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Press Release

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THE “PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT RESEARCH REPORT” RELEASED

The results of the “*Perceptions and Experiences of Workplace Violence and Harassment Research*,” conducted with 3,007 respondents as a collaborative effort between Özyeğin University and the International Labour Organization (ILO), reveal that more than 75% of employees in Türkiye have experienced workplace violence at least once during their careers.

Özyeğin University and the International Labour Organization (ILO), recently unveiled comprehensive research on workplace violence and harassment —the first of its kind in Türkiye— at the “**Workplace Violence and Harassment Research Launch Conference**,” held on October 16, 2024, at Swissôtel The Bosphorus in Istanbul. The conference highlighted key findings and policy recommendations built on a foundation of a social dialogue approach, featuring prominent attendees including **Prof. Barış TAN, President of Özyeğin University**, and **Malena MARD, Swedish Ambassador to Ankara**, **Yasser HASSAN, Director of the ILO Türkiye Office**.

Özyeğin University President Prof. Barış TAN emphasized the University’s commitment to serving society. Prof. Tan stated: “We undertake a wide range of projects aligned with our mission to create, share, and apply solution-oriented and high-value knowledge at the service of society. We are dedicated to offering innovative solutions to global challenges, enhancing the quality of life, and contributing to a sustainable world. This study is a testament to our mission as a research university, yielding significant findings that will serve as a guiding beacon for the business world. Through this collaborative research conducted with our esteemed partner, the ILO, we aim to generate a profound global scientific, social, and economic impact as an institution firmly opposed to all forms of violence.”

Meanwhile, **Prof. H. Canan SÜMER from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Özyeğin University** and the Principal Investigator of the study drew attention to the study’s key findings: “Conducted jointly by Özyeğin University and ILO Türkiye, our study aimed to explore the anatomy of workplace violence within the context of Istanbul through a transdisciplinary approach. Based on data collected from a representative sample, the study examined the prevalence of five distinct types of workplace violence



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—economic violence, discrimination, psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual violence— as well as employees’ awareness of these types, the factors influencing this awareness, their knowledge levels, coping strategies, and sources of support. The study also collected information on the characteristics of perpetrators and targets of violence.

The research report presents the findings and provides recommendations for employers, policymakers, and labor organizations who bear key responsibilities in preventing violence. We hope this study and the insights presented in this report will contribute to efforts toward a world free of violence and more aligned with the ideal of decent work.”

Yasser HASSAN, Director of the ILO Türkiye Office, emphasized the importance of evidence-based data and social dialogue in combating violence and harassment in the workplace: “To address and prevent violence and harassment in the workplace, it is important to develop policies through a social dialogue approach, involving governments, workers, and employers’ organizations. The most critical need in this process is evidence-based data to develop effective policies. In this regard, the data presented in the research report, Türkiye’s first comprehensive study gathering insights from both women and men across sectors, is extremely valuable and crucial for shaping these policies. I hope the policy recommendations in this report will serve as a guide for policymakers, worker and employer organizations, and the private sector in addressing workplace violence and harassment, ultimately forming a basis for national policies and cultural transformations toward equality.”

Over 3,000 Respondents Surveyed Through Face-to-Face Interviews

The study, conducted between May 2024 and July 2024 as a collaborative effort between Özyeğin University and the International Labour Organization (ILO), explored the prevalence of five types of workplace violence —psychological violence, discrimination, economic violence, physical violence, and sexual violence— within the context of Istanbul. More than 3,000 household members were surveyed through face-to-face interviews to collect data. The primary purpose of the research was to examine the prevalence of the five types of violence among different demographic groups, the level of awareness of employees regarding violence, and the coping strategies used in the face of violence.

Key Findings

Key findings from the research show that workplace violence and harassment is a widespread problem affecting both women and men in various industries. Some of the key findings are listed below.



- More than 75% of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of workplace violence at least once during their careers.
- There is a significant gap between perceived and experienced violence across all types. This finding indicates a general lack of awareness regarding workplace violence.
- Around 60% of respondents reported experiencing economic violence during their careers. Respondents in the private sector reported significantly higher levels of economic violence (almost double) compared to those in the public sector.
- Psychological violence is widespread, with almost half of all employees, regardless of gender, experiencing it. Women in managerial positions experience psychological violence more often than their male counterparts in managerial positions and women in non-managerial roles.
- Sexual violence disproportionately affects women, with one in four women experiencing it at least once in their working lives. The prevalence of sexual violence among women is more than twice that of men.
- One-third of respondents reported experiencing physical violence at work. Men experience physical violence more frequently.
- One in five respondents has been the target of discrimination. Discrimination based on gender and attire and/or appearance was more commonly reported by women, while men reported higher rates of discrimination based on ethnicity and religion.
- Violence is not an isolated incident. Those who experience one form of violence are likely to encounter others. The fact that more than half of the respondents experienced two or more forms of violence highlights how severe and widespread violence is.
- While employees with low education levels experience psychological, economic, and physical violence more frequently, those with high education levels are more likely to experience sexual violence.
- Workplace violence has a negative impact on employees' job satisfaction, job engagement, and general well-being.
- One-third of the respondents who quit their jobs cited economic violence as a major reason for leaving.



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- Almost 90% of respondents reported that their organizations do not provide sufficient information about workplace violence, indicating a lack of efforts to increase knowledge and awareness.
- Those who witness violence prefer to remain silent and passive to a great extent. This finding shows that those who have been subjected to violence may be deprived of the support that is critical for them.
- Union membership provides employees with protection against workplace violence, particularly sexual violence and discrimination.

About Özyeğin University

Established on May 18, 2007, by the Hüsnü M. Özyeğin Foundation, Özyeğin University is an innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial research university integrated with modern life with the mission of serving society. In line with this mission, Özyeğin University aims to prepare individuals with in-depth knowledge of rising professions, proficient in foreign languages, competent in communication and information technologies, with sheer talent in practical skills, and exhibit entrepreneurial spirit. Özyeğin University aspires to instill in students the passion and dedication to make a difference for their employers and communities. Özyeğin University believes that all distinguished students must have access to high-quality education, no matter their circumstances. The University has 7 faculties, 3 graduate schools, and 1 vocational school, offering 25 bachelor's degrees, 36 master's degrees, and 10 doctoral degree programs. Özyeğin University was named the World's Top Turkish University in recognition of its social impact in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings 2019. It earned the highest score for contributing to the United Nations' "Sustainable Development Goals." Özyeğin University was also recognized as one of the top five foundation universities in Türkiye according to the "Times Higher Education Emerging Economies 2021" rankings.

About The ILO

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations for the world of work. The ILO sets international labour standards, safeguards rights in the workplace, promotes decent work opportunities, and strengthens dialogue on social protection and labour-related issues. The primary goal of the ILO is to provide opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity.

The ILO Türkiye Office works actively with the government, worker and employer organizations to establish International Labour Standards in Türkiye while considering ILO's fundamental priorities, labour standards, areas of interest, and policies. It develops, implements, and monitors technical cooperation programs and projects aimed at promoting decent work opportunities for all.