The Effects of Ethical Climates on Bullying Behaviour in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT. Various aspects of the relationship between ethical climate types and organizational commitment have been examined, although a relationship with the concept of bullying, which may be very detrimental to an organization, has not attracted significant attention. This study contributes to the existing research by taking the effects of bullying behaviour into consideration. The aim of this study is to explore the effects of bullying behaviour upon the relationship between ethical climate types and organizational commitment. It will be noted that work-related bullying behaviour significantly mediated the relationship between instrumentality climate and two of the dimensions of organizational commitment. Significant relationships between ethical climate dimensions and organizational commitment can also be detected. By emphasizing a required ethical climate dimension for organizations this study therefore presents in outline a partial strategy to reduce bullying behaviour and to increase organizational commitment.

KEY WORDS: bullying, mobbing, ethical climate, organizational commitment, supervisory support

Introduction

Within the last decade, researchers have started to emphasize the importance of aggressive behaviour at workplace. The scope of aggressiveness is a broad one, ranging from violence at one end to incivility at the other. Aggressiveness in the workplace is a very important subject, however, and although violence attracts immediate attention because it is more readily visible and evident, subtler forms of unwelcome behaviour like bullying/mobbing or general incivility might be underestimated despite the harm they cause to both organizations and individuals. There is considerable research for identifying bullying as an extreme form of stress (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Groeblinghoff and Becker, 1996; Leymann

and Gustaffson, 1996; Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001, 2002). In addition to producing organizational outcomes like absenteeism, and decreases in turn-over, commitment, job satisfaction, productivity and efficiency (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001; Salin, 2003), bullying at work has also been observed to lead to reduced psychological and physical health, as well as greater anxiety and depression (Hoel et al., 2004; Mayhew et al., 2004; Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001, 2002; Sparks et al., 2001). Leymann (1996) who laid the theoretical foundations for mobbing/bullying research, highlighted the fact that in prolonged cases of bullying the damage to the victim would be so severe that the individual might even be forced to withdraw from the labour market.

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct that reflects employees' psychological states, which in turn defines their relationships with the organization (Glazer et al., 2004; Wasti, 2003). As mentioned above, bullying is detrimental to both organizational outcomes and the psychological state of individuals. Therefore, it is accepted that bullying will have a negative effect on all three components (normative, continuance and affective) of organizational commitment. On the other hand, the prevailing ethical climate type within an organization determines employees' decisions about what is right or wrong, and has an influence on employee behaviour (Cowie et al., 2002). As a result, the ethical climate is expected to affect both organizational commitment and the bullying behaviour of the employees (Hoel and Cooper, 2000; McCormack et al., 2006; Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush et al., 1997b; Wornham, 2003). Hence the primary aim of this study is to explore the effects of ethical climate types on bullying behaviour and the impact of bullying on the relationship between ethical climate types and organizational commitment.

Most of the studies related to the constructs explored in this study were completed in Western countries, reflecting Anglo/individualized cultural values (Yousef, 2002). Due partly to this, differences in the range of variables and the mobility of literature across different cultures (Glazer and Beehr, 2005) still remains relatively unexplored. Bearing this in mind, we will examine whether ethics is related to employee attitudes and behaviour, and investigate the factor structure of the Ethical Climate Questionnaire developed by Victor and Cullen (1988) within Turkish culture.

Definitions of bullying

During the last decade, various different concepts related to bullying have been explored (Aquino and Lamertz, 2004; Einarsen, 2000). Among these are: bullying, mobbing, incivility, victimization, workplace aggression, emotional abuse, employee abuse, mistreatment, intimidation, emotional harassment, psychological harassment and work mistreatment (WHO, 2003). Although these concepts vary in some aspects from each other, generally bullying is accepted as a term mostly used by English-speaking researchers, whereas, mobbing is generally used by German-speaking and north European commentators (Hoel and Beale, 2006).

Although bullying and mobbing are often used interchangeably, some differences have been identified between these concepts and their applications (Hoel and Beale, 2006). Zapf and Einarsen (2005) made a distinction between the two terms by relating bullying to behaviour that is directed towards a subordinate by a manager, and mobbing to unwanted behaviour between peers. A further distinction was made by other writers, associating bullying with more direct forms of aggression mostly performed by individuals, while relating milder forms performed by a group with mobbing (Leymann, 1996; Zapf, 1999). On the other hand, Einarsen (1999, p. 17) pointed out that, despite the differences, the above-mentioned concepts seemed to refer the same phenomenon, which involves ''the systematic persecution of a colleague, a subordinate or a superior, which, if continued, may cause severe social, psychological and psychosomatic problems for the victim''. Additionally, though Zapf (1999) referred to Leymann (1996),

and noted the difference between mobbing and bullying as such, he preferred to use the terms interchangeably, a practice that will be continued in this article, where these terms will also be used interchangeably, while excluding physical assaults due to the fact that employees rarely confront physical abuse, whereas they can be frequently exposed to psychological terror.

Leymann (1996, p. 168) gave the operational definition of mobbing (bullying) as:

> Psychological terror or mobbing in working life involves hostile and unethical communication, which is directed in a systematic way, by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual who, due to mobbing is pushed into a helpless or defenceless position, being held there by means of continuing mobbing activities. These actions occur on a very frequent basis (statistical definition: at least once a week) and over a long period of time (statistical definition: at least 6 months of duration).

In accordance with this definition researchers of bullying consistently agree that the act is systematic and repetitive (Leymann and Gustaffson, 1996; Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001; Rayner and Hoel, 1997; Zapf and Einarsen 2001), and it is intended to be hostile and/or perceived to be hostile by the recipient (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996).

As can be observed from the above-mentioned definitions, there are five important features of bullying behaviour: (1) it is repetitive; (2) it is systematic; (3) the actor acts in a negative way; (4) the target for some reason is unable to defend himself/herself and lastly, (5) it covers a certain time range (six months). In this research these issues are used to construct an operational definition of bullying/mobbing.

Antecedents of bullying

Perceived reasons for bullying have been investigated by various researchers (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Einarsen, 1999; Leymann, 1996; Vartia, 1996; Zapf, 1999). Among the possible reasons for bullying: competition concerning status and job positions, envy, the aggressor's uncertainty about him/herself, the personality of the victim (Björkqvist et al., 1994), a general negative evaluation of the leadership

style and conflict resolution strategies of the employee's immediate supervisor (Tınaz, 2006; Vartia, 1996), low moral standards and culture (Einarsen, 1999), and a combination of organizational, work group and personal factors (Zapf, 1999) have been mentioned.

However, bullying or mobbing behaviour does not occur in isolation, this behaviour evolves during time and is shaped by contextual factors. Einarsen (1999, p. 19) underlined the fact that mobbing or "bullying is not an either–or phenomenon, but rather a gradually evolving process". In the first of the defined four phases there is mild aggressive behaviour. As time passes, the severity of aggressive behaviour increases, and it becomes more explicit. This second phase is called bullying (Leymann, 1996). In the further phases, there is stigmatization, and severe trauma (Einarsen, 1999). Hence, unless there is a supportive culture and climate within the organization, bullying behaviour will find no ground for evolving and most probably will vanish at the first phase. Einarsen (1999) pointed out that bullying will only take place if the superiors let the bullies behave in this manner. If both the bully and the victim know that this kind of behaviour is not approved, the victim will not be in a defenceless position.

Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) indicate that whether behaviour is interpreted, tolerated or accepted depends on the organizational culture. Likewise, Cowie et al. (2002) also point out that the climate within an organization can be influential in defining, identifying and evaluating mobbing or bullying. Thus, sometimes due to being unable to interpret organizational norms for professional behaviour, employees become incapable of distinguishing 'right' from 'wrong'. In this respect, some organizational cultures and climates may encourage bullying, so that "bullying may go beyond colleague-on-colleague abuse and become an accepted, or even encouraged, aspect of the culture of an organisation" (Cowie et al., 2002, p. 34).

From the above-mentioned points, it can be inferred that the culture and climate of an organization are prevailing factors in eliciting bullying behaviour. Culture and climate are closely related constructs and may sometimes be used interchangeably. McMurray (2003) says that agreed upon perceptions of behavioural expressions of culture provide raw material for climate. As culture is tacit

and climate is more explicit, in this article the main focus will be on the effect of organizational climate – which is considered as a component of organizational culture (Cullen et al., 1989) – on bullying behaviour.

Climate in an organization is defined as perceptions of organizational practices and procedures that are shared among members (Schneider, 1975); a set of organizational rather than psychological variables that define the organizational environment in which individuals operate (Glick, 1985); the understanding of employees about the organization (Schneider et al., 1996); the average perception of the working environment of the employees that would in turn affect the definition of their workplaces (Altmann, 2000). A more comprehensive definition is given by Moran and Volkwein (1992), where it is stated that organizational climate (a) is a product of member interaction, (b) represents collective perceptions of autonomy, trust, cohesiveness, support, recognition, innovation and fairness, (c) helps to interpret the situation, (d) reflects prevalent norms and (e) is a major influence upon shaping behaviour.

Various types of climates are claimed to exist in organizations (Peterson, 2002a), one of which is the ethical climate proposed by Victor and Cullen (1988).

Ethical climate

There has been interest among researchers and practitioners about ethical behaviour in the workplace (Cullen et al., 1989; Victor and Cullen, 1988) and this interest has grown especially after recent scandals (D'Aquila et al., 2004; Forte, 2004; Martin and Cullen, 2006).

Martin and Cullen (2006) stated that there are various types of climates in the workplace and one of them is the ethical climate, which is related to the established normative systems of organizations.

Based on the definition of a work climate as 'psychologically meaningful agreed upon descriptions' of workplace procedures and practices, Victor and Cullen (1988, p. 101) define ethical climate as "prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content". It can be said that ethical climate not only determines decision-making and subsequent behaviour in response to ethical dilemmas and issues, but it also

determines the moral criteria for understanding, weighing and resolving such issues (Cullen et al., 1989).

In the literature a two dimensional theoretical typology is used to determine climate types (Cullen et al., 1989; Victor and Cullen, 1988). One dimension is related to the ethical criteria used for decision-making, and the other is related to the locus of analysis used as a referent in ethical decisions. Each dimension has three categories, which yield nine different ethical climate types (Cullen et al., 1989).

In order to explain the ethical criterion dimension, Victor and Cullen (1988) used three major constructs of ethical theory that differ in terms of the basic criteria used in moral reasoning: egoism, utilitarianism (benevolence) and deontology or principle. The first construct, egoism, refers to self-interest focussed and self-interest maximizing behaviour. Utilitarianism or benevolence considers the utmost good outcome for the maximum number of people. In deontology or principle theory, rules, law, codes and procedures specify decisions and actions for the good of others (Cullen et al., 1989; Victor and Cullen, 1988). These constructs serve as implicit guidelines while conceiving ethical decisions. In the literature it has been mentioned that there emerges one dominant criterion that defines the organization's ethical climate (Martin and Cullen, 2006).

The locus of analysis dimension represents the referent group that identifies the source of moral reasoning used for applying ethical criteria in decision-making processes within the organization. The referent groups are divided into three categories of individual, local and cosmopolitan (Victor and Cullen, 1988).

In the literature, nine theoretical ethical climate types are determined by using the two dimensional theoretical typology (Cullen et al., 1989; Victor and Cullen, 1988). These climate types are: self-interest; company profit; efficiency; friendship; team interest; social responsibility; personal morality; company rules and procedures; laws and professional codes. Victor and Cullen (1988) found five climate types in their work as opposed to the above-mentioned nine theoretical types. These five different climate types, identified as instrumental, caring, independence, law and code, and rules, are also found in most of the empirical research done on the subject (Martin and Cullen, 2006).

Ethical climate and bullying

Wornham (2003) points out that bullying is a complex construct and should be interpreted by taking contextual factors such as management style, organization climate and conflict management into consideration. Victor and Cullen (1988) suggest that organizations are considered to shape the ethical or unethical behaviour of their employees. In other words: "the ethical climates serve as a perceptual lens through which workers diagnose and assess situations" (Cullen et al., 2003, p. 129).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) make a distinction between ethics and workplace deviance and point out that ethics considers behaviour that violates organizational norms, while studies about deviant behaviour focus on violations in terms of law, justice or other societal guidelines. However, they also underline that behaviour may be both unethical and deviant. In order to be considered as deviant, behaviour should harm an organization or its members. In this perspective bullying/mobbing can be considered as both unethical and deviant because it is intended to give harm to organizational members and it also violates norms and values (Peterson, 2002a). Therefore, it can be said that bullying in the workplace may be predictable from the ethical climate type of the organization.

This view is also supported by Wimbush and Shepard (1994) and Wimbush et al. (1997b) who have suggested that there is a close link between the behaviour of employees and the climate of the organization. They also underlined the fact that an ethical climate may be related not only to the ethical behaviour of employees, but also to dysfunctional and counterproductive behaviour. Hence, besides ethical behaviour, deviant or counterproductive workplace behaviour like bullying may be closely related to the ethical climate of an organization.

Instrumental climate and bullying

If employees perceive an instrumental ethical climate in their workplace, they will infer that prevalent norms and expectations encourage ethical decision-making from an egoistic perspective. In this case, their behaviour is guided by self-interest even at the cost of being detrimental to others (Martin and

Cullen, 2006). Hence, when this type of climate is dominant, most probably employees will not be concerned about the consequences of their behaviour for others' well-being. Additionally, maximizing organizational benefits is important in instrumental climates and this may urge employees to contribute to organizational outcomes like productivity and profits (Parboteeah and Kapp, 2007). This in turn may create a competitive environment that establishes a basis for bullying behaviour to emerge. This view is also supported by Vartia (1996) who observed that bullying behaviour was prevalent when the climate of the organization was perceived as competitive and everybody pursued their own interests.

Additional support for this view came from Peterson (2002b) who found a significant positive relation between an egoism climate and unethical behaviour. Furthermore, in the study of Wimbush et al. (1997b) the only positive significant relationship found was between instrumental climate and misbehaviour. As a result, we argue that instrumental climates will promote bullying behaviour, because altruistic and caring behaviour will seldom be recognized and rewarded in this type of climate. Additionally, bullying may result in the receipt of extrinsic rewards by being instrumental in the achievement of organizational or personal benefits (Parboteeah and Kapp, 2007).

Hypothesis 1:   There is a positive relationship between instrumental climate and bullying behaviour.

Law and code climate and bullying

When a law and code dimension is prevalent in the climate, employees are expected to adhere to codes such as an accepted religious text or Holy Book, the law or professional codes of conduct (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush, et al., 1997a, b). Therefore, it is expected that in law and code climates, employees will be more motivated to comply with existing codes of conduct and thus they will not be inclined to engage in bullying behaviour (Parboteeah and Kapp, 2007). Existing literature supports this view, for example; Parboteeah and Kapp (2007) found a significant positive relationship between a principled-local climate and safety motivation; Vardi (2001) observed that the most

important climate facet that had a significant negative effect on organizational misbehaviour was laws and rules; Wimbush et al. (1997b) observed that all the types of climates except for the instrumental climate were negatively related to misbehaviour. Moreover, Peterson (2002b) also found significant negative relationships between all of the unethical behaviour types reported by the employees and law and code ethical climates. In view of this, we claim that when the prevailing ethical climate is law and codes, employees will be less likely to behave as bullies.

Hypothesis 2:   There is a negative relationship between law and code and bullying behaviour.

Rules climate and bullying

In an ethical climate, dominated by rules, organizational rules and policies are strictly followed by employees (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush, et al., 1997a, b). If this type of a climate is prevalent, then the distinction between right or wrong behaviour is made in terms of organizational rules. In accordance with this, Parboteeah and Kapp (2007) observed that the climates that emphasized adherence to company derived rules and procedures predicted safety–enhancing behaviour which was obviously not compatible with bullying. Additionally, as Peterson (2002a) pointed out, deviant behaviour is voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms. Therefore, being a kind of deviant behaviour, bullying may also be defined in terms of a departure from organizational norms. Therefore, we expect bullying behaviour to occur less in organizations where the rules dimension of ethical climate is prevalent.

Hypothesis 3:   There is a negative relationship between rules and bullying behaviour.

Caring climate and bullying

As mentioned before, being exposed to bullying at work may result in damaged physical and mental health (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Leymann, 1996; Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2002). An employee perceiving a caring climate is not likely to behave in a way that will be detrimental to others because the

underlying construct in the caring climate is benevolence or, in terms of moral philosophy, utilitarianism and employees have a sincere concern for the well-being of others (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Parboteeah et al., 2005; Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush et al., 1997a, b). Additionally, caring is not exhibited in any kind of bullying behaviour (LaVan and Martin, 2007). Thus, as employees within a caring climate are interested in others' well-being; they will decline from engaging in harmful behaviour. This view is also supported by Ambrose et al. (2008), who observed significant negative relationships among disobedience, stealing and being an accomplice.

Hypothesis 4:   There is a negative relationship between a caring climate and bullying behaviour.

Independence climate and bullying

An independence climate is mainly based on personal morality and the person's deeply held values (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Wimbush and Shepard, 1994; Wimbush et al., 1997a, b). Ethical behaviour will be promoted in independence climates (Wimbush et al., 1997a), because they reflect the highest (post-conventional) form in a cognitive moral development framework (Ambrose et al., 2008). Since individuals with a post-conventional level of cognitive moral development are expected to work in independence climates, their actions will be based upon principles of deontology and utilitarianism (Ambrose et al., 2008). In the study by Ambrose et al. (2008) an independence climate was observed to be negatively related to dysfunctional forms of behaviour, such as disobedience, lying and being an accomplice. Therefore, an independence climate is expected to be negatively related to bullying.

Hypothesis 5:   There is a negative relationship between independence climate and bullying behaviour.

Organizational commitment

Organizational Commitment was first proposed and defined by Porter as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation" (Ketchand and Strawser, 2001, p. 222). After Porter's conceptualization, some

researchers pointed out that organizational commitment may not be a singular construct, but instead it can be multidimensional due to employees' different evaluations of their organizations. Allen and Meyer (1996) have defined organizational commitment as *a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization*. They also proposed a three-component model of organizational commitment; affective, continuance and normative commitment. *Affective commitment* refers to employees' emotional attachment to, involvement in and identification with the organization. The employee enjoys being in the organization: the employee remains in the organization because he/she *wants* it (Allen and Meyer, 1990, 1996). In *continuance commitment*, employees make a calculation about the cost of leaving the organization. The employee remains because he/she *needs* to do it. Finally, in *normative commitment* the employee feels an obligation to remain in the organization. This type of commitment is composed of internalized normative pressures to act in a way that fits with organizational goals and interests. In this case, individuals stay in the organization because they believe it is the "*right*" and "*moral thing to do*" (Allen and Meyer, 1990; p. 3). Therefore, the employee remains in the organization because he/she ought to (Conway, 2004).

Organizational commitment and bullying

Affective commitment and bullying

A number of negative organizational and individual level outcomes have been found to be associated with bullying. As bullying affects the emotions of victims it is deemed that bullying is strongly correlated with affective commitment. Within this context some researchers have found a strong negative relationship between affective commitment and bullying behaviour (Hoel and Cooper, 2000; McCormack et al., 2006). Furthermore, employees who are committed might be more vulnerable to the effects of work-related stressors because of their identification with the organization (Irving and Coleman, 2003). Also, employees who are being bullied experience problems in internalizing orga

nizational goals, values and achievements, which decrease their organizational identification (Ashfort and Male, 1989). As one of the primary bases for the development of affective commitment is identification with the related target, the decrease in organizational identification positively correlates with affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2004). Therefore, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 6: Employees who are being bullied have lower affective commitment than those who are not bullied.

Normative commitment and bullying

Lewis (2006) observed that difficulties in workplace relationships had a negative effect on personal commitments toward professional and organizational values. Additionally, Heames et al. (2006) cited Pearson (1999) and indicated that 46% of the respondents in a recent study about bullying had the intention of quitting their jobs due to increasing pressure from bullies, 12% of the respondents were observed to have quit in order to avoid a bully, and 37% of the respondents highlighted the decline in their commitment to the organization. Leymann (1996) pointed out the vicious cycle that was produced by bullying as a kind of extreme form of social stress. Stress was considered dysfunctional in as much as it decreased commitment and productivity (Montgomery et al., 1996). Elangovan (2001) found that stress had a strong effect on commitment through satisfaction. Bullied employees go through a trauma because of the stress they face and they lose their self-confidence (Leymann, 2005; Tınaz, 2006). In the literature, cultural and organizational socialization and the receipt of benefits that activate a need to reciprocate are specified as the primary antecedents of normative commitment (Scholl, 1981; Wiener, 1982). If there is bullying in an organization, socialization and reciprocation will hardly surface, thereby normative commitment will probably be lower.

Hypothesis 7: Employees who are being bullied have lower normative commitment than those who are not being bullied.

Continuance commitment and bullying

The relationship between continuance commitment and bullying can be explained by the evidence found in stress literature. Despite other commitment types, stress has an adverse (positive) effect on continuance commitment. Stress studies found a positive relationship between job-related stress and continuance commitment (Dobreva–Martinova et al., 2002; Glazer and Beehr, 2005; Harris and Cameron, 2005; Irving and Coleman, 2003; Srivastava and Sager, 1999). In addition, Addae and Wang (2006), observed a significant linear relationship between anxiety and continuance commitment. This type of commitment develops as the result of accumulated investments, or side bets, which the individual will lose by leaving the organization thereby creating a strong necessity to remain in the organization (Irving and Coleman, 2003; Meyer et al., 2004). Therefore, employees who have a higher level of continuance commitment might not face up to the cost of leaving the organization. Moreover, they may feel a stronger need for that job as a facilitator in coping with these stressful problems.

Hypothesis 8: Employees who are being bullied have higher continuance commitment than those who are not being bullied.

Supervisory support

House (1981) identified four types of supervisory support: instrumental, emotional, informational and appraisal. The most important and effective support types have been investigated, but mixed results were found. In regard to this, a significant contribution was made by Beheer (cf. Kirrane and Buckley, 2004), who pointed out that rather than the type of support, the support provider has a greater impact on the recipient. Therefore, in organizations, supervisory support has gained importance. Supervisory support refers to supervisors' help towards their employees by being close, understanding and genuine (Luthans, 2002). Supportive supervisors share employees' problems and try to help in coping with them. Supervisory support is one kind of psychological contract, which directs employees to appraise

their organizations. Studies related to supervisory support indicate that it leads to an increase in job satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1992), and organizational commitment (Kirrane and Buckley, 2004). In addition, it leads to lower levels of absenteeism (Hutchison et al., 1986) and burnout (Etzion, 1984).

Supervisory support, organizational commitment and bullying

In the literature, it is said that received social support "buffers" individuals from the destructive effects of stress (Cummins, 1990). Muhammad and Hamdy (2005) noted that employees who receive emotional support from their supervisors will be able to cope with emotional exhaustion better than those who do not receive it. They also observed a significant moderating effect of supervisory support on the negative relationship between burnout and organizational commitment. It has been mentioned before that bullying is considered as an extreme form of stress. By the same token, burnout is defined as an advanced state of mental strain. Therefore, supervisory support is expected to have a similar effect on the bullying–commitment relationship. Also, Dobreva–Martinova et al. (2002) stated that, support from the leader moderates the relationship between stress and organizational commitment. The higher the support from the supervisor, the stronger will be the relationship between stress and organizational commitment. Additionally, Murry et al. (2001) observed that the supervisory support received by sexually harassed victims mediated the relationship between harassment and negative work outcomes. Based on this view, in this article, supervisory support can be seen as a moderating variable between bullying and organizational commitment. If the employees who experience problems receive supportive supervision they will be able to discuss these problems with their supervisors freely. Hence, these employees can feel themselves valuable individuals within an organization that is helping to increase their commitment levels. Bullied employees who take support from their immediate supervisor will feel fewer emotional problems, which will lead to a higher level of organizational commitment. Consequently, supervisory support is expected to

buffer the negative effect of bullying on organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 9:   Employees who are being bullied and take support from their supervisor will be more committed to the organization than the employees who do not receive supervisory support.

Previous research found evidence that being exposed to incivility or bullying at work indicate reduced organizational commitment (Barling and Phillips, 1993; Leather et al., 1997). Bowling and Beehr (2006) observed that workplace harassment mediated the effects of role ambiguity and role conflict on the outcome variables. In other studies the relationship between ethical climate and turnover intentions were observed to be fully mediated by variables such as role stress, interpersonal conflict, and job stress (Jaramillo et al., 2006; Mulki et al., 2008). Hence, as a stressful event, bullying is expected to mediate the relationship between ethical climate and commitment.

Hypothesis 10:   The effect of the ethical climate on organizational commitment will be mediated when bullying surfaces.

The above-mentioned relationships can be observed in the research model given in Figure 1.

Methodology

Data collection

The questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected companies located in Istanbul. Some of them were personally given to respondents and some were sent by e-mail. In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed of which 201 were returned. Four of them were excluded because of missing values. As a result, 197 questionnaires were used and this yielded a return rate of 49.2%.

Male respondents comprised 58.2% and females 41.8% of the sample. 68% of the respondents had an undergraduate degree, 23.7% graduate and 8.2% had only lyceum degrees. 28.4% were married and 71.6% were single.
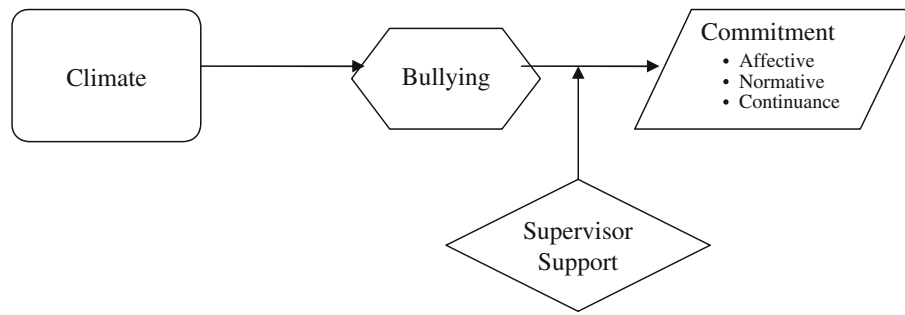
Figure 1. Model.

Measurement instruments

Bullying was measured by the revised version of the Negative Acts Questionnaire (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997; Hoel et al., 2004; Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001). First the questionnaire was translated into Turkish and then a jury of five persons was asked to match the translated questions with the originals. In order to prevent misunderstandings due to cultural differences, a preliminary survey was carried out. In the survey, firstly a definition of bullying was made (the second question which was related with sexual harassment was omitted, because sexual harassment was not included within the scope of this study), and then all the 28 specific forms of negative behaviour from NAQ were presented, and the respondents were asked to what extent those behaviour represented the previously defined bullying behaviour. As a result, the 18th and 22nd questions ('Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get on with' and 'Excessive monitoring of your work') were not regarded as contributing to an explanation of bullying; therefore these were also omitted from the questionnaire. Additionally, "Being ignored, excluded or being sent to Coventry" was seen as excessively loaded, and therefore all three items were asked separately. Responses were recorded on a six–point Likert–type scale, with anchors of "never" and "always".

Victor and Cullen's (1988) Ethical Climate Questionnaire was used to measure ethical climate types. This instrument was first translated into Turkish, and then this Turkish version was given to English preparatory school teachers. They were asked to translate it into English, then this translation was compared with the English version and necessary modifications were made accordingly. Responses, on a six–point Likert–type scale, ranged from "totally agree" to "totally disagree".

Organizational commitment was measured in three dimensions: affective, normative and continuance. These 33 questions were taken from Wasti's (1999) doctoral dissertation. As in the Ethical Climate Questionnaire, a six–point Likert–type scale, with anchors of "totally agree" to "totally disagree" was used to collect responses.

The measurement instrument of supervisory support included six items from Grandey's (1999) dissertation and an additional item that was developed by the writers based on interviews with employees working in the banking sector. The six questions from Grandey's (1999) dissertation were translated into Turkish. Afterwards, 10–15 experts were asked whether the meanings of the translated sentences matched the meanings of the original sentences. The instrument was finalized after modifying the items according to their suggestions, and responses were collected on a six–point Likert scale that ranged between "never" and "always".

Results

Table I presents the means, standard deviations and correlations for the study variables. The variables were observed to be moderately correlated. Cronbach alpha values of all of the scales were all at acceptable levels.

Factor analyses

The inter-item reliability of bullying instrument, which comprised 28 items measuring exposure to

TABLE I

Intercorrelations among variables

	Variables	X	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Personal	1.5589	.83823	(0.85)													
2	Physical	1.2328	.60458	.547**	(0.81)												
3	Work	1.9679	.99220	.518**	.502*	(0.81)											
4	Underestim.	2.3504	1.06745	.543**	.327*	.433**	(0.82)										
5	Rules	4.0148	1.17443	−.295**	−.171*	−.364**	−.113	(0.93)									
6	Caring	2.9782	1.18432	−.314**	−.037	−.230**	−.358**	.521	(0.88)								
7	Instrumen.	3.1282	.98768	.440**	.307**	.414**	.376**	−.197**	−.278**	(0.71)							
8	Independent	2.5893	.90494	−.110	.012	−.069	−.174*	.174*	.250**	.032	(0.79)						
9	Profit	3.2276	.99272	.161*	.043	.102	.148*	.399**	.103	.125	.132	(0.64)					
10	Affective	3.2560	1.19742	−.162*	−0.25	−.269**	−.330**	.276**	.423**	−.257**	.194**	.178*	(0.92)				
11	Pay up	3.6949	1.27836	−.243**	−.075	−.345**	−.320**	.349**	.501**	−.378**	.112	.160*	.548**	(0.68)			
12	Normative	2.9047	1.05378	−.135	−.092	−.252**	−.128	.142*	.204**	−.095	.219**	.147*	.542**	.395**	(0.66)		
13	Continuance	2.9465	1.01836	.113	.104	.044	.005	.033	.107	−.088	.077	.114	.452**	.271**	.420**	(0.63)	
14	Sup. support	3.9785	1.24158	−.346**	−.186**	−.494**	−.418**	.283**	.377**	−.239**	−.218**	.082	.515**	.491**	.429**	.178	(0.92)

Note: Cronbach's alpha in parentheses.
***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.05$.

negative acts was high ($\alpha = 0.94$; $N = 28$). The questions included no reference to the term "bullying"; instead it was all explained in behavioural terms. The factor structure of this instrument was analyzed using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. This analysis yielded four factors with eigen values over 1.00 that explained 68% of the total variance. The factor structure and loadings are given in Table II.

The factor structure of this scale showed similarities with the types of bullying behaviour mentioned by Einarsen (1999). As can be seen in Table II, questions related to personal attacks were loaded under the first factor, verbal threats and physical violence or threats all together composed the second, and work-related bullying questions were loaded under the third factor. These factors were identified as *personal attacks*, *physical threats* and *work-related bullying*, respectively. The fourth factor comprised questions related to social isolation and ignoring the abilities of the person. Therefore, this factor was named *underestimating*.

The principal component analysis of the Ethical Climate Questionnaire with varimax rotation yielded five factors like the original Victor and Cullen (1988) analysis. However, factor structures showed some differences from the original. First, questions 5 "In this company it is expected that you will always do what is right for the customers and public (BC)"

TABLE II

Factor analysis for bullying instrument

	Component			
	Personal attacks	Physical threats	Work-related	Underestimating
14. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	.780			
11. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	.764			
8. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person your attitudes or personal life	.714			
13. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	.689			
27. Being moved or transferred against your will	.587			
12. Threats of violence or personal abuse		.832		
21. Offensive remarks or behaviour with reference to your race or ethnicity		.750		
10. Intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking/barring		.732		
23. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm		.707		
17. Insulting messages, telephone calls or e-mails		.661		
26. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload			.822	
19. Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines			.797	
18. Systematically being required to carry out tasks which clearly fall outside your job description			.630	
22. Pressure not to claim something which by right you are entitled to			.539	
3. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence				.882
4. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks				.779
6. Being excluded				.723

KMO: .872; approx. chi-square: 1729.826, df: 136; $p < 0.001$; Cronbach Alpha: .90.

and 6 "The most efficient way is always the right way in this company (EC)" had to be eliminated because the first one was loaded on two factors and the second one was left alone as a separate factor. The questions related to *rules* and *law and code* were grouped under one factor; therefore this factor was named *rules and law* ($\alpha = .93$). The questions related to a caring climate formed the second factor; hence, it was called *caring* ($\alpha = .88$). The third factor was related with an instrumental climate, like the original, and therefore was named *instrumental climate* ($\alpha = .71$). The fourth factor was also similar to the original one, therefore it was called *independence* ($\alpha = .79$). Unlike the original, in the fifth factor questions falling under egoism criteria and local locus of control were grouped separately from the individual locus of control, because questions related with the individual locus of control and egoism had to be eliminated. As a result, the fifth factor was named *company profit* ($\alpha = .64$). The loadings of the above-mentioned factors are given in Table III.

The factor analysis of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire which is given in Table IV, revealed four factors as opposed to the three factors generally accepted in literature. Whereas two of the factors; *affective* and *continuance* commitment are the same as literature's, normative commitment was explained by two factors which are called "*pay up*" and "*normative*". The first one is named "*pay up*", because these questions indicate the employees' feelings of guilt and their attempts to pay their debt to the organization. Reliability coefficient of affective commitment is high ($\alpha = .92$), but reliability coefficients of pay up to the organization ($\alpha = .68$), normative ($\alpha = .66$) and continuance commitment ($\alpha = .63$) are relatively low.

Testing the hypotheses

Regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 1 through 8. Hypothesis 1 was supported because a significant positive relationship was observed between all of the dimensions of bullying and the instrumental climate (See Table V).

Significant negative relationships were observed between rules and all of the dimensions of bullying except for underestimating. Hence, as rules and law and code dimensions of climate were grouped under

one factor, Hypotheses 2 and three were partially supported. Hypothesis 4 was again partially supported because there was a significant negative relationship only between the underestimating type of bullying and a caring climate. Hypothesis 5 was partially supported because there was a significant negative relationship between an independence climate and personal attacks and underestimating. As the changes in affective commitment were explained by only two dimensions of bullying (work-related bullying and underestimating) Hypothesis 6 was partially supported. Work related bullying significantly affected pay up and normative commitment. Additionally, underestimating also predicted pay up commitment, thus, Hypothesis 7 was partially supported. Hypothesis 8 was rejected because none of the dimensions of bullying had an effect on continuance commitment.

Mediating role of bullying

As can be seen in the research model, bullying was assumed to mediate the relationship between ethical climate and organizational commitment. In order to test the mediating effect of bullying, a three-stage multiple regression method was used (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Baron and Kenny (1986) indicate that to test for mediation, three regression equations should be estimated. First, the mediator should be regressed on the independent variable; second, the dependent variable should be regressed on the independent variable and; third, the dependent variable should be regressed both on the mediator and on the independent variable. In order to have a mediating effect the following conditions should be met: the independent variable should affect the mediator in the first equation; it should also affect the dependent variable in the second equation; and the mediator should not only affect the dependent variable in the third equation, but also the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable should be less in the third equation than in the second.

In accordance with the above-mentioned method in the first level, bullying was regressed on ethical climate. The instrumentality factor of ethical climate was observed to have a significant effect on all of the dimensions of bullying. On the other hand, rules climate had a significant effect on only three bullying dimensions: personal attacks, physical threats and

TABLE III

Factor analysis for ethical climate questionnaire

	Component				
	Rules	Caring	Instrmt.	Indept.	Profit
In this company people are expected to strictly follow legal or professional standards (PC)	.896				
Everyone is expected to stick by company rules and procedures (PL)	.877				
It is very important to follow the company's rules and procedures here (PL)	.872				
In this company the law or ethical code of their profession is the major consideration (PC)	.846				
In this company the first consideration is whether a decision violates any law (PC)	.845				
People are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above all other considerations (PC)	.813				
Successful people in this company go by the book (PL)	.619				
People in this company strictly obey the company policies (PL)	.580				
In this company each person is expected above all to work efficiently (EC)	.528				
What is best for everyone in the company is the major consideration here (BL)		.831			
The most important concern is the good for all people in the company as a whole (BL)		.812			
Our major concern is always what is best for the other person (BI)		.801			
In this company people look out for each other's good (BI)		.660			
In this company people are mostly out for themselves (EI)			.917		
In this company people protect their own interests above all else (EI)			.870		
There is no room for one's own personal morals or ethics in this company (EI)			.620		
The major responsibility of the people in this company is to control costs (EC)			.411		
In this company people are guided by their own personal ethics (PI)				.858	
The most important concern in this comp. is each person's own sense of right or wrong (PI)				.819	
In this company people are expected to follow their own personal and moral beliefs (PI)				.699	
Each person in this company decides for themselves what is right or wrong (PI)				.674	
Work is considered a substandard only when it hurts the company's interests (EL)					.758
People are expected to do anything to further the company's interests, regardless of the consequences (EL)					.690
People here are concerned with the company's interests – to the exclusion of all else (EL)					.681

KMO: .859; Approx. chi-square: 2712.024, df: 276; $p < 0.001$.

work-related bullying. Profit climate was observed to affect three, but different, bullying dimensions: personal attacks, work-related bullying and under-estimating. And, the last climate type (caring) was observed to have a significant effect only on physical threats and underestimating dimensions (Table V).

TABLE IV

Factor analysis for organizational commitment questionnaire

	Component			
	Affective	Pay up	Normative	Continuance
6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me	.808			
11. I feel emotionally attached to this organization	.795			
4. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization	.687			
10. I feel as if these organization's problems are my own	.683			
18. I feel ''like part of my family'' at my organization	.674			
23. I have a sense of gratitude to this organization	.670			
14. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain	.639			
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization		.715		
33. This organization deserves my loyalty		.687		
17. I would seriously consider leaving the organization for additional benefits		.681		
27. I share this organization's goals		.669		
15. I would like to leave this organization and start from a scratch		.642		
21. I would stay in this organization even if it had financial difficulties		.548		
25. I don't feel an obligation to stay with this organization		.451		
31. I would feel guilty if I left			.712	
16. I wouldn't leave the organization because I feel I have obligations to the people working here			.690	
19. I wouldn't leave the organization even if it were advantageous for me			.639	
20. I think it is my duty to be loyal to the organization			.535	
9. It would be hard for me to adopt to working at another company				.717
29. If I didn't have so much contributions, I would think of leaving this company				.639
32. I feel it gets harder to leave the company as time passes by				.618

In the second level of the three-stage multiple regression analysis, organizational commitment was regressed on ethical climate. The results indicated that among ethical climate's dimensions caring and instrumentality had significant effects on affective and pay up types of organizational commitment. Additionally ''independent'' ethical climate had a significant effect on normative commitment, whereas, none of the ethical climate types had a significant effect on continuance commitment (Table V).

On a third level, organizational commitment was regressed on all types of ethical climate and bullying behaviour. As a result, only work-related bullying and underestimating indicated significant results; work-related bullying mediated the relationship between instrumentality climate and two dimensions of commitment; pay up and affective commitment. Also, underestimating had a significant mediating effect between instrumentality and affective commitment. Other bullying behaviour was not observed to have any significant mediating effect (Table V). Therefore, Hypothesis ten was partially supported.

The moderating role of supervisory support

The role of supervisory support as a moderating variable between bullying and organizational commitment was tested by hierarchical regression analysis.

TABLE V

Three stages multiple regression analysis of bullying

First stage	Personal attacks	Physical threats	Work-related	Underestimating
Rules	−.338★★★	−.253★★	−.421★★★	-.018
Caring	.017	.216★	.101	−.202★★
Instrumentality	.336★★★	.335★★★	.344★★★	.283★★★
Independent	−.172★★	−.018	−.045	−.169★★
Profit	.227★★	.082	.221★★	.165★
R^2	.306	.143	.291	.241
Adjusted R^2	.288★★★	.120★★★	.272★★★	.220★★★
F-value of Model	16.524★★★	6.251★★★	15.376★★★	11.787★★★

Second level	Affective	Pay up	Normative	Continuance
Rules	.018	.070	−.015	−.064
Caring	.310★★★	.356★★★	.132	.065
Instrumentality	−.172★	−.239★★★	−.073	−.111
Independent	.090	.021	.148★	.066
Profit	.133	.131	.109	.133
R^2	.218	.316	.073	.035
Adjusted R^2	.198★★★	.298★★★	.048★	.009
F-value of Model	10.506★★★	16.946★★★	2.919★	1.347

Third level	Affective	Pay up	Normative	Continuance
Rules	−.013	.015	-.146	.003
Caring	.261	.333	.178	.053
Instrumentality	−.109	−.176★	.029	−.177
Independent	.060	.006	.142	.105
Profit	.183	.179	.171	.089
Personal	.091	.092	−.031	.180
Physical	.139	.112	.021	.077
Work	−.220★	−.261★★	−.301★	−.042
Underestimate	−.212★	−.131	.052	.006
R^2	.283★★★	.371★★★	.136★	.068
Adjusted R^2	.248★★★	.339★★★	.093★	.021
R^2 Change	.283★★★	.371★★★	.136★	.068
F-value of Model	7.993★★★	11.651★★★	3.137★	1.448

Independent variables: Rules, caring, instrumentality, independent, Profit climate; *Dependent Variables*: Affective, pay up, normative, continuance commitment.
★$p < 0.05$; ★★$p < 0.01$; ★★★$p < 0.001$.

The aim of this analysis was to understand if supervisory support affected the relation between bullying and commitment. In order to test for the interaction effect, first the data related with each scale were tested for normality. If they were normally distributed, then each scale's mean scores were subtracted from raw scores, but if they were not, then again mean scores were subtracted from raw scores but this time they were divided by their standard deviations. In order to find the interaction effect of bullying and supervisory support, the calculated data for bullying behaviour and supervisory support were multiplied.

At the first and second stages, bullying and supervisory support were added to the regression

equation respectively. The calculated interaction variable was added at the third stage. The interaction effects of supervisory support and bullying behaviour were significant for only normative commitment. Hence it can be said that, even though physical threats have no effect on normative commitment alone, its interaction with supervisory support produces a significant relationship. Employees who encounter physical threats but receive supervisory support have lower normative commitment levels. On the other hand, employees who are underestimated by others and at the same time supported by their supervisor have higher normative commitment level than those who do not take support. Thus, Hypothesis 9 was partially supported. Significant results are presented in Appendix 1.

The independent samples *t*-test analysis showed that female and male samples differed in terms of pay up and affective commitment. The test results showed that females were more committed to the organization.

Discussion

Similar to Erben and Güneşer's (2007) study, which was also conducted in Turkey, some of the items in the normative commitment scale were mixed with items belonging to other dimensions of the scale. Affective commitment included similar items to the above-mentioned study. Thus, the commitment scale needs to be further tested and validated.

Einarsen (1999) pointed out that Zapf defined five categories of bullying behaviour which are similar to the categories observed in this study: Personal attacks and work-related bullying are the same as Zapf's definition, underestimating resembles social isolation, while physical threats are a combination of verbal threats and physical violence.

As mentioned above, in the ethical climate questionnaire, questions related to the individual locus of control and egoism had to be eliminated. Kabasakal and Bodur (2002) found that Turkey, which is a member of the Arabic cluster, was found to be highly group-oriented, and outstanding leadership in this cluster includes team-oriented leaders. A study done on attitudes towards business ethics indicated that despite some shared views towards business ethics existing in various countries, signifi-

cant differences can be observed between Turkey and other countries (United States of America, Israel, Western Australia and South Africa) included in the study (Sims and Gegez, 2004). Thus, cultural factors might have an effect on the elimination of highly egoistic, individualistic questions.

Unlike Victor and Cullen's (1988) original dimensions, the fifth factor (company profit) involved exactly the same questions as found in Elçi and Alpkan's (2008) study, which was also done in Turkey. In effect, this study makes an important contribution to the literature by verifying their results.

As predicted, the instrumental climate explained the variations in all dimensions of bullying behaviour. As Martin and Cullen (2006) indicated, this type of climate supports people to act from an egoistic perspective. Moreover, people will do anything to maximize their benefits. Therefore, when this type of climate is prevalent, it is normal for people to act without considering others' well-being, hence, a person may easily engage in bullying behaviour in order to maximize his/her benefits. In this case, people may maximize their self-interests even at the cost of their actions being detrimental to others. Similar results were found in the literature indicating that instrumental climate predicts misbehaviour (Vardi, 2001), negative extra-role behaviour (Leung, 2008), being an accomplice (Wimbush et al., 1997a), negatively predicting organizational commitment (Kelley and Dorsch, 1991), as well as identification with the company (Leung, 2008).

In this study, rules and law and code were dimensions of climate that were grouped under one factor, therefore the rules dimension indicates that employees are not only expected to adhere to codes such the Holy Book, the law or professional codes of conduct, but also are expected to strictly follow company rules and policies. As bullying behaviour is not tolerated by universal codes of conduct, nearly all dimensions of bullying were observed to be affected negatively by a rules climate. This finding is also supported by the studies of Parboteeah and Kapp (2007), Peterson (2002b), Vardi (2001) and Wimbush et al. (1997b), who found similar relationships with unethical behaviour, organizational misbehaviour and law and code climates. Only the underestimating type of bullying did not have any significant relationship with this type of climate. People underestimating others may think that the

person who was being bullied did not actually possess the skills and abilities necessary for performing the job, thus rules do not have any effect on this kind of behaviour.

A caring climate was observed to have a negative relationship with the underestimating type of bullying. The most interesting point here is that a caring climate positively predicted physical assaults. As mentioned before, employees have a sincere concern for the well-being of others if the climate is caring. In this climate, the concern shown for the bullied person may be perceived as offensive by the bully and therefore s/he may become more aggressive and engage in physical threats. On the other hand, the concern for others may decrease the perception of being underestimated. It might be that in some cases behaviour, which has been perceived as bullying might not be intended to be a bullying behaviour, but only careless, indiscreet behaviour. As in Turkey caring was found to represent a relatively unimportant argument in moral reasoning (Srnka et al., 2007) and misinterpretation of such careless behaviour may have a negative effect on underestimating type of bullying.

There was a significant negative relationship between an independence climate and two dimensions of bullying; supporting Hypothesis 5. In accordance with our predictions, personal attacks and underestimating were affected negatively by an independence climate. The ethical criterion dimension of this type of climate is principles or deontology, therefore, people are at higher stages of their moral development and thus they do not behave in an unethical way (Ambrose et al., 2008).

The mediating effect of bullying was significant between instrumental climate, affective and pay up commitment. As a result, work-related bullying mediated not only the relationship between instrumental climate and affective commitment, but also the relationship between instrumental climate pay up commitment. On the other hand, an underestimating type of bullying mediated only the relationship between instrumental climate and affective commitment. In workplaces where the dominating climate type is instrumental, employees perceive their organization as encouraging egoistic behaviour (Cullen et al., 1989; Martin and Cullen, 2006; Victor and Cullen, 1988). This feature can create a competitive environment that reveals all negative behaviour acceptable for the bullies for achieving best

results for him/her. As mentioned before, bullying behaviour becomes widespread when the climate of the organization is perceived as competitive and where everybody is concerned with their own interests (Vartia, 1996). Similar to the results of this study, McCormack et al. (2006) found a significant negative relationship between being bullied and affective commitment. As a result, it can be said the findings of this study are in accordance with the literature and it contributes to the literature by highlighting the negative relationship of bullying with another dimension of commitment which is identified as the pay up commitment.

Previous studies have shown that the ethical climate is a valid predictor of unethical behaviour as well as deviant behaviour (Peterson, 2002a). In this study, the instrumental climate dimension was predictive of different types of bullying behaviour that are investigated. In accordance with previous studies (Erben & Güneşer, 2007) ethical climate dimensions had a stronger effect on affective commitment than on continuance commitment. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to the literature by providing support for the conception that the climate of the organization can have a significant impact on workplace behaviour.

The moderating effect of supervisory support indicated unexpected but reasonable results. The results surprisingly showed that the normative commitment of the individuals who were physically threatened but took support from their supervisors decreased. This result may be explained in terms of perception. It may be the case that the bullied employees perceive the support of their employees as offensive. The bullied employee feels defenceless (Leymann, 1996), and if someone else tries to defend the person, it may cause the bullied person to feel more disabled. In this case, similar to the physically disabled people who do not want any help from others, the bullied employee may not want the supervisor help him/her. If the supervisor tries to support the employee, this support may insult the employee. Normative commitment is said to develop in response to social pressure. Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested that there are two primary mechanisms operating in the development of normative commitment: socialization experiences and reciprocation for organizational investments. They say the employee may choose to leave the organization, or cut back effort. Therefore, if the employee thinks

that s/he has been insulted by his/her supervisor, s/he may think that the debt has been repaid.

On the other hand, supervisory support positively affected the normative commitment of the employees who were underestimated. Underestimated employees feel different from physically bullied ones. Since, by being neglected, they begin to consider that they are insufficient and unskilled individuals. They perceive themselves as being lucky by working in this organization with these insufficient competences. Employees who receive support from their supervisors believe that stressful situations are challenging moments that can be endured with the help of this support. Hence, the supervisor's support diminishes the negative impact of stressful situations on organizational outcomes like commitment (Srivastava and Sager, 1999). On the other hand, when they receive support from their supervisors, this support will be considered as an additional debt that should be paid back to the organization. Therefore, their normative commitment increases.

Theoretical contribution

Although the link between organizational climate and workplace behaviour has been examined in the literature, the impact of ethical climate types on bullying behaviour in particular has not been considered. This article makes a notable contribution to the literature by examining this ignored relationship. Additionally, the findings which indicate rules climate has a negative impact on bullying behaviour is an important contribution to the approach that ethical climate predicts workplace (mis)behaviour (Parboteeah and Kapp, 2007; Parboteeah et al., 2005; Peterson, 2002a, b; Vardi, 2001; Wimbush et al., 1997b).

Another contribution of the study is providing additional support to other studies advocating the view that ethical climates have an impact on organizational commitment. The strong effect of ethical climate dimensions on affective commitment, thereby the importance of ethical climate was once more revealed.

This study also contributes to the study of ethical climates across cultures. It provides an understanding of the perception of ethical climates and bullying behaviour in Turkey. The current lawsuits about bullying and sexual harassment (Tınaz, 2006) increase the importance of this study because it will shed light for the modification of the current rules. Turkey is especially an important country because it is a member of the Arabic cluster, which is considered to be a bridge between East and West (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002).

Practical implications

Behaviour may be perceived and interpreted differently across cultures. The present study attempts to provide insight to managers of international, transnational or multinational companies operating in Turkey by providing evidence about the perception and interpretation of ethical climate types, bullying behaviour and the effects of climate types on bullying. Developing ethical climates requires substantial managerial attention and managers should be proactive in creating desired ethical norms (Schminke et al., 2007). Contrary to expectations, the expected negative relationship between a caring climate and bullying was far from being the strongest; the caring climate actually had a positive impact on bullying. Therefore, by demonstrating the utility of managers developing rules or independence types of climate, rather than instrumental or caring climates, this study may be helpful to managers in their efforts to foster desired climate dimensions. Additionally, the results show that related constructs are not stable; they can change across cultures over time. This variation sheds light on the fact that cultural differences should be taken into consideration while dealing with employees.

Limitations of the study and implications for future research

This study suffers from a number of limitations one of which is the self-reporting nature of the data collection method. This type of research enables measuring only perceptions, not the actual behaviour. Secondly, this study is subject to single-rater bias as only the employees' responses have been considered. Hence, it would be beneficial if multiple data collection methods and multiple raters are used in future research.

Another limitation of the study may be the social desirability bias as the ethical climate questionnaire is inclusive of socially desirable questions besides being self-reported.

In the future a cross-cultural study may be more instrumental in explaining cultural impact on ethical climate, bullying, commitment and the relationships between each of these.

Although the reliability of affective commitment measure is high ($\alpha = .92$), reliabilities of pay up, normative and continuance commitment measures are low (under acceptable level of 0.70). In this study, normative commitment was explained by two factors instead of one and some questions related with continuance commitment had to be deleted. Additionally, normative commitment scale was observed to include items belonging to other dimensions. Hence, it may be inferred that there are problems with normative and continuance commitment scales stemming from cultural differences or misunderstandings due to the wording of the questions. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the reliability and validity of commitment scale to be further tested and the effects of different cultures should be particularly considered.

Conclusion

This article, like Cullen et al.'s (2003) study, supports the view that an organizational climate affects the level of commitment, and a caring climate is the one that affects it most. Additionally, it is important for organizations to encourage the principle-led or deontology dimension of ethical-decision making, if their aim is to decrease bullying behaviour. Instrumentality is the type of climate that the managers should avoid as it is not only positively related with all dimensions of bullying behaviour, but also negatively related to organizational commitment. By promoting deontology therefore, managers will be able to achieve more positive organizational outcomes.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1

The hierarchical regression results of the bullying and supervisory support interaction on normative commitment

Variables	B	Beta	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	F
1. Level					
Personal	−.081	−.062	.046	.067	3.303★
Supervisory support	.352★★★	.416★★★	.162	.118★★★	8.330★★★
2. Level					
Personal × Supervisory support	−.057	−.072	.195	.049★	6.100★★★
1. Level					
Physical	.214★	.163★	.046	.067	3.303★
Supervisor support	.352★★★	.416★★★	.162	.118★★★	8.330★★★
2. Level					
Physical × Supervisory support	−.260★	−.235★	.195	.049★	6.100★★★
1. Level					
Work	−.525★★★	−.282★★★	.046	.067	3.303★
Supervisor support	.352★★★	.416★★★	.162	.118★★★	8.330★★★
2. Level					
Work × Supervisory support	.101	.241	.195	.049★	6.100★★★
1. Level					
Underestimate	−.525★★★	−.282★★★	.046	.067	3.303★
Supervisory support	.352★★★	.416★★★	.162	.118★★★	8.330★★★
2. Level					
Underestimate × Supervisory support	.160★	.217★	.195	.049★	6.100★★★

Dependent variable: Normative commitment.
★★★$p < 0.001$; ★★$p < 0.01$; ★$p < 0.05$.

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