
P-value	0.002*						
Attack on professional status							
Constantly finding mistakes/errors in your work and the results of your work	164	72.9	271	87.4	435	81.3	1.3± 1.8
Making you responsible for more work than you can manage	153	68.0	270	87.1	423	79.0	1.5± 2.3
Holding you alone responsible for the negative results of work carried out by others	120	53.3	229	73.9	349	65.2	1.2± 1.4
Blaming you for things that are not your responsibility	110	48.9	257	82.9	367	68.6	1.3± 1.6
Questioning your professional competency for every job you do	127	56.4	242	78.1	369	68.9	1.3± 1.6
Considering the work you do to be worthless and unimportant	85	37.8	191	61.6	276	51.5	1.2± 1.1
Constantly negatively evaluating your performance	107	47.6	208	67.1	315	58.8	1.2±1.3
Making you feel as if you and your work are being inspected	159	70.7	242	78.1	401	74.9	1.3±1.6
Being forced to do a job that will negatively affect your self-confidence	109	48.4	215	69.4	324	60.5	1.2±1.2
P-value	0.0001*						

Cont. Table (2): Types of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University in the previous six months

#Mobbing behaviors	Male (225)		Female (310)		Total (535)		Mean Score ± SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Attack on personality							
Facing behaviors such as slamming their fist on the table	75	33.3	132	42.6	207	38.6	1.1± 0.7
Having untrue things said about you	106	47.1	186	60.0	292	54.5	1.3± 1.7
Being verbally threatened	93	41.3	197	63.5	290	54.2	1.4± 1.3
Talking about you in a degrading and dishonoring manner in front of others	126	56.0	190	61.3	316	59.0	1.2± 1.2
Using non-verbal behavior to belittle you in front of others	101	44.9	201	64.8	302	56.4	1.2± 1.2
Starting untrue rumors about your private life	101	44.9	101	32.6	202	37.7	0.96± 0.6
Suggesting that your mental health is not sound	61	27.1	48	15.5	109	20.3	0.71± 0.3
Questioning your honesty and reliability	78	34.7	191	61.6	269	50.2	1.3± 0.9
Writing unfair reports about you	69	30.7	153	49.4	222	41.5	1.4± 0.9
P-value	0.001*						
Direct negative behaviors							
Having physical violence used against you	6	2.7	20	6.5	26	4.86	0.39± 0.0
Having your personal possessions damaged	26	11.6	42	13.5	68	12.71	0.62± 0.2
Knowingly leaving when you enter a worksite	51	22.7	88	28.4	139	25.98	0.93± 0.4
Preventing or forbidding coworkers from talking with you	77	34.2	76	24.5	153	28.60	0.80± 0.4
P-value	0.001*						

More than one answer **- (*) Significant at P < 0.05; - Chi -Square test**
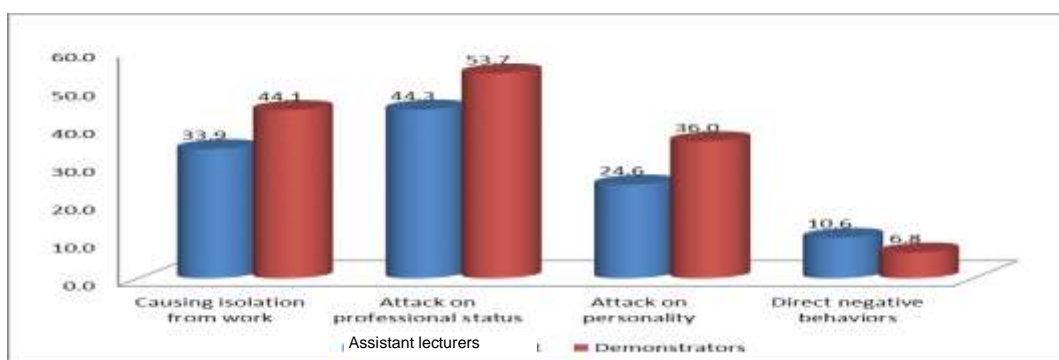
Figure (1): Total types of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers

Table (3): Sources of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers in relation to different variables

# Sources	Male (225)		Female (310)		◊Practical (185)		◊Theoretical (350)		Single (290)		Married (245)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dean of faculty	16	7.1	32	10.3	35	10.00	13	7.0	28	9.6	21	8.7	48	9.1
Vice-deans	24	10.6	9	2.9	24	6.8	8	4.3	22	7.5	11	4.5	33	6.2
Head of the department	29	12.8	67	21.6	72	20.5	24	12.9	50	17.2	46	19.1	96	18.1
Thesis supervisors	25	11.1	64	20.6	74	21.1	15	8.1	39	13.4	50	20.8	99	18.7
My friends at the same level (demonstrators)	40	17.7	30	9.6	17	4.8	53	28.6	40	13.7	30	12.5	70	13.2
My friends at the same level (assistant lecturers)	18	8	18	5.8	18	5.1	19	10.2	21	7.2	15	6.2	33	6.2
Teaching staff in the department	25	11.1	50	16.1	57	16.2	18	9.7	24	8.2	41	17.0	71	13.4
Employees	32	14.2	25	8.0	41	11.7	19	10.2	45	15.5	14	5.8	60	11.3
Students	18	8	12	3.8	9	2.5	21	11.3	17	5.8	13	5.4	30	5.7
Total	227	100.9	307	99.03	347	99.1	190	102.7	286	98.6	241	100.4	540	101.9
P-value	0.001*				0.001*				0.004*				-	

More than one answer; - (*) Significant at P < 0.05; - Chi -Square test

N.B. ◊Theoretical faculties includes: Faculties of Commerce, Social Work and Law - ◊Practical faculties includes: Engineering, Nursing and Medicine

Table (4): Responses to mobbing behaviors as reported by demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University

#Responses	Male (225)		Female (310)		Total (535)		Mean Score ± SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Psychosocial reactions:							
I feel extremely sad when I remember the antagonistic behaviors towards me	174	77.3	267	86.1	441	82.4	1.5± 2.5
I replay/re-experience the behavior over and over in my mind	170	75.6	273	88.1	443	82.8	1.3± 2.1
I feel afraid when I enter the workplace and I hate the work	148	65.8	218	70.3	366	68.4	1.4± 1.5
I feel lonely	138	61.3	217	70.0	355	66.3	1.4± 1.4
I don't trust anyone at work	137	60.9	204	65.8	341	63.7	1.2± 1.3
I feel less self-confidence and self-respect	76	33.8	176	56.8	252	47.1	1.2±0.9
My life outside work (my marriage and my family) is negatively affected by this	126	56.0	227	73.2	353	65.9	1.4±1.6
I feel guilty most of the time	133	59.1	196	63.2	329	61.5	1.4± 1.4
I feel as if I want to cry	85	37.8	235	75.8	320	59.8	1.5± 1.4
I feel as if I have been betrayed	40	17.8	93	30.0	133	24.8	0.92± 0.4
I am experiencing an unexplained fear that something bad is going to happen	137	60.9	174	56.1	311	58.1	1.2±1.1
I am receiving support from a psychologist because of the behaviors I was exposed to	136	60.4	155	50.0	291	54.3	1.4±1.2
I feel tired and stressed	168	74.7	241	77.7	409	76.4	1.4± 1.8
I am excessively discontented and easily frightened	115	51.1	176	56.8	291	54.3	1.2± 0.9
I think I am depressed	118	52.4	215	69.4	333	62.2	1.4± 1.4
P-value	0.001*						
Physiologic reactions							
My sleep regularity is disturbed	121	53.8	246	79.4	367	68.6	1.4± 1.6
I am experiencing changes in my blood pressure	76	33.8	197	63.5	273	51.0	1.4± 1.1
I want to eat too much or I have a poor appetite	117	52.0	218	70.3	335	62.6	1.4± 1.4
I have chest pain and heart palpitations	101	44.9	157	50.6	258	48.2	1.3± 1.0
I use cigarettes or medications (substance abuse)	33	14.7	55	17.7	88	16.4	0.91± 0.3
I have headache	108	48.0	241	77.7	349	65.2	1.5± 1.6
I have stomach and intestinal complaints	100	44.4	184	59.4	284	53.0	1.4± 1.1
I have developed uncontrollable movements/tics	95	42.2	97	31.3	192	35.8	1.5± 16.6
P-value	0.006*						

Cont. Table (4): Responses to mobbing behaviors as reported by demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University

Responses	Male (225)		Female (310)		Total (535)		Mean Score ± SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Counter-productive work behaviors:							
I spend most of my time doing things unrelated to my work	133	59.1	199	64.2	332	62.0	1.1± 0.7
I feel less attached to work	116	51.6	204	65.8	320	59.8	1.1± 1.1
I make it look as if I am very busy even when I'm not doing anything	106	47.1	154	49.7	260	48.6	1.2± 1.2
When something needs to be done I move very slowly	88	39.1	100	32.3	188	35.1	0.96± 0.7
I have conflict with coworkers at work	104	46.2	172	55.5	276	51.5	0.95± 0.6
I have difficulty concentrating on a job	114	50.7	219	70.6	333	62.2	1.3± 1.1
I make mistakes with my job	120	53.3	209	67.4	329	61.5	1.3± 1.3
I can't do any work in the workplace	96	42.7	198	63.9	294	54.9	1.1± 1.0
P-value	0.002*						

 # More than one answer ;- (*) Significant at P < 0.05; - Chi -Square test
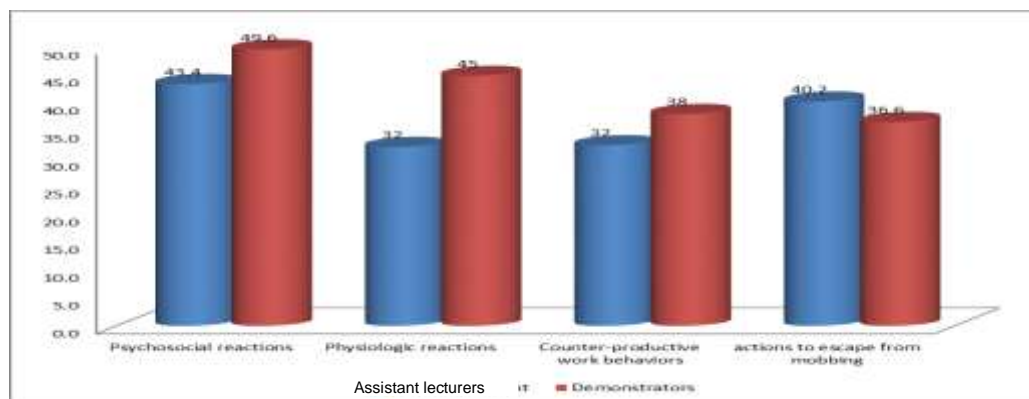

Figure (2): Total responses to mobbing behaviors as reported by demonstrators and assistant lecturers

Table (5): Distribution of the studied demonstrators and assistant lecturers working at Assiut University regarding their actions to escape from mobbing

#Actions	Male (225)		Female (310)		Total (535)		Mean Score± SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Sometimes I think about taking revenge on the person who behaved like this	119	52.9	121	39.0	240	44.8	1.4±1.4
I am cursing the ones who acted like this against me	88	39.1	55	39.0	143	26.7	1.2±0.8
I am seriously thinking about resigning from the institution	93	41.3	129	17.7	222	41.5	0.79±0.4
I am thinking about changing my work area within the institution	105	46.7	148	41.6	253	47.2	1.3±0.9
I am trying to rectify the injustice I faced by talking face to face with the person	155	68.9	237	47.7	392	73.2	1.4 ±1.0
I am reporting the negative behaviors I experienced to my superiors	115	51.1	170	76.5	285	53.2	1.5±1.9
I am thinking about pressing legal charges against the person showing me negative workplace behaviors	65	28.9	104	54.8	169	31.5	1.3±1.2
I am being a lot more careful with my work to avoid criticism	173	76.9	259	33.5	432	80.7	1.2± 0.7
I am working harder and more organized	180	80.0	249	83.5	429	80.1	1.5± 2.5
I think about committing suicide sometimes	19	8.4	53	80.3	72	13.4	0.81± 0.2
P-value	0.0000*						

More than one answer; **- (*) Significant at P < 0.05;   - Chi -Square test**

Table (6): Difference between types of mobbing behaviors and participant responses in relation to type of faculty, marital status and job classification

Mobbing behaviors	Type of faculty				Marital Status				Job classification			
	◊Theoretical (350)	◊Practical (185)	T	P Value	Single (290)	Married (245)	T	P Value	Demonstrators (332)	Lecturer assistant (203)	T	P Value
	Mean± SD	Mean± SD			Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD			Mean± SD	Mean± SD		
Types: Causing isolation from work	9.4± 13.7	8.9± 16.6	1.29	0.19	8.7± 12.3	9.5± 14.5	2.74	0.006*	8.7 ± 11.9	9.7 ± 15.7	4.64	0.000*
Attack on professional status	9.5± 12.4	9.4± 13.0	0.62	0.53	9.4± 11.6	9.5± 13.7	2.41	0.01*	8.9 ± 11.5	10.2± 14.4	3.26	0.001*
Attack on personality	7.6± 8.5	8.2 ± 8.1	0.52	0.60	7.9± 7.9	7.6± 8.9	1.36	0.17	7.6 ± 7.3	7.9± 10.0	3.91	0.000*
Direct negative behaviors	1.9± 1.0	2.7± 1.7	3.28	0.001*	2.2± 1.2	2.3 ± 1.3	0.35	0.73	2.5 ± 1.4	1.7± 1.0	1.86	0.06
Responses: Psychosocial reactions	14.5± 22.2	12.9 ± 21.0	0.99	0.32	11.4± 18.9	15.9 ± 25.3	5.23	0.000*	13.1± 20.9	15.2± 23.3	1.89	0.05*
Physiologic reactions	7.1± 9.2	7.5± 9.1	0.09	0.92	6.4± 7.3	7.6 ± 11.4	6.59	0.000*	7.4± 8.3	6.8± 10.5	13.42	0.001*
Counter-productive work behaviors	6.3± 8.2	7.6± 8.6	0.59	0.55	7.1± 8.1	6.4 ± 8.7	0.99	0.33	7.2± 8.2	6.1± 8.8	0.95	0.341
Actions	7.4± 11.4	8.3± 14.4	4.26	0.000*	8.0± 13.7	7.3 ± 10.9	4.04	0.000*	7.9± 13.0	7.7 ± 11.4	2.25	0.03*

N.B. ◊Theoretical faculties include: Faculties of Commerce, Social Work and Law - ◊Practical faculties include: Engineering, Nursing and Medicine
- (T) test was used

4. Discussion

Clearly, in the modern world people spend most of their time at the workplace. Universities are workplaces where people are in intense communication and interaction. There are many factors which increase labor productivity of academics and which make the phenomenon of mobbing occur *(Sargin and Cǒvǒlǒdaǧ, 2013)*.

The findings of the present study indicated that 57.9% of the studied participants were females and 42.1% were males. Our findings stand in line with *Sargin and Cǒvǒlǒdaǧ (2013)* who conducted a research on mobbing in the academic environment at Turkey. 62.1% of our study participants were

demonstrators and 37.9% were assistant lecturers, unlike *Yildirim et al., (2007)* who reported that 50% of their study participants were research assistants and only 22% were instructors. The difference could be explained by the variation of the aim and nature of the research.

The current research illustrated that the study participants encountered different types of mobbing behaviors: 73.2% reported that their decisions and recommendations were criticized and rejected, 72.3% were frequently exposed to interruption while they were speaking, and 71.7% mentioned that they did not take any opportunity to prove themselves.

These results contradict with *Yildirim et al., (2007)* who indicated that 55% of the nursing school teaching staff in Turkey were exposed to the following mobbing behaviours: their decisions and recommendations were criticized and rejected, 43% reported they were frequently interrupted while they were speaking and 47% did not take any opportunity to prove themselves. This difference could be demonstrated by the fact that our research emphasizes on demonstrators and assistant lecturers rather than on all the teaching staff and we suggest that junior staff could be the victims of mobbing for many reasons.

These findings may be attributed to the fact of power imbalance between victims and perpetrators which puts the junior target group at risk of negative behaviors, especially mobbing. The individuals feel as if they are in a position from which they will not be able to defend themselves. Formal power differences are quite normal in academic environments *(Tepper, 2000).*

The higher level of mobbing behaviors against assistant lecturers and demonstrators may be due to the assumption that they work in an academic career that requires a high level of personal involvement, which means sensing, expressing emotions and building up different personal relationships. The higher level of personal involvement and the variations in the level of job-related knowledge may be cornerstone possibilities

Also, it is difficult to evaluate or appraise the assistant lecturers' and demonstrators' jobs objectively and this lack of objectivity offers a lot of opportunities for attacking by mobbing. Although those high-risk groups often come across mobbing, bullying and harassment behaviors in their work environment, they are reluctant to complain because they tend to accept it as just "part of the job", and they can't express the experience if it is from their thesis supervisors, deans or vice-deans of the faculty, head of the department or from teaching staff in the department. Therefore, workplace mobbing is severely underreported *(Magnavita and Heponiemi, 2011).*

Our research demonstrated that the main sources of mobbing behaviors against male participants are their friends at same level (demonstrators), followed by departmental heads, while females are mobbed by their thesis supervisors and departmental heads. Moreover, married participants are mobbed by their thesis supervisors.

This result stand in line with *(Jankowiak et al ., 2007, Bjo¨rkqvist et al., 1994, Salin, 2003 and Ferrinho et al., 2003)* who mentioned that most of the mobbing victims were married and females

This is because married participants, especially females from practical colleges, work for a long time, may be heavily overloaded due to the faculty nature,

may be responsible for completing their thesis, performing job duties (studying/ attending courses, seminars or workshop) and may have children who need care from them, in addition to the family requirements. Some of these make them delayed in performing their duties in the exact deadlines, which in turn makes them liable to being exposed for mobbing by their supervisors and departmental heads.

Jealousy and competition are considered an important reason for being subjected to mobbing in different work environments, especially persons at the same level. In addition, a high percentage of our study participants were demonstrators, younger in age and have lack of experience.

Moreover, individuals who did not show occupational commitment complained about mobbing behavior more than those showing occupational commitment. This fact could be considered a reason why thesis supervisors and departmental heads are a main source for mobbing against our study participants *(Sahin et al., 2012)*, or why mobbing may be due to managers who had poor problem-solving skills. This study demonstrated that the majority (82.8%, 82.4%) of the participants responded psychologically to mobbing behaviors as follows: they replay mobbing behaviors over and over in their minds and feel extremely sad when they remember the antagonistic behaviors towards themselves, respectively. Of them the percentage of females is higher than males. Moreover, (76.4%) feel tired and stressed.

Similar finings are reported by *Bjo¨rkqvist (2001)* who found that women frequently face mobbing and they try to hurt their enemies psychologically, rather than physically. In addition, they prefer to display passive aggressive behaviors.

Above two thirds of the current research participants (68.6%, 65.2%, 62.6% respectively) responded physiologically to mobbing behaviors in the form of disturbance in sleep regularity, headache and eating too much or having a poor appetite. Our findings are partially supported by *Yildirim et al., (2007)* who found that the most common responses were that they felt tired and stressed (75%), had headaches (69%), replayed the behavior over and over (69%). These physical symptoms may be deeply attributed to the psychological effects of mobbing, which cause some stress-based physical problems reflect on psychosomatic forms.

The distinct percentage (80.7%, 80.1%) among our studied participants reported different actions taken to escape from mobbing such as (they became more careful with their work to avoid criticism in addition to working harder and being more organized, respectively). This finding is consistent with *Yildirim et al., (2007)* who found that (78%) work harder and

are better organized and (78%) are more careful with their work to avoid criticism.

We think that persons who perform these behaviors do this as a defense mechanism to avoid the effect of mobbing on their academic achievement. Generally most of juniors had a degree of shyness or introverted and one that does not want to cause any waves or report anything to their superiors because of the fear of retaliation.

Conclusion:

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the majority of the subjects under study were exposed to mobbing behavior. Attacks on their professional status consider the dominant type of mobbing behaviors against demonstrators and assistant lecturers followed by behaviors causing isolation from work. The main sources of mobbing behaviors against the participants were thesis supervisors, departmental heads and teaching staff in their departments. It was observed that the nearly half of the participants responded psychologically to mobbing behaviors to which they were exposed in the form of: replaying over and over in their minds and feeling extremely sad. More than two thirds responded physiologically to mobbing behaviors in form of sleep disturbance and headache. The majority reported that they became more careful with their work to avoid criticism and worked harder. Moreover, it was observed that there is a statistically significant difference between demonstrators and assistant lecturers in the types of mobbing behaviors they encountered, as well as in their psychosocial and physiological reactions to mobbing, and their actions to escape mobbing behaviors.

Recommendations:

An educational program should be applied to mangers, demonstrators and assistant lecturers at Assiut University about the advantage of the open managerial approach, their legal rights, how to respond appropriately, stress management techniques and the measures to prevent the development of mobbing behaviors.

Departmental heads must monitor the mobbing behavior, come up with solutions by making a risk analysis and provide an environment in which employees are able to express their complaints and facilitate respectful interactions.

Enhancement and development of policies, rules and regulations against the perpetrators of mobbing.

Further research is needed to provide comprehensive data about the circumstances associated with mobbing, its degrees and its effect on the organization.

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