

DETERMINING THE LEVELS OF MOBBING AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF MARITIME FACULTY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of intimidation (mobbing) behaviors that maritime faculty students experience or perceive during their education and internships. It focuses on how such behaviors influence students' attitudes toward the profession, motivation levels, and potential desire to leave the field, as well as the broader social and psychological impacts. Data were collected from 138 students across Turkish maritime faculties using the "Mobbing Scale for Seafarers" and the "Social Impact Scale." The research includes both a theoretical overview of mobbing in the maritime context and an empirical section covering methodology, data analysis, and findings. The study aims to reveal the prevalence and consequences of mobbing in maritime education and support the development of policies that enhance student well-being and professional development.

Keywords: Maritime, Mobbing, Mobbing Scale for Seafarers, Social Impact

JEL-Classification: J81, J28, I23

1. INTRODUCTION

Mobbing, recognized today as one of the most significant psychosocial risks individuals face in both work and educational environments, is defined as a systematic and persistent form of psychological violence that can occur not only in professional settings but in any organized social context. In its 1999 report, the International Labour Organization (ILO) identified mobbing as one of the most serious issues encountered in the workplace. Initially conceptualized through the study of animal behavior, the phenomenon of mobbing was later contextualized within human interactions through the work of Olweus on school-aged children. In the early 1980s, Heinz Leymann's research in Swedish workplaces demonstrated that mobbing could also manifest as a systematic form of psychological violence among adults, thus introducing the concept into the literature on organizational life (Bingöl, 2007).

Leymann (1996) defines mobbing as a set of systematic psychological assaults carried out by one or more individuals, typically based on a power imbalance, directed at a specific person or a small group, occurring at least once a week over a period of no less than six months. Rather than being a mere temporary conflict or physical altercation, mobbing constitutes a serious issue that threatens the psychological, physical, and social integrity of the victim, potentially resulting in long-term negative consequences for both individuals and institutions. In workplace and educational settings, such behaviors may take various forms, including unjust criticism, exclusion, humiliation, threats, mockery, and slander, all of which can harm the individual's



social relationships (Bingöl, 2007).

In domains such as maritime education, where hierarchical structures are prominent, discipline is heavily emphasized, and social solidarity is of vital importance, mobbing behaviors are more likely to be observed. Maritime faculties aim to equip their students not only with academic knowledge but also with the resilience required for challenging working conditions, the ability to make decisions under pressure, and the development of strong personal characteristics. However, mobbing behaviors encountered during this educational process can negatively affect students' psychological well-being and social interactions. In this context, examining the impact of mobbing on students' social lives is crucial for both personal development and institutional improvement.

This study investigates the extent of sch experiences among maritime faculty students and explores the social dimensions of these experiences. It aims to identify the psychosocial consequences of mobbing behaviors and provide a multidimensional analysis of their effects on young individuals during their education. The ultimate goal of the research is to raise awareness regarding the psychosocial climate of educational institutions, propose preventive measures against mobbing, and suggest strategies to enhance student well-being.

2. SOCIAL IMPACT

Definition and Scope of Social Impact

Social impact can be defined as the transformation or change that an action, behavior, or activity causes on individuals, groups, or society. These changes may be positive or negative and can manifest immediately or over an extended period. Social impact may be planned or unplanned and often extends beyond those directly involved, affecting indirect actors such as institutions or organizations. Therefore, social impact is a multilayered and broad phenomenon (Yalçın & Güner, 2015).

Human beings, as social creatures, both influence and are influenced by their environment, resulting in changes in behavior through continuous and face-to-face interactions (Güney, 2023). For instance, siblings raised in similar conditions may exhibit distinctly different personalities and behaviors (Taşkıran, 2018). Through social influence, individuals display varying degrees of conformity behaviors such as acceptance, obedience, or compliance, with the strength of influence determining the intensity of conformity (Güney, 2023). Social impact shapes daily behaviors, from adopting peers' clothing styles to aligning political views with family members, demonstrating how social environment molds individual attitudes and actions (Taşkıran, 2018).

Social Impact and Social Cohesion

Although individuals possess unique personalities, they develop shared patterns of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors influenced by their social environment, which is essential for societal order and continuity (Gedikli, 2011). Social norms learned from childhood provide behavioral consistency and sustainability within society (Eroğlu, 2015). Individuals not only replicate learned behaviors but also adapt dynamically to new social cues, emphasizing the ongoing interaction between individuals and their environments (Yüksel, 2018). The dynamic relationship between individuals and their social surroundings is critical for personal development and societal cohesion, as social influence mechanisms foster collective behaviors that strengthen social solidarity.



Social Impact Theory

Social impact theory, developed by Latane, explains the influence of groups on individuals by proposing three fundamental principles akin to physical forces in nature. These principles determine how social factors affect individual behavior (Latane, 1981; Güney, 2023):

- **Strength of the social factor:** The influence exerted by a person with authority (e.g., a professor) is stronger than a stranger on the street.
- **Immediacy (time and space proximity):** The closer in time and space a social factor is, the greater its influence. The influence of the first person giving feedback is stronger than subsequent individuals offering the same input.
- **Number of sources:** While increasing the number of influencing people can raise overall social impact, the effect on each individual decreases. For example, personalized criticism from a teacher has more impact than generalized classroom feedback (Latane, 1981).

Ultimately, social impact theory posits that the likelihood of behavior change increases with the strength, immediacy, and number of influencing factors (Taşkıran, 2018).

Experimental Studies on Social Impact

Key experimental studies have illuminated the mechanisms and effects of social influence and conformity:

- **Solomon Asch's conformity experiment** demonstrated how individuals conform to a group consensus even when it is objectively incorrect, with 76% of participants conforming at least once (Güney, 2018; Taşkıran, 2018).
- **Stanley Milgram's obedience experiment** revealed the extent to which individuals obey authority figures even when asked to perform harmful acts, with 65% of participants administering the highest shock level, highlighting powerful social pressure effects (Güney, 2018; Taşkıran, 2018).
- **Muzaffer Sherif's autokinetic effect experiment** showed how social norms emerge in ambiguous situations, where individuals initially form personal judgments but converge towards a group norm through interaction, which they continue to use independently later (Güney, 2018; Taşkıran, 2018).

These studies collectively emphasize the profound impact of social environments on shaping perception, attitudes, and behavior.

Social Impact in Maritime Context

The maritime profession, characterized by a closed, hierarchical environment, presents a setting where social influence mechanisms are particularly pronounced. From the outset of maritime education, students are subject to strict discipline and uniformity, often leading to the unconscious internalization of group norms and behaviors modeled by senior peers (Eroğlu, 2015). Onboard ships, social pressures intensify due to prolonged confinement and hierarchical structures, where authority figures such as captains or senior engineers shape operational and behavioral standards (Gedikli, 2011).

Social influence in maritime contexts manifests not only through obedience but also via the internalization of group norms, contributing to professional identity formation. However, intense social pressure may suppress individuality, with negative outcomes including stress,



reduced self-esteem, and alienation—especially in cases of hazing or authoritarian behaviors (Eroğlu, 2015).

Therefore, understanding and managing social influence within maritime education and operational settings is critical, as it affects not only individual development but also team cohesion and maritime safety. Leadership styles that promote open communication and inclusive group culture can mitigate adverse effects, fostering both personal growth and ethical professional environments.

3. MOBBING

Definition and Scope of Social Impact

Mobbing, also known as workplace bullying, refers to the phenomenon where an individual is subjected to systematic, repetitive, and intentional negative behaviors at work, resulting in significant personal and organizational consequences. Originating from the term “mob,” it was first defined in the 1980s by German psychologist Heinz Leymann as a form of psychological harassment, emotional assault, or psychological terror. While Leymann and his followers emphasized that mobbing behaviors need to occur regularly over a minimum period of six months, some researchers argue that even a single incident can have severe detrimental effects on the victim (Bingöl, 2007; Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Workplace mobbing behaviors may manifest as mockery, belittling, exclusion, threats, spreading misinformation, social isolation, and actions that damage professional reputation. These behaviors typically occur in relationships with power imbalances, aiming to control or remove the victim from the organizational environment. Mobbing is a subjective experience; thus, the same behavior can be perceived differently by different individuals, complicating diagnosis and prevention efforts. Furthermore, mobbing symptoms are often misinterpreted as ordinary workplace conflicts or communication issues, delaying or preventing timely intervention (Bingöl, 2007; Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Humans are holistic beings with biological, psychological, and social dimensions. In the workplace, individuals seek not only material satisfaction but also emotional fulfillment such as respect, trust, and belonging. However, increasing competition, stressful environments, and high-performance expectations strain employees’ mental resilience and foster conditions conducive to mobbing. Organizational psychology should therefore focus on enhancing employee satisfaction and institutional sustainability (Bingöl, 2007; Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Mobbing is especially prevalent in sectors with harsh conditions like shipyards and maritime industries, where it adversely affects employee health both directly and indirectly. In such physically demanding, hierarchical, and socially restrictive workplaces, mobbing’s impact can be more destructive. Hence, mobbing should be examined not only as an individual grievance but also as a structural issue threatening organizational climate and functioning (Bingöl, 2007; Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Historical Development of Mobbing

The concept of mobbing traces back to the 19th century, initially used to describe animal behaviors (Tınaz, 2011). In the 1960s, Konrad Lorenz reintroduced the term to describe exclusionary behaviors among animals living in groups, especially exemplified by the weakest bird being physically harmed or deprived of food and water (Davenport, 2005; Tınaz, 2006).

The first use of mobbing in human behavior was by Swedish physician Peter Paul Heinemann, who applied it to social exclusion and hostility among children, laying the groundwork for examining social relations in human contexts (Gün, 2010). Over time, mobbing evolved into a



comprehensive concept encompassing systematic exclusion, humiliation, and psychological pressure on individuals.

In the workplace, the term was popularized by Heinz Leymann in the 1980s, who identified long-term, systematic, hostile acts among employees under the label “mobbing” (Leymann, 1996; Cicerali & Cicerali, 2014). This definition highlighted that mobbing extends beyond momentary conflicts to a persistent psychological oppression targeting an individual.

Mobbing has since been studied beyond workplaces, including educational settings. Olweus (1993) analyzed bullying among school children under the bullying framework, emphasizing its negative effects on social development. Mobbing has also been linked to organizational dynamics such as poor management, authoritarian leadership, and inadequate communication, all of which can trigger such behaviors (Einarsen et al., 2011).

Today, mobbing is recognized as a widespread social problem that harms individuals’ mental and physical health, as well as organizational efficiency. In highly hierarchical and discipline-based sectors like maritime, its effects are especially pronounced, requiring both individual and systemic approaches to address it (Tavacıoğlu et al., 2018).

The Mobbing Process

Modern workplaces offer complex interaction networks that fulfill not only physical but also emotional and social needs. However, these interactions can turn destructive when systematic psychological pressures, or mobbing, occur. Mobbing involves one or more individuals targeting a person with prolonged, intentional, and systematic negative behaviors (Leymann, 1996).

The process typically begins covertly through subtle actions such as belittling attitudes, social exclusion, removal from responsibilities, abuse of authority, and gossip, which gradually intensify (Einarsen et al., 2011). These behaviors aim to damage the victim’s reputation and induce feelings of isolation. Laçiner (2006) notes that mobbing often lasts between six to ten months, during which the victim undergoes systematic psychological deterioration.

Victims commonly experience severe psychological and physiological effects, including insomnia, depression, anxiety disorders, gastrointestinal issues, social withdrawal, anger outbursts, and loss of self-esteem (Zapf, 1999). Prolonged exposure leads to disengagement and burnout, often culminating in resignation (Tınaz, 2006).

Witnesses of mobbing may avoid intervention due to fear of job loss, distrust in management, or lack of organizational justice, which perpetuates the problem and normalizes it institutionally (Hirigoyen, 2000).

Tatar and Yüksel (2019) report that mobbing often begins with verbal humiliation, intimidation, mockery, and exclusion, threatening not only victims’ psychological integrity but also the ethical climate of the organization. Davenport et al. (2003) emphasize that mobbing is a slow and insidious process, often difficult to detect early.

In the maritime sector, characterized by isolated and hierarchical work environments and diverse international crews, mobbing behaviors are frequent and more intense. Crew members living in confined spaces for extended periods experience intensified social conflicts. Superior-subordinate relations often exacerbate mobbing via misuse of command authority. Research indicates that maritime workers face higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression linked to mobbing than other sectors (Baykal, 2014; Yıldırım & Çınar, 2021). Limited access to legal complaints and protection mechanisms in international waters prolongs victimization,



highlighting the need for robust internal policies and international standards and training programs (Baykal, 2014).

Ultimately, workplace mobbing constitutes not only an individual but an organizational health issue. Effective prevention requires clear institutional policies, employee awareness, and a culture of safe communication, along with early detection and intervention mechanisms to foster recovery at both personal and corporate levels.

Signs of Mobbing

Mobbing in the workplace manifests as systematic pressure, psychological violence, and coercive behaviors directed at employees, adversely affecting motivation, focus, job satisfaction, and potentially leading to turnover (Hervé, 2023). It can affect individuals regardless of cultural, ethnic, religious, or linguistic backgrounds (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

The emergence of mobbing behaviors can stem from diverse individual and organizational factors. Intense competition among peers, struggles over task ownership, traditional gender roles, subordinates' tendencies to belittle superiors, and managers' desire for control are common triggers. Additionally, jealousy and personal animosities can incite mobbing (Mimaroglu & Özgen, 2008).

Mobbing behaviors are not always overt; seemingly ordinary actions may evolve into systematic patterns that undermine psychological resilience. Thus, mobbing is often assessed through behavioral and physiological indicators (Tınaz, 2006).

Behavioral signs include the employee being excluded, disregarded, frequently criticized, assigned inappropriate tasks, or left out of important communications. Neglecting rest periods and inadequate recognition of effort also exemplify behavioral mobbing (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Physiological signs reflect the toll on physical health. Chronic stress may lead to depression, concentration difficulties, memory problems, eye issues, musculoskeletal pain, general fatigue, and in severe cases, cardiovascular problems (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Together, these signs reveal that mobbing affects not only work life but also overall quality of life and health (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Parties Involved in Workplace Mobbing

Workplace mobbing is a complex organizational issue that extends beyond individual behaviors. There is no specific category that exclusively defines those subjected to mobbing. The mobbing process is generally examined within four fundamental components:

- Perpetrators (bullies, harassers, aggressors),
- Targets (victims),
- Bystanders (those who remain silent or submissive),
- Organizational factors that enable mobbing to occur.

Consequently, individuals in the workplace may be prone to mobbing, each assuming a position in this process, with these four elements mutually influencing one another (Tınaz, 2006).

Perpetrators

Mobbing behaviors stem from multiple psychosocial factors, including deficits in emotional intelligence, lack of empathy, fear-driven attitudes, psychiatric disorders, and ethical failures (Lewis, 2003; Salin, 2001). Fear of job loss or social demotion often motivates these behaviors.



Perpetrators typically experience insecurity, jealousy, and fear, using mobbing to mask internal weaknesses (Rayner, 1997; Leymann, 1990; Çobanoğlu, 2005).

Their behaviors range from overt aggression to covert, passive-aggressive actions that complicate detection and intervention (Gürhan, 2013; Einarsen et al., 2011). Early personality traits prone to conflict may escalate minor issues into serious workplace disputes (Başaran, 1998). Commonly, perpetrators exhibit personality disorders that impair social and occupational functioning (APA, 2013, 2022).

- **Paranoid Personality Disorder:** Characterized by pervasive distrust and suspicion without evidence, hypersensitivity to criticism, and grudges (APA, 2013, 2022).
- **Narcissistic Personality Disorder:** Marked by grandiosity, need for admiration, lack of empathy, and exploitative behaviors despite fragile self-esteem (APA, 2013, 2022).
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder:** Defined by perfectionism, rigidity, and control needs, often leading to inflexibility and difficulty delegating tasks (APA, 2013, 2022).
- **Sadistic Personality Traits:** Involving pleasure in inflicting pain, with punitive and humiliating behaviors, especially toward vulnerable individuals (APA, 2013, 2022).
- **Antisocial Personality Disorder:** Characterized by disregard for others' rights, impulsivity, deceitfulness, and lack of remorse, often beginning in childhood or adolescence (APA, 2013, 2022).

Targets of Mobbing

The risk of exposure to mobbing is a universal threat across work environments, irrespective of cultural or sectoral differences. Though manifestations vary by context, targets often share common traits (Tınaz, 2006). Prolonged exposure can lead to social isolation, psychological deterioration, health problems, reduced job performance, and even job loss (Leymann, 1990).

Targets frequently experience restricted expression, verbal aggression, unwarranted criticism, invasion of privacy, exclusion, and other forms of psychological or social harassment, leading to feelings of humiliation and worthlessness (Einarsen et al., 2010). Emotional intelligence may mediate sensitivity to mobbing impacts, with higher emotional intelligence sometimes correlating with greater vulnerability (Alparslan & Tunç, 2009).

Individual factors linked to mobbing outcomes include:

- **Low Self-Esteem:** Normalization of mobbing can internalize self-blame and psychological harm (Arsan, 2008).
- **Loneliness and Social Isolation:** Targets may be excluded from social support networks (Dussault & Frenette, 2014).
- **Low Psychological Resilience:** Individuals with poor coping skills suffer more intense adverse effects (Just, 1999; Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Bystanders

Bystanders are employees who observe mobbing incidents but do not directly intervene. They include coworkers, supervisors, and managers. Silence can be interpreted as tacit approval, implicating them in the process (Tınaz, 2006; Karavardar, 2009; Gürbüz & Gürdal, 2019).

Bystanders can be classified into five types:



- Diplomatic (Mediating) Bystanders: Attempt to remain neutral and resolve conflicts, sometimes risking becoming targets themselves.
- Passive (Indifferent) Bystanders: Avoid involvement, ignoring mobbing and thus inadvertently allowing it to continue.
- Supportive (Collaborative) Bystanders: Loyal to the perpetrator, often covertly supporting mobbing.
- Over-Involved Bystanders: Overly intrusive with good intentions, but may cause discomfort to victims.
- Two-Faced Bystanders: Appear neutral but secretly side with one party for self-protection.

Active bystander intervention can help terminate mobbing, while passive or perpetrator-supporting attitudes prolong and worsen the problem, sometimes turning bystanders into new victims (Tınaz, 2006; Karavardar, 2009; Gürbüz & Gürdal, 2019).

Organizational Factors Enabling Mobbing

Mobbing often stems from structural and organizational deficiencies rather than solely interpersonal conflicts. Management-related tensions and institutional weaknesses provide fertile ground for mobbing (Zapf, 1999). Centralized hierarchies, poor interdepartmental coordination, limited promotion opportunities, ineffective supervision, exclusion from decision-making, lack of democratic practices, insensitive leadership, ambiguous job descriptions, job insecurity, and unattainable performance targets are among key organizational contributors (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007; Grubb, 2011).

Work-related stress is a major trigger for mobbing behaviors. Numerous studies link stressful, tense, and unsupportive work environments to increased mobbing (O'Moore, 2000; Tavacıoğlu, 2024). Furthermore, misalignment between organizational values and employee beliefs fosters a hostile culture that sustains mobbing. Competitive, individualistic workplaces lacking collaboration and social support encourage control struggles, favoritism, jealousy, dominance efforts, criticism, and aggression, which facilitate the spread of mobbing behaviors (Einarsen, 2000).

Types of Mobbing

Workplace mobbing typically occurs in three main forms: vertical (hierarchical), horizontal (functional) and cross-level mobbing (ÇSGB, 2014).

Workplace mobbing manifests in three main forms: vertical, horizontal, and cross-level mobbing. Vertical mobbing occurs between hierarchical levels, either from supervisors to subordinates or vice versa. It is particularly impactful in structured environments such as maritime settings. Subordinate-to-superior mobbing often arises from resistance to authority, while superior-to-subordinate mobbing involves persistent criticism and unfair task allocation, negatively affecting employee well-being and productivity.

Horizontal mobbing takes place among peers at the same level, driven by jealousy, conflicts, and competition, especially in confined or high-pressure workplaces. Cultural and linguistic differences may also exacerbate this form, resulting in exclusion and stress for targeted individuals, often newcomers or high performers.

Cross-level mobbing combines elements of both vertical and horizontal mobbing, involving coordinated actions across different levels within an organization. Embedded within corporate culture, it is difficult to detect and leads to social isolation and psychological harm. Addressing



these mobbing forms requires comprehensive strategies including education, awareness, support systems, and fostering open communication to ensure healthier work environments.

Mobbing in the Maritime Sector

Mobbing in maritime settings involves repeated negative behaviors such as verbal abuse, threats, and exclusion, creating a hostile atmosphere and undermining individual dignity (Boström & Österman, 2022). These behaviors harm the psychosocial well-being of seafarers and extend beyond the ship environment, leading to stress, anxiety, and decreased job satisfaction.

Studies indicate that maritime workers face unique psychological pressures, including isolation, fatigue, and fear related to job and family security (Bergheim et al., 2015). Notably, about 20% of seafarers report suicidal thoughts, with many avoiding professional or social support due to stigma (Mellbye & Carter, 2017). Raising mental health awareness and coping strategies is therefore essential.

Maritime mobbing requires sector-specific interventions due to complex operational dynamics. Research shows low-status workers are particularly vulnerable, and mobbing negatively affects maritime safety by increasing human errors (Tavacıoğlu et al., 2018; Sampson & Ellis, 2019).

Gender disparities are significant, as women in this male-dominated field face distinct challenges and “glass ceiling” barriers. Women report higher mobbing rates, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive policies and inclusive practices (Charles & Grusky, 2005; Koca & Kinalibalaban, 2020; Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

International frameworks, such as the 2016 amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention and guidelines by ICS and ITF, provide tools to prevent harassment and mobbing onboard ships (ICS & ITF, 2016).

Effective anti-mobbing strategies in maritime contexts integrate scientific evidence, safety analyses, gender equality efforts, technological advances, and crisis management. These holistic approaches aim to foster safer, more resilient, and inclusive workplaces (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Mobbing directly impairs health, motivation, and performance among maritime personnel, with onboard isolation intensifying these effects. It also impacts family relationships due to psychological stress and social isolation from extended voyages (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

Finally, mobbing contributes to increased turnover, threatening workforce stability and operational continuity. Addressing mobbing through counseling services and ethical organizational policies is critical for sustainable maritime operations (Tavacıoğlu, 2024).

4. METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Significance

The primary objective is to measure the extent of mobbing behaviors experienced by maritime students and analyze their impact on students' perceptions of social influence. Given the maritime education context characterized by confined living spaces, hierarchical structures, and authority-based operations, the study contributes to understanding social challenges affecting students' academic and professional development, offering implications for institutional policies.



Study Population and Sample

The sample comprised 138 voluntary students from various maritime faculties across Turkey. Sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, academic year, department (deck/engine), and onboard experience were considered to ensure representativeness and generalizability of findings to the broader maritime student population. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (n = 138)

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	18–25	132	95.7
	25–30	5	3.6
	30 and above	1	0.7
Gender	Female	29	21.0
	Male	109	79.0
Marital Status	Single	134	97.1
	Married	4	2.9
Department	Deck (Navigation)	117	84.8
	Marine Engineering	21	15.2
Academic Year	1st year	58	42.0
	2nd year	22	15.9
	3rd year	9	6.5
	4th year	49	35.5
Sea Experience / Internship	None	69	50.0
	1–3 months	16	11.6
	3–6 months	11	8.0
	6–12 months	42	30.4

Data Collection

Data were collected through an online survey consisting of three sections: sociodemographic questions, the “Mobbing Scale for Ship Personnel” (Tavacıoğlu, 2024), and the “Social Influence Scale” (Ekşi et al., 2021), both employing a 5-point Likert format. Participation required informed consent, ensuring ethical compliance.

Data Analysis

Analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0 with a significance level set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) indicated non-normal distribution; thus, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis) were used for group comparisons. Spearman’s correlation examined relationships between variables, and regression analysis with Newey-West standard errors addressed model assumptions.



Hypotheses and Model

The study hypothesized a significant positive relationship between mobbing and social influence levels. Additionally, it was posited that sociodemographic factors would significantly affect mobbing and social influence perceptions. Mobbing scores served as the independent variable and social influence scores as the dependent variable in correlation and simple linear regression analyses. The relationship between mobbing and social impact levels was examined using correlation analysis in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation Between Social Impact and Mobbing

Variables	Pearson r	p value	Relationship
Social Impact – Mobbing (overall)	0.221	< .001	Positive, significant

Note: Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. A positive and statistically significant relationship was found between social impact and mobbing levels ($p < .05$).

The predictive effect of social impact on mobbing was examined using simple linear regression analysis in Table 3.

Table 3. Effect of Social Impact on Mobbing

	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Constant	2.563	0.224	—	11.449	< .001
Social Impact	0.411	0.093	0.354	4.410	< .001

Model statistics: $R^2 = 0.364$, $F = 19.57$, $p < .001$.

Dependent variable: Mobbing

Note: Regression coefficients are significant at $p < .05$.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients confirmed high internal consistency for both scales: 0.939 for the Mobbing Scale and 0.877 for the Social Influence Scale, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Item-total correlations further supported the reliability of the instruments, validating the data's suitability for statistical analysis. The reliability of the measurement instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients in Table 4.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis of the Scales

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Mobbing Scale for Seafarers	18	0.939	High reliability
Social Impact Scale	13	0.877	High reliability

Note: Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability. Both scales demonstrate high internal consistency.

The main findings of the study are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Summary of Findings**

Dimension of Findings	Analysis Type	Key Results	Academic Interpretation
Level of Mobbing	Descriptive statistics	A considerable proportion of students reported exposure to mobbing behaviours.	Mobbing appears to be a structural and non-negligible problem within maritime education settings.
Level of Social Impact	Descriptive statistics	Students' social impact levels were found to be at a moderate to high level.	Hierarchical structures and group norms exert a strong social influence on students.
Relationship between Mobbing and Social Impact	Correlation analysis	A statistically significant and positive relationship was identified between mobbing and social impact.	Increased exposure to mobbing is associated with higher susceptibility to social influence.
Effect of Social Impact on Mobbing	Regression analysis	Social impact was found to be a significant predictor of mobbing.	Social influence plays a determining role in the emergence and persistence of mobbing behaviours.
Age	Group difference analyses	Statistically significant differences were found across age groups.	Younger students appear to be more vulnerable to mobbing and social influence.
Gender	Group difference analyses	Significant differences were observed based on gender.	Gender-related dynamics within maritime education may shape students' experiences of mobbing.
Academic Year	Group difference analyses	Lower-year students reported higher levels of mobbing and social impact.	Increased academic seniority is associated with improved coping mechanisms against social pressure.
Internship / Experience	Group difference analyses	Significant differences were identified based on internship duration and experience.	Practical maritime experience increases awareness and perception of mobbing behaviours.
Voluntary Career Choice	Group difference analyses	Students who did not choose the profession voluntarily reported higher mobbing levels.	Professional motivation significantly influences perceptions of mobbing and social influence.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the relationship between mobbing experiences and social influence levels among maritime faculty students. Findings indicate that students are exposed to varying degrees of mobbing throughout their education, negatively impacting their social interactions, particularly in terms of professional status-related harassment and psychological pressure. The average mobbing score was moderate (3.50), while the social influence score was relatively low (2.29).

Correlation and regression analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between mobbing and social influence, suggesting that individuals more susceptible to social influence may be at greater risk of experiencing mobbing. Additionally, demographic factors such as academic year and maritime experience significantly affected mobbing perceptions, with first-year and inexperienced students reporting higher levels.

The results highlight the need for structural and psychosocial support systems within maritime education institutions to prevent mobbing. Revising communication strategies and management approaches, fostering peer interaction through group activities and social clubs, and enhancing counseling services are critical steps to mitigate mobbing's adverse effects.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Organize awareness seminars and workshops on mobbing prevention at universities.
- Develop guidance programs for academic and administrative staff on handling mobbing.
- Promote social clubs and activities to strengthen student solidarity.
- Increase accessibility to psychological counseling and support services for affected students.



- Regularly monitor and evaluate internship experiences to address potential mobbing risks.

The study's insights can inform policies and practices aimed at improving student well-being in maritime faculties. Furthermore, integrating personal development and psychological resilience content into curricula can prepare future maritime professionals to better cope with mobbing and related challenges.

Practical Implications

Given the maritime sector's hierarchical and isolated nature, this study underscores the importance of enhancing students' psychological resilience, social support, and communication skills. Universities should reevaluate student services, academic advising, and industry collaborations to provide holistic and responsive support. Preventive education, strengthened counseling, and leadership development programs are recommended to foster a healthier learning environment.

Ultimately, this research offers valuable guidance not only for academic institutions but also for maritime industry stakeholders, supporting the creation of more inclusive, supportive, and sustainable educational and professional settings.

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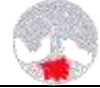
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