A Comparison of Generation Xer versus Millennial Hotel Employees on Mobbing and Sexual Harassment Perceptions and their Impact on Workplace Creativity[1]

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Abstract

This study investigated to what extend psychological terrorization, i.e. perceptions of mobbing and sexual harassment, are widespread among high-end Istanbul hotel employees and how these affect the employees' workplace creativity. The primary data was collected with a questionnaire and the total number of respondents was 203. When the employees perceived psychological terrorization -due to experienced or witnessed mobbing or sexual harassment-, it indeed did hamper their self-assessed workplace creativity. However, the analyses also showed that there are marked differences between the Generation Xer and Millennial groups of employees. The Millennials' creativity is influenced much more strongly by such perceptions. Based on these results, human resource recommendations for management of both generational groups are provided.

İşyeri Yaratıcılığının Üzerindeki Etkenleri Bağlanımda, Bezdiri ve Cinsel Taciz Algıları Bakımından X ve Milenyum Kuşağı Otel İşgörenlerinin Karşılaştırılması

Özet

Bu araştırmada, İstanbul'daki beş yıldız ve butik otel işgörenlerinin psikolojik terörle, diğer bir tanımla bezdiri ve cinsel tacizle, ilgili algılarının ne ölçüde yaygın olduğunun yanı sıra, bunların

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işgörenlerin işyeri yaratıcılıklarını nasıl etkilediği incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın birincil verileri hazırlanan anket yoluyla toplanmış ve toplam katılımcı sayısı 203 olmuştur. Beklendiği üzere, işgörenler yaşadıkları veya gözlemledikleri bezdiri ve cinsel taciz algıladıklarında psikolojik terör, işyeri yaratıcılıklarına dair kendi değerlendirmeleri üzerinde bozucu etkisinin olmaktadır. Ancak, analizler, X Kuşağı ve Milenyum kuşağı işgörenlerin bu değerlendirmelerinin önemli farklılıklar olduğunu da göstermektedir. Bu tür durumlara dair algılar, Milenyum kuşağı işgörenlerinin yaratıcılıklarını çok daha kuvvetli biçimde etkilemektedir. Bu sonuçlar ışığında, her iki kuşaktan işgörenlerin yönetimine dair insan kaynakları önerileri geliştirilmiştir.

Introduction

One of the recent challenges for the hospitality industry world-wide is the changes in the workforce, as Millennials now form a larger proportion of the current labor market. There is a growing hospitality literature that points to the attitudinal and behavioral differences between Millennial employees and employees from earlier generational groups (e.g., Chen and Choi, 2008; Gursoy, Mailer and Chi, 2008). Inelmen, Zeytinoglu and Uygur (2012), drawing on a sample of Turkish employees from the five star hotels, suggested that Millennials may indeed be distinct in terms of their work behavior, values and attitudes from the Xers Generation. Nevertheless, Solnet and Hood (2008) proposed that more empirical research is needed to verify the breadth and strength of these differences in various segments of hospitality industry. The present study aimed to compare employees from different generations, on psychological terror perceptions and their impact on workplace creativity levels. In more specific terms, perceived mobbing and sexual harassment and their impact on creativity of Generation Xer and Millennial employees was investigated. This approach has shed further light on the ongoing discourse in business circles and academic literature about the generational differences.

Literature Review

In service industries, importance and effects of mobbing and sexual harassment was assessed to be fairly high, because of the intensity of human interaction in the organizations (Yamada,

2000). As a matter of fact, in the hospitality enterprises where "employee motivation and performance plays the leading role, and when relations and communication among employees realizes more frequently and intensely, it shows itself in various types of negative impacts, such as experiencing mobbing in the office" (Pelit and Pelit, 2014, p. 39). Since perceptions of mobbing or sexual harassment primes psychological terror, there is strong likelihood that it will have a negative effect on employees' creativity in the workplace, which the lodging sector managers are trying hard to increase.

Mobbing in the workplace is defined as an unethical communication and/or conduct towards one who is wanted to be in a defenseless position, and due to systematic and long lasting hostile behavior, mobbing results with psychological problems of the sufferer (Leymann, 1996). Mobbing activities includes all kinds of rude attitudes and might cause lots of negative results up to suspension of victim persons with disturbance of employees' psychological and physical health within the organization (Pelit and Pelit, 2014). Additionally, as sexual harassment, i.e. unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, is more prevalent in the hospitality industry than in society at large, special attention should be payed to it. Prevalence of the sexual harassment cases is partly because of extremely close contact with customers, unusual hours and conditions of work, the gendered nature of work and power within the industry (Ram, Tribe and Biran, 2016). While various behaviors may be perceived as mobbing or sexual harassment, someone else who treated by the same set of behaviors may not think it as mistreatment. This makes victim's situation complicated and not easily to be identified as a form of workplace incivility by others.

Continued existence of creative employees is significant necessity for every workplace. Organizations may benefit from the creative ideas with respect to the new ways of the services, much more effective and updated service recovery processes, new ideas about the current service standards, dynamism within the organization. Thus, any person, who has the capability to generate creative ideas and take the responsibility of any related outcome of those novel ideas, has a crucial role for organizations. Workplace creativity is generally framed in the contacts of organizational products, services, processes and procedures and focuses on the

production of new and useful ideas (Amabile et al., 1996). The term "creativity" was defined in several different ways in the literature, but the working definition used here describes it as a process that results in novelty, accepted as useful or satisfying at least by a certain group of others, at some time period (De Sousa, Pellissier and Montevideo, 2012).

The present study investigated the employees of high-end hotels in İstanbul, as these enterprises are the flagships of the industry, and where workplace creativity -understood as creating new and useful ideas- is emphasized the most. According to Zontek (2016), in order to achieve such high standards of service quality, those lodging facilities started to give more and more importance to hire creative employees. However, it also needs to be taken into account that there are differences between generational groups of employees in terms of work attitudes and perceptions. Research showed this is true in terms of organizationally important work attitudes (Inelmen et al., 2012), perceptions of employees about the desired level "initiative and scope for creativity in one's work" (Solnet and Hood, 2008, p. 62), and characteristics such as Generation Xers being more self-reliant, expect immediate recognition, and work better in isolation, whereas Millennials more likely to believe in team work, but are also independent, self-confident, and highly expressive (Gursoy, Mailer and Chi, 2008). Whether there are differences in terms perceptions of mobbing and sexual harassment cases, as well as their impact on creativity between Generation Xer and Millennial employees was not been investigated until recently. The study reported here did set out to fill this void.
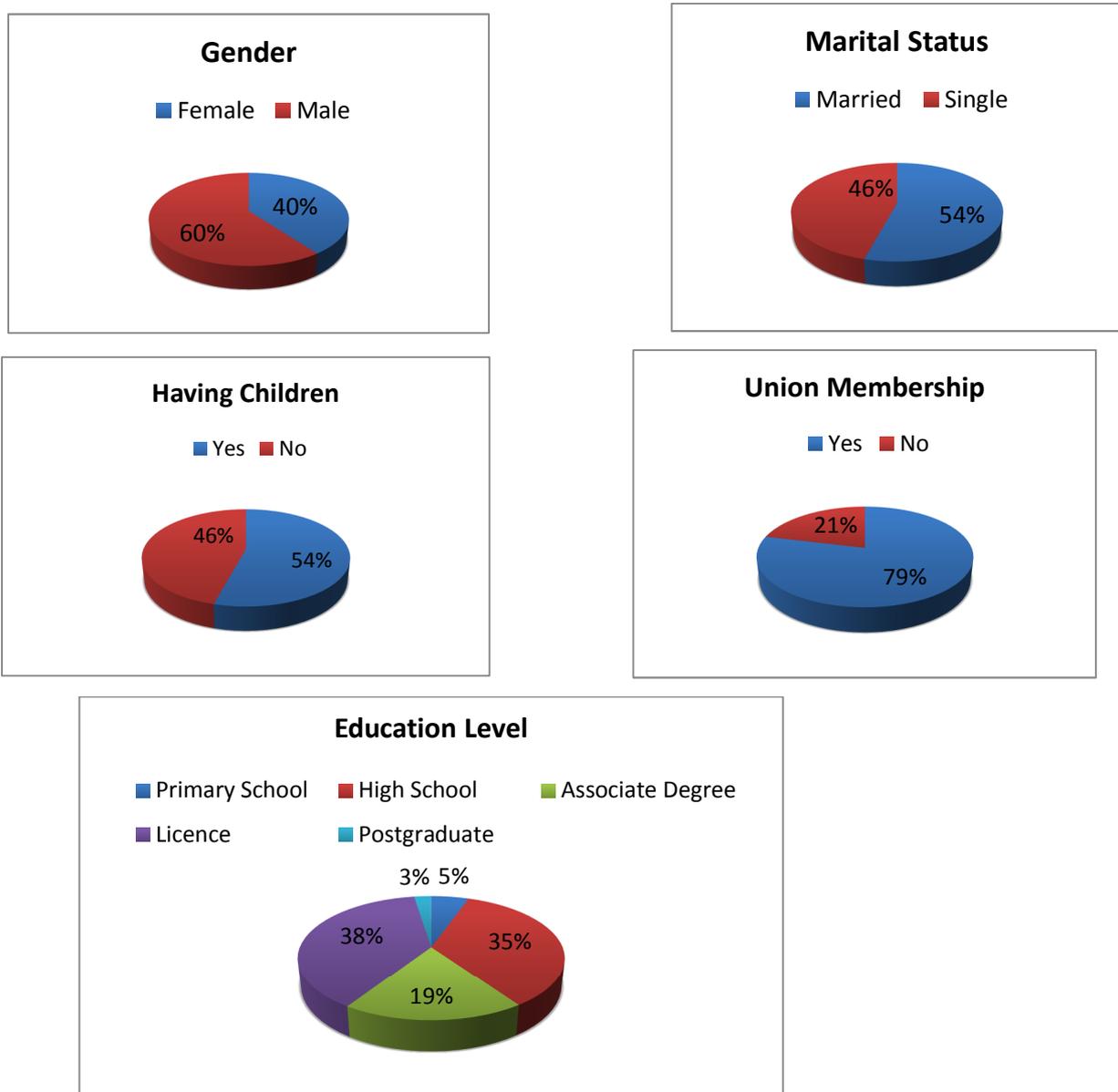
Methodology

Sample

This study targeted as its sampling universe the non-managerial employees that were gainfully employed in the high-end İstanbul hotels. Although their organizational structures could be somewhat different due to factors such as size, five-star and special class hotels have similar perspective when it comes to service excellence. Number of respondents of the questionnaire from both hotel categories totaled to 203. The questionnaires were collected from various

departments to account variety in the non-managerial employees (e.g., front of the house versus back-office) in order not to inflict a bias to the targeted sample. Parallel to the procedure used by Inelmen et al. (2012), the respondents that were born before 1982 were categorized as Generation Xer (n_1=62) and the rest were clustered as Millennials (n_2=141). Demographics of the sample are shown below with respective pie-charts corresponding to each characteristic:

Figure 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Income Importance

- Not İmportant at All
- Not Important
- Relatively İmportant
- Important
- Very Important

7% 20% 43% 30%
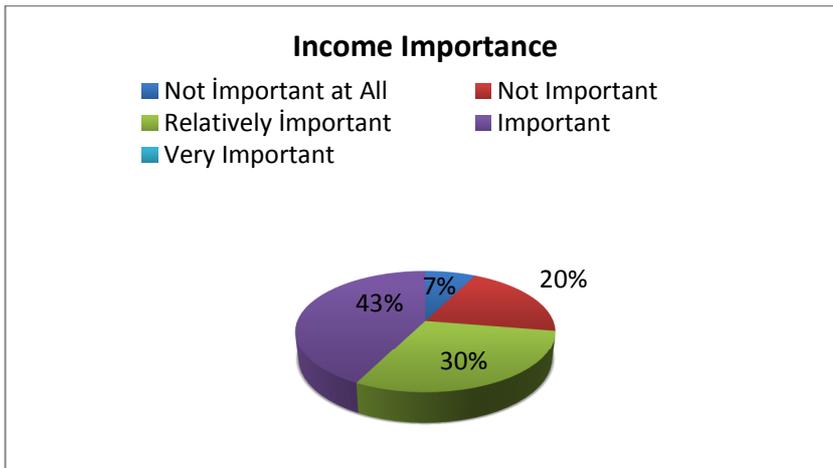
Measures

To measure the impact of psychological terrorization including perceptions of mobbing and sexual harassment on the hotel employees' creativity, a questionnaire was designed and employed. The questionnaire consisted of 70 questions (see Appendix 1). The data collection is completed with this questionnaire in April 2016 and screening the sample was done to ensure they were completed by the targeted employee group. After compiling the questionnaires the data was entered into SPSS. The summary of the questionnaire is as follows in Table 1:

Table 1. The Question Breakdown of the Questionnaire

1-7	Demographics
8-33	Workplace Creativity
34-70	Psychological Terror

The Leymann's Inventory of Psychological Terrorization (LIPT) inventory was employed to measure the levels of mobbing and sexual harassment perceptions (shortly referred as "perceived mobbing" from this point onwards) of the employees. The inventory investigates 45 activities to find out the presence of mobbing in five dimensions. The result of Cronbach's Alpha showed that the scale was reliable (see Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Statistic for LIPT

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,983	45

Additionally, the Person-Environment Fit Scale for Creativity (PEFSC), developed by Sen, Acar and Cetinkaya (2014), is used in order to measure the level of own organizational creativity perceptions of employees working in the targeted hospitality enterprises. The PEFSC scale consists of 26 items. The result of Cronbach's Alpha showed that this scale was also reliable (see Table 3).

Table 3. Reliability Statistic for PEFSC

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,957	26

First, a Pearson correlation was conducted that where the aim was to see whether there was a relationship between the mobbing perceptions and self-assessed workplace creativity. The result provided support for the expectation, and there was a relatively strong and negative correlation between the two variables (r=-.658), and this correlation was highly significant (p<.001). This finding showed that as the perceptions of mobbing increase, the workplace creativity level of the hotel employees decreases (see Table 4).

Table 4. The Pearson Correlation between the Main Study Variables

		Perceived Mobbing - LIPT
Work Creativity - PEFSC	Pearson Correlation	-,658[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
	N	203

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level.

Secondly, to analyze the effect of belonging to Xer or Millennial group an Independent Samples t-test was used that showed the average perceived mobbing was higher among Millennials (M_M=2.24; M_{Xer}=2.08) and this difference was statistically significant (t [134.11]= -2.53, p<.01). In order to assess any possible effect of the demographics, and the hotel employing the respondent, as well as perceived mobbing, a multiple regression analysis was conducted (see Table 5). The factors of employing hotel, gender, education, marital status, having children, union membership did not show a significant effect for the whole sample. The resulting R-square shows that the relationship between the included factors and workplace creativity is 45.6, where perceived mobbing, importance of income and notably age had significant effects.

Table 5. The Regression of the Factors on Work Creativity (N = 203)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4,415	,550		8,027	,000
	gender	-,109	,084	-,071	-1,296	,196
	age	-,015	,006	-,147	-2,326	,021
	education	,007	,046	,010	,160	,873
	marital	-,027	,095	-,018	-,288	,773
	children	-,076	,083	-,050	-,912	,363
	incomeimp	,086	,039	,137	2,222	,027
	union	,214	,109	,116	1,972	,050
	hotel	-,171	,105	-,114	-1,638	,103
	permobbing	-,477	,043	-,641	-11,018	,000

It is important for the purposes of this investigation to emphasize that the analysis shows us that the self-assessed workplace creativity tends to decline as the age of employees increased (r=-.21, p<.01), and it also proved to have a sizable effect in the regression (Beta=-.147, p<.05).

Thus, it could be suggested that the investigation of generational differences as aimed by the present study got some empirical support. Upon this result, the sample was divided as Generation Xer and Millennial sub-samples. On these two sub-samples, the regression model was used twice using the same dependent variable and factors. The only exception in this case was age, as this factor could have created a confounding effect, since it was used as the grouping variable. The analysis conducted on the data collected from Generation Xer sub-sample generated a statistically significant, but modest R-square of .269 (p<.05) for the prediction of self-assessed creativity. Here, the main determining factors were marital status (Beta=-.349, p<.05), perceived mobbing (Beta=-.294, p<.10) both having negative effects, and union membership (Beta=.252, p<.10) having a positive effect.

The data collected from Millennial sub-sample analyzed with the same regression model generated a substantial R-square of .598 result and it is statistically very significant (p<.001) for the prediction of self-assessed creativity. The determining factors in this case were importance of income with a positive (Beta=.169, p<.01), and perceived mobbing with a strong negative effect (Beta=-.746, p<.001). For the investigated groups, although the observed negative effect of perceived mobbing was expected, the magnitude of the effect was rather hefty for the Millennials. On the other hand, Generation Xers reported perceiving mobbing less as a source of decreased creativity, but other factors like being married or union membership could predict workplace creativity as about the same levels with mobbing perceptions.

Discussion and Conclusion

Consequences of mobbing experience often are increased staff demoralization and declined productivity. Even the witnesses of workplace incivility suffer as well and net result is experience a lowering of staff's moral, increased absenteeism, and/or decreased creativity (Richardson and McCord, 2001). The study that is presented in this report has taken a step further to show that cohort of the employee could be among the important factors that have an influence on creativity. It is hard to disagree with the fact that passing years do bring about

changes in cognitive, effective and physical functioning and motivation (Salthouse, 2012) and some of these changes could possibly be related to decreased creativity. Moreover, the present study showed that the generational group the employees belong to was an important factor for the determination of self-assessed creativity.

Specifically, the Millennial high-end hotel employees' self-assessed creativity is influenced strongly by mobbing perceptions. This could be attributed to the fact that the younger and less tenured employees feeling more vulnerable when faced mobbing and were more inclined to limit their contribution in the form of workplace creativity. For these employees, income was also an important factor for workplace creativity. Thus, it could be recommended that the managers of high-end hotels should put monetary reinforcement to their agenda, to secure increased creativity from Millennials. More importantly however, considering that mobbing perceptions could be very important for this group, the managers should work diligently to generate a mobbing and sexual harassment-free work environment.

The case of Generation Xers seems to be somewhat different in respect to the sources of workplace creativity. Perceptions of mobbing were less important as an antecedent of decreased creativity here, but having other occupations like being married or union membership had some influence. Thus, it could be suggested that partly due to their longer amount of work experience, and partly because the generational groups they belong to, it may be possible that this generation's employees may report lower levels of perceived mobbing as they get less affected by such occurrences. In future research, the model that was employed in this study needs to be complemented with other variables to assess the full range of antecedents that influence Generation Xer employees' workplace creativity. In a nut-shell, the two generational groups were found to be rather different, and this finding provided support for earlier academic work (e.g., Gursoy et al., 2008; Inelmen et al., 2012; Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons, 2010) and the popular discourse.

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Appendix 1

KONAKLAMA SEKTÖRÜ ÇALIŞMA YAŞAMINA DAİR BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Bu anket, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nden bir ekip tarafından, konaklama sektörü çalışanlarının iş yaşamlarına dair bazı bilgiler edinmek amacıyla oluşturulmuştur. Sorularda yer alan ifadeler için mutlak doğru veya yanlış cevap yoktur. Mümkün olduğunca size uygun görünen şekilde bütün sorulara cevap vermeniz, araştırmanın sağlıklı sonuçlara ulaşabilmesi için son derece önemlidir. Lütfen isminizi yazmayınız. Cevaplarınız tamamen gizli tutulacak olup, kesinlikle üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır. (Anketle ilgili eleştirileriniz varsa, bunları Doç. Dr. Kıvanç İnelmen'e, e-posta yolu ile inelmenk@boun.edu.tr adresinden iletebilirsiniz.) Katılımınız için teşekkür ederiz.

1. Cinsiyetiniz:	Kadın	Erkek		
2. Yaşınız:	……………………			
3. Eğitiminiz:	(1) İlköğretim	(2) Lise	(3) Ön lisans	(4) Lisans	(5) Lisansüstü
4. Medeni durumunuz:	Evli ya da birlikte yaşayan	Bekar / boşanmış		
5. Bakmakla yükümlü olduğunuz çocuğunuz var mı?	Hayır Evet Cevabınız evet ise sayısı ___			
6. Ailenizin ekonomik durumu için geliriniz ne kadar önemli?	Hiç önemli değil Önemli değil Kısmen önemli Önemli Çok Önemli			
7. Sendika üyesi misiniz?	Evet Hayır			

Aşağıdaki ifadeleri 1; kesinlikle katılıyorum, 2; katılıyorum, 3; kararsızım, 4; katılmıyorum, 5; kesinlikle katılmıyorum olacak şekilde, size uygun olanını seçerek yanıtlayınız.

	1	2	3	4	5
8. Yeni yaşantı ve deneyimleri merak ederek, çeşitli konularla yakından ilgilenirim.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Risk almayı ve beklenmeyen sonuçlarla karşılaşmayı işimin bir parçası sayarım.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Bireysel inisiyatif alarak, cesur davranırım.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Olay ve olgular arasındaki farklı ilişki noktalarını görür ve değerlendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Yeni düşünceleri özümseyebilmek için esnek davranmaya çalışırım	1	2	3	4	5

13. Rekabet ederek, potansiyel fırsatları somut yararlara dönüştürmeye çalışırım	1	2	3	4	5
14. Yeni şeyler denemeyi/uygulamayı önemseyerek, girişimci davranırım.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Her seferinde yeni bilgi ve becerileri kullanmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Sürekli öğrenerek kendimi geliştirmenin yollarını ararım.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Yeni hedeflere ulaşmak için mevcut sınırların ötesine geçmeye çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Yapılandırılmamış, farklı iş süreçlerini kullanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Yeni yöntemlerin işe koşulması için değişime açık bir tutum takınırım.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Beklenenin üstünde ve ötesinde performans göstermeye çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Çok yönlü hareket ve dinamizm içinde olmaya gayret ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Sorunlara farklı çözümler geliştirmek için rutin davranış kalıplarını terk ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Yeni fikirlerin ortaya çıkması ve uygulaması için yöneticiler gerektiğinde kuralları esnetirler.	1	2	3	4	5
24. İşimi geliştirmeye dönük yeni bir düşünceye/uygulamaya sahip olduğumda bunu yöneticilerimle kolaylıkla paylaşırım.	1	2	3	4	5

Yönetim…

25. …yeni bir fikir/uygulama önerdiğimde onu ciddiye alır ve geliştirme yollarını arar.	1	2	3	4	5
26. …çalışanların sıra dışı buluş veya uygulamalarını gördüğünde hemen ödüllendirme yoluna gider	1	2	3	4	5
27. …çalışanlara özgürce düşünme ve davranmaları için uygun bir ortam hazırlar.	1	2	3	4	5
28. … çalışanlara hata yapmaktan korkmamalarını ve risk almalarını teşvik eder.	1	2	3	4	5
29. … yapılan hata ve yanlışları birer öğrenme aracı olarak görür ve değerlendirir.	1	2	3	4	5
30. … çalışanların bilgi ve becerilerini geliştirmek için sürekli biçimde eğitim hizmetleri sunar.	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
31. Üstün başarılara imza atan personelle gurur duyan bir yönetim vardır.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Yöneticiler, farklı insanların farklı düşünme biçimlerine saygı gösterirler.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Yöneticilerim, farklı düşünme ve davranmaya özendiren demokratik liderliği benimserler	1	2	3	4	5

İş arkadaşlarım…

	1	2	3	4	5
34. … ben yokmuşum gibi davranırlar	1	2	3	4	5
35. … benimle yüksek ses tonuyla konuşurlar	1	2	3	4	5
36. … arkamdan konuşur	1	2	3	4	5
37. … ile düşmanca ilişkilerim vardır	1	2	3	4	5
38. … beni azarlamak için bahane ararlar	1	2	3	4	5
39. … tarafından günah keçisi ilan edildiğimi düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
40. … kişisel eşyalarıma zarar veriyor.	1	2	3	4	5
41. … benim özel yaşamımla ilgili olarak gereksiz eleştirilerde bulunuyorlar.	1	2	3	4	5
42. … benim dini inançlarımla ilgili olarak eleştirilerde bulunmaktadırlar.	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
43. İş arkadaşlarımın beni boykot ettikleri düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
44. İş arkadaşlarımın beni reddettiğini ve bana arkadaşça olmayan tavırlarla yaklaştıklarını düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
45. İşte aşağılayıcı sözlerin hedefi haline geldiğimi düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
46. Çevremde düşmanca bir havanın olduğunu hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Çalışırken kendimi çok kaygılı hissederim	1	2	3	4	5
48. İş arkadaşlarımın benimle ilgili dedikodu yaptıklarını düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
49. Saygısızca davranışların hedefi haline geldiğimi düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
50. İş arkadaşlarımın sürekli bana baktığı izlenimine kapılıyorum	1	2	3	4	5

51. Molalarda yalnız kalıyorum	1	2	3	4	5
52. Kimsenin beni dinlemediğini düşünüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
53. İş arkadaşlarımdan yazılı tehditler alıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Hafif derecede fiziksel şiddete maruz kalıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Cinsel tacize maruz kaldığımı düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Cinsel içerikli kabaca şakalara maruz kalıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Dış görünüşüm ile dalga geçiliyor.	1	2	3	4	5
58. İş arkadaşlarımdan telefonda tehditler alırım.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Hiçbir şey işten daha önemli değildir.	1	2	3	4	5
60. İşi benim için her şeyden önce gelir.	1	2	3	4	5
61. Siyasi görüşlerim eleştiri odağı haline geliyor.	1	2	3	4	5
62. İş arkadaşlarımın özelime girdiğini düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
63. Uzmanlık gerektirmeyen basit işler bana verilir.	1	2	3	4	5
64. İş için kullandığım araç gereçler bana haber verilmeden kaldırılır.	1	2	3	4	5
65. Benim uzmanlık alanıma uygun olmayan işler bana verilir.	1	2	3	4	5
66. Aldığım ücrete uygun olmayan işler bana verilir.	1	2	3	4	5
67. Gereksiz işlerle ilgili olarak çalışmam istenmektedir.	1	2	3	4	5
68. Kariyerimin yönetim tarafından engellendiğini düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
69. Yetenek gerektirmeyen işler bana veriliyor.	1	2	3	4	5
70. Kariyer gelişimimin kasten engellendiğini düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5