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Management culture and mobbing in a social organisation: whether a special status provides a guarantee of safety

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ABSTRACT

The authors of the article present the findings of the research conducted in a social organisation. The main findings reveal that cases of mobbing in employees' interrelations have been recorded in the organisation. Moreover, the correlation (from strongest to weakest) of relations of mobbing in the employees' relations and management culture have also been determined. The research revealed the mistakes in organization of management culture processes which prevent the achievement of a higher level of management culture within the organization. According to the authors of this article, after the implementation of changes in management culture, the management quality of all processes would also improve. On the basis of the results of the research, the authors provide the developed model intended for social organizations. The purpose of this model is preventive: it is designed to reduce the number of interpersonal conflicts, and also to facilitate conflict resolution and to improve psycho-social climate. The increase of the social competence of employees provided for in the model can be identified as a certain instrument, which allows the potential victim to avoid conflict, to resolve it independently, or deal with it with the help of the organization, which would spend less resources in this case and could allocate greater efforts for the implementation of its mission.

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1. Introduction

Mobbing has been quite widely analysed in employees' relations by various authors from different countries. However, the mobbing prevention issue, with the aim of improving the level of management culture in a social organisation, is rarely discussed. Usually, a social organisation is interested and obliged to take particular care of the employees' well-being, with respect to the fact that employees with certain disabilities are working in the organisation. The employees' health and safety policy implemented by these organizations includes the following aspects: constant provision of information, instruction, supervision with a view to employees' safety; introduction of systems that allow to implement a quick and effective communication with employees of the company on health and safety issues; the continuously functioning system of identification of the threats to employees,

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decision-making and feedback. However, most of the means are oriented towards workplace adjustment and employees' physical wellbeing. In addition, it is necessary to take into account that the relationship of healthy people and people with disabilities working together is affected by explicit and implicit provisions unfavourable to the disabled people. Thus, the issues of managerial staff competencies when organising work processes, maintaining healthy employee interrelations and a positive psychological microclimate are relevant.

The research problem is the question of what employee interrelations disturb the activities of the organisation and, after such disturbances are diagnosed, how to improve the management level in an organisation by using prevention means.

The abundance of research on mobbing in relations between employees shows the lack and/or ineffective application of preventive measures of the problem. This is also confirmed by Kemp (2014) arguing that there is a paucity of research into effective prevention and intervention programmes. Preventive measures that focus on the whole workplace culture or on targets alone have mixed results. According to the author, workplace policies and procedures may lessen the prevalence and incidence of bullying, but often competing interests of senior management, human resources personnel, supervisors and workers may mitigate any anti-bullying interventions. Branch, Ramsay, and Barker (2013) note the fact that the solution of theoretically raised problems of mobbing remains a not fully resolved problem in practice. Based on Dolinar, Jere, Mesko, Podbregar, and Eman (2010), it can be argued that the key for mobbing prevention is raising awareness among employees and also in the whole society. The experience of researchers, both directly and indirectly presenting solutions for prevention of mobbing in relations between employees, is indisputable in this area (Arenas, León-Pérez, Munduate, & Medina, 2015; Gillespie, Gates, & Fisher, 2015; Ioana, 2014; Marcilla-Gutierrez, 2010; Ovejero, Yubero, & Moral, 2011; Psunder, 2011; Waschgl, Ruiz-Hernandez, Llor-Esteban, & Jimenez-Barbero, 2013; Yang, Caughlin, Gazica, Truxillo, & Spector, 2014; etc.). However, the persons responsible for the implementation of decisions are not always able to effectively apply them in practice (Zukauskas, Vveinhardt, Melnikas, & Grančay, 2015). Undoubtedly, not all preventive measures are suitable for absolutely all organisations and all individuals without exception. For example, results of research made by Giorgi, Ando, Arenas, Shoss, and Leon-Perez (2013) demonstrate the importance of considering individual differences as predictors of bullying and, in particular, it suggests that mental health promotion might play a role in bullying prevention. The authors state that, in addition, findings indicate that organisational interventions for workplace bullying may benefit from introducing elements aimed at improving group cohesion and organisational climate. According to Beirne and Hunter (2013) effective action against bullying involves more than policy-making, rule forming and guideline setting. According to the author, it is important to cultivate the resilience of those at the sharp end of anti-bullying projects, and engage with managers and employees who experience difficulties or confront unpalatable changes to their work situation as anti-bullying initiatives develop. Hutchinson's (2012) research concludes by suggesting that a multidisciplinary approach to understanding workplace bullying as a work and employment relations issue is a fundamental step in its prevention. According to Tonini et al. (2011) prevention can be carried out only through effective information and training of workers and employers, who have the legal obligation to preserve the integrity of the mental and physical status of their employees and colleagues during work. Pai and Lee (2011), after analysing risk factors for workplace violence in clinical registered nurses, state that for violence prevention, interventions should be sensitive

to personal factors. Guglielmi, Panari, and Depolo's (2009) research data seem to confirm that mobbing prevention can be implemented starting from the psychosocial work environment and management of relationships, especially involving leaders and colleagues. Weber, Hörmann, and Köllner (2007) also maintain that prevention against occupational mobbing must be given high attention.

The aim of this research is to diagnose mobbing in employees' relations in order to improve the level of management culture in the organisation by forming a mobbing prevention model.

In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives of the research have been set: (1) to adapt the mobbing diagnosis instrument of the employees' relations; (2) to conduct surveys with employees and managers of the organisation; (3) according to the research results, to provide proposals for how to improve the level of management culture in the organisation; and (4) to form a mobbing prevention model for employee relations.

The research is based on scientific literature analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, modelling, summarising and comparing (devoted to the adaptation of the mobbing diagnosis instrument of employee relations, formation of the model). An oral and written survey was used (a questionnaire was prepared for the employees and a structured interview for the managers). The research was implemented by using qualitative and quantitative data processing methods.

The research was carried out in a Lithuanian organization, which has a special status of the social enterprise granted by the state. As the research was carried out only in one enterprise that has the status of a social enterprise, it does not show the situation in all enterprises that have this status.

2. Research methodology

2.1. The formation of interview questionnaire instrument for the employers

The interview questionnaire instrument was formed on the basis of scientific literature analysis. The categories of *management culture* (Acar & Keating, 1986; Dalton & Kennedy, 2007; Năstase, 2009; Townsend, 2004; etc.) and *mobbing in employees' relations* (Baillien, Bollen, Euwema, & De Witte, 2014; Baillien, Neyens, & De Witte, 2011a; Figueiredo-Ferraz, Gil-Monte, Grau-Alberola, Llorca-Pellicer, & García-Juestas, 2012; Leon-Perez, Notelaers, Arenas, Munduate, & Medina, 2014; Leon-Perez, Medina, Arenas, & Munduate, 2015; Shallcross, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013; Tsuno, Kawakami, Inoue, & Abe, 2010; etc.) were formed after the analysis of a series of Lithuanian and foreign researches. The distinguished categories, subcategories and their half-structured interview questions are provided in Table 1.

As can be observed from the data provided in Table 1, according to some interview questions, the organisational management culture as well as the spread of mobbing in employees' relations could have been forecasted (e.g., question 26).

2.2. The formation of written questionnaire instrument for the employees

The written questionnaire was adapted according to two validated questionnaires provided by the researcher and the co-author. The part of the questionnaire 'management culture' is adapted according to the questionnaire prepared by Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė (2015a)

Table 1. Categories and questions of the half-structured interview.

Categories	Subcategories	Primary / additional questions*	No. of questions in a subcategory	Examples of questions
General questions	Number, turnover, selection and education of employees and their managers	1, 2, 3, 7, 20	5	How many employees work in your organisation? How many of them are disabled? What is the staff turnover in your organisation (during the last year)? Was the commission for work conflict resolution formed in your organisation?
	Existence of councils, unions and commissions	4, 5, 6	3	What education field prevails among the managers of your organisation, and how many of them have management education? How are the employers informed about the organisation's situation, is it necessary from the manager's perspective? Are the leisure conditions provided for the employees of the organisation, what are they? Into what activities are the employees and their family members involved after the work?
Management culture	Education, knowledge and development of the managers	8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15	7	How are the employees informed about the conflict resolution examination, e.g., only the ones that have complained or all the workers are informed? Why this way has been chosen? Do employees solve conflicts, disagreements by themselves or they address the managers? If yes, when and whom? Are there persons in the organisation that would be considered specialists of the conflict resolution?
	Dissemination of information in an organisation Leisure activities and conditions	11, 16, 17, 26 18, 19	4 2	
Mobbing in employees' relations	Conflict resolution	20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	9	
	Nature of conflicts Dissemination of information on conflict examination	23, 25 26	2 1	
Total			33 / without duplicate** 31	

*addition questions were asked during the interview; **number of questions without duplicates.

Source: Created by authors.

**Table 2.** Management culture scales and subscales of the questionnaire.

Scales	Subscales in the original questionnaire	Subscales in the adapted questionnaire	Number of statements in scale / subscale	
			OQ*	AQ**
1. Culture of managerial staff	1. Common culture level of the managerial staff	1.1. Common culture of the managerial staff	7	4
	2. Level of management science knowledge	-	5	-
	3. Personal and business qualities of employees, style of management	1.2. Type of management, tasks and assignments	7	6
	4. Level of the abilities of management (art of management)	2.1. Optimal regulation and organisation of management processes	9	6
2. Culture of process management organisation	5. Optimal regulation of management processes		7	
	6. Rational organisation of management work		5	
	7. Level of modern computerisation of management processes		5	
	8. Culture of welcoming interested parties, conducting meetings, talking via telephone etc.	2.2. Help for the employees, partners, clients	7	4
3. Culture of management work conditions	9. Level of work environment (interior, lightening, temperature, cleanness etc.)	3.1. Workplace environment conditions	9	13
	10. Level of workplace organisation		6	
	11. Work and rest schedule, relaxation opportunities	3.2. Occupational safety, leisure and microclimate	6	9
	12. Occupational safety, socio-psychological microclimate		6	
4. Culture of documentation system	13. Culture of documentation		6	-
	14. Optimal document search and management system		5	
	15. Rational usage of modern information technologies		8	
	16. Rational archive storage system		6	
Total			104	42

*OQ – number of statements in scale / subscale of the original questionnaire; **AQ – number of statements in scale / subscale of the adapted questionnaire.

Source: Created by authors.

'Expression of management culture in order to implement social responsibility of the company'. The scales and subscales that form the part of the management culture statements are provided in Table 2.

As can be seen from the data provided in Table 2, in the original questionnaire version, the part regarding management culture encompasses four scales, and 16 subscales that include 104 statements. The original version of the questionnaire was shortened by uniting scales and rejecting a part of items. When adapting specifically this part of the questionnaire, as well as in order to make it shorter, the scale of the culture of documentation system was refused, some subscales were united, a part of items was waived, i.e., three scales were left, the number of subscales (6 of 14 subscales were left) and the number of items (42 items of 104 remained) decreased. It should be stressed that the titles of some subscales (joined or not) have been changed. In the adapted version of the questionnaire, one third of the formulations of the statements have been changed, i.e., from 42 left questionnaire statements, 13 have been edited.

The part of the questionnaire 'Mobbing in employees' relations' is adapted according to the questionnaire prepared by Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė's (2015b) 'Questionnaire verification of prevention of mobbing/bullying as a psychosocial stressor when implementing CSR'. The scales and subscales that include statements from the part of mobbing in employees' relations are provided in Table 3.

According to the data provided in Table 3, it can be seen that in the original questionnaire version, the part of mobbing in employee relations encompasses two scales, 11 subscales and 83 statements. After the adaptation of this part of the questionnaire, the number of scales remained unchanged, but the number of subscales was reduced, even though not significantly, i.e., five subscales were left. More than half of the statements were eliminated: 35 statements were left out of 83. In the adapted version of the questionnaire, the formulations of the statements have almost remained unchanged; there have been only minor changes in seven statement formulations. During the adaptation of the questionnaire, it was aimed to shorten it as much as possible to save the time needed for its completion. There are three

Table 3. Mobbing in employees' relations: scales and subscales of the questionnaire.

Scales	Subscales in the original questionnaire	Subscales in the adapted questionnaire	Number of statements in scale / subscale	
			OQ*	AQ**
4. Factors related to the employees' interrelations	1. Employees' communication	4.1. Employees' communication	8	8
	2. Employees' isolation	and isolation	7	
	3. Employees' reputation	4.2. Employees' reputation	7	5
	4. Employees' demography		9	
	5. Employees' attitudes		5	
	6. Employees' suffered damage	4.3. Employees' wellbeing and suffered damage	6	12
	7. Employees' wellbeing		15	
	8. Employees' intentions		6	
5. Factors related to the nature of tasks, work content and evaluation	9. Nature of tasks	5.1. Nature of tasks	7	5
	10. Work content	-	7	-
	11. Work evaluation	5.2. Work evaluation	6	5
Total			83	35

*OQ – number of statements in scale / subscale of the original questionnaire; **AQ – number of statements in scale / subscale of the adapted questionnaire.

Source: Created by authors.

questions on mobbing in employee interrelations and four demographic types of questions provided at the end of the questionnaire in order to establish the seniority, education, age and gender of the respondent in the current workplace.

When evaluating the reliability of the questionnaire in the case of this sample, extremely high values of Cronbach's alpha have been received, which confirms that the instrument is suitable to diagnose the analysed issue. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges between 0.683 (the lowest) to 0.961. Only one subscale does not fall under the lowest Cronbach's alpha limit, i.e., 0.7; however, this might be influenced by the number of statements (in this case, four) in the subscale. As is known, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient depends on the number of subscales that are made of the individual statements. The more statements are included in the subscale, the more Cronbach's alpha coefficient can be encouraged to grow. There are two such subscales that encompass four statements in the questionnaire. The calculated inter-correlation relations between the subscales that compose the questionnaire reveal a close interrelation.

3. Results of the research

The research was conducted in four private equity enterprises operating in Lithuania that have an official status of social enterprises given by the state. This status is granted to enterprises that employ at least 50% of disabled people. A total of 25 persons (which amounted from 84 to 87% of the people who worked in these companies at the time) were included in the research sample. Four returned questionnaires were recognised as invalid, as they were not completed properly. An interview was conducted with the heads of the same four enterprises.

3.1. Results from the managers' questionnaires

The principles and state of the company's staff management are illustrated by the informants' answers: not all the representatives of managerial staff accurately name the persons (or person) responsible for staff management. This might have been determined by the circumstance that there are no staff councils in the company, only the appointed persons that fulfil their functions. The technical (document management) function is appointed for the company's accountant, staff recruitment for production director and managerial staff recruitment for the chief executive. There is no staff specialist, in its traditional meaning, in the researched organisation, because of the prevailing principle that it is an unnecessary expense: 'the accountant has a long time experience in employee accounting, salary accounting', and 'the production director knows the best what employees are needed'. In Table 4, the knowledge and competency requirements for the managerial staff that are needed for job applications and further stages of training and development are provided.

It is important that the informant I4 admits that during the recruitment process 'the experience related to staff management' is not accentuated as well as further managerial staff training and development. Training and development is related to the management of new product manufacturing without drawing attention from the work. This is the task to the managerial staff which is dealt with on their own, 'through personal experience'. That is, the development in the field of personnel management depends only on the initiative of the manager. The only standards that the company has formulated are the quality management, environment and

Table 4. Knowledge and competency requirements for the managerial staff.

Stages	Competencies	Extract
Recruitment	Helping to achieve good results; managerial; professional; personal; communication with clients	Professional competencies are stressed; human resource management is not highlighted
Development	Engineering education; management; technology knowledge; administration; export field; boundaries of competence	The most important priorities are the technology and sales competencies; the management competencies are of secondary importance

Source: Created by authors.

Table 5. Features of management practice.

Criteria	Adequacy	Practice
Staff instructions, regulations	Exists in written form, but not all managers are aware of it	Managerial staff view staff instructions and their definitions as secondary, there is no feedback
Informing of employees	Undefined form and unwritten tradition	Each manager interprets informing of employees in their own terms
Involvement into decision-making processes	Employees do not participate in the processes	Processes are organised according to formula: <i>managers say, employees do</i>
Employees' physical welfare	Priority for the work and rest conditions	The investment in the employees physical welfare is reasoned by the special company status and obligations to the State
Employees' psychological welfare	Not actualised	Psychological employees' safety is not related to the workplace safety

Source: Created by authors.

occupational safety. Moreover, the company does not have electronic process documentation management, or a storage system. After the informants' answers were analysed and systematised, new and/or additional criteria of management practice features were singled out in the social company. Table 5 overviews the criteria related to work regulation, communication, employees' involvement in the decision-making processes, and their wellbeing.

A certain authoritarian style of management prevails in the company (e.g., I4: 'there can be no democracy in our company'). Authoritarian management style dominates in the company. This is illustrated by the item I4 reflecting the lack of management competence: 'there cannot be democracy here'. It may be assumed that these could be the reflection of naturally developed management traditions in Lithuania that are realised in practice. In this research sample, the question how much does the developed management practice guarantee the production quality and innovation has not been raised. However, in the discourse of internal relations functionality and relations stability, employees' loyalty, involvement in the organisational tasks, the employees' involvement in the sample of this research is evaluated as complicated. Nevertheless, among the significant management culture aspects, it should be noted that the managers create favourable conditions for the employees in the company and involve their family members in such socially responsible initiatives as 'sport contest, pool, health strengthening procedures' (I1 and the informants I2 and I3 affirmed this). According to I4: 'we were implementing the social integration plan as set out in the agreement with the State Labour Exchange'.

When analysing the answers of the informants, additional criteria that help describe the state of the company's organisational system and provide possibilities for mobbing conflicts to arise and develop have been revealed (Figs. 1 and 2).

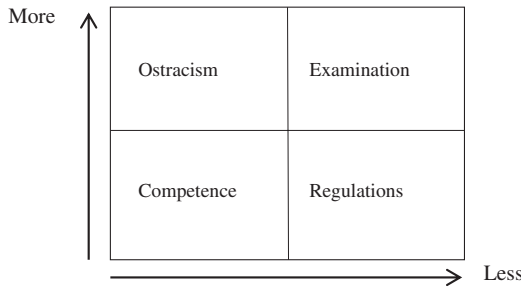


Figure 1. Influence of organisational system criteria. Source: Created by J. Vveinhardt.

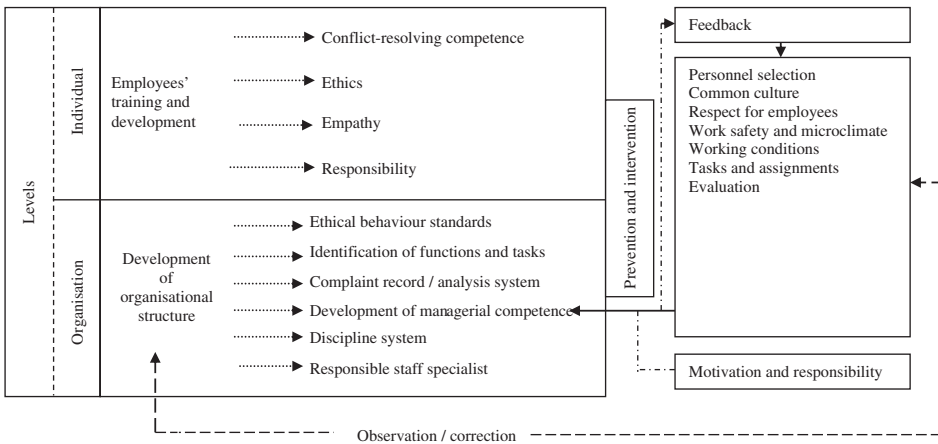


Figure 2. Integrated mobbing prevention model. Source: Created by J. Vveinhardt.

Regulations: the processes of recruitment are not regulated; only professional qualities of the applicant are valued (e.g., I1: ‘abilities are evaluated, the sickness records are checked’); the work functions are defined vaguely, which provides possibilities to abuse the ability of assigning tasks and evaluating their implementation; there are no general appeal procedures for conflicts and complaints; thus, it can be appointed by every manager on his own terms (e.g., I4: ‘you should take care of your own garden’). The company does not have official ethical behaviour norms. Regarding *competence*, as has already been mentioned, there are no employee training and development systems in the company, and this issue is still relevant in the conflict resolution context. I4 assumes that development of conflict resolution competence is overrated: ‘What will we get out of this? We are coping with it, I suppose, because people work, and those that work well receive premiums; they are motivated’. *Conflict resolution:* the directly lower positioned managers are appointed to examine conflict situations and employees’ complaints, and there is no possibility to appeal their decisions to the higher managers. The examination is quite formal; the parties receive written explanations. Subjective criteria, for example, positions of conflicting parties, seniority (e.g., I4: ‘we know them better, so we trust them more’) influence the decision-making. There is no system of informing employees about the decisions that have been made (e.g., I3: ‘they are not informed separately; they find out in the process’). Regarding *social ostracism*,

the managers of the company tolerate the psychological pressure used on employees they want to leave (e.g., I4: ‘if an unsuitable employee appears, the staff “cleans” itself. It unconsciously “pushes out”... one recently hired employee was alienated and left the work’). Thus, the system – even though it does not provoke directly – provides possibilities to escalate mobbing conflicts.

3.2. Results of the employees’ questionnaire

3.2.1. Management culture and relations with the co-workers

Most employees quite positively evaluate the interrelations (Table 6); however, in principle, the condition that was revealed during the interviews with the managers was confirmed: the employees use psychological pressure when wanting to eliminate co-workers. It has been proved that there were employees that, due to the bad relations with co-workers and managers, were obliged to leave work.

According to the previously mentioned cases and the evaluation of the employee’s interrelations in the present situation of the company, conditions have developed that provide the possibility to terrorise a victim or victims for a long time, and intensively. The answers of three employees correspond to the criteria of victims that experienced mobbing. Thus, the management culture and negative behaviour forms from the perspective of these victims will be discussed further.

When conducting the research, the victims feared being identified; they were not feeling safe, even though two of them had solved their problems after they addressed higher managers. One person did not address managers and still is experiencing attacks. The reasons become clearer when evaluating the company’s management culture. Even though the evaluation of the general management culture is quite low, near the average, 2.91, the calculated evaluation of managers’ objectivity and justice most significantly stand out, equal to 2.67. Moreover, the victims are more likely unsatisfied than satisfied with the work environment conditions, culture of managers’ communication, occupational safety and psychological climate. Moreover, the respondents quite critically evaluate the possibilities of solving the raised issues by communicating with their direct managers and without addressing higher managers. In this case, there is a clear tendency that the middle link managers transfer the problems to higher management by stressing in front of the employee the organisation and decision-making freedom problems.

The victims’ evaluations of relations with co-workers reveal the inner structure of negative actions and intensity. In the dimension of employee’s reputation attacks, attacks in

Table 6. Features of mobbing, according to employees.

Mobbing in employees’ relations	Communication and isolation of employees	Reputation of employees	Wellbeing and experienced damage of the employees	Nature of tasks	Evaluation of work
Number of employees that participated in the survey	25	25	25	25	25
Average of answers	1.78	1.68	1.65	1.65	1.94
Most frequent value*	1	1	1	1	1

*Where 5 shows absolute disagreement with the statement and 1 shows absolute agreement (formulations of statements are negative).

Source: Authors’ calculations.

the informal communication field are revealed; the highest value is in the area of gossip spread about the person (4), and, decreasing order, the constant doubt about decisions (3.67), criticism of personal life details (3.33), mocking of individual qualities (physical, demographic, etc.) (3.33), laughing at beliefs, values (2).

The highest value in the employee wellbeing and experienced damage dimension is 4. In the categories of moral damage and categories that encompass direct and indirect material damage, this means the damage of personal property, reduced willingness to achieve better work results. In addition, a part of the employees suffered financial losses because of the fault of the colleagues (3,67). A frequent consequence of mobbing is the use of alcohol and drugs; in this case, the evaluation is a bit higher than the average (3.67). The reasons for the feeling of despair (but remaining at work because there is no other choice) (4) are usually the lowered self-esteem and self-confidence, but for more accurate evaluation, additional research is necessary.

In the task dimension, the most apparent are the assignments to perform health damaging work (4) and being intentionally assigned useless works (3.67). Moreover, the respondents foresee the attempts to discredit by intentionally assigning tasks that exceeded possibilities (3.33) and providing assignments that had self-esteem damaging features (3.33).

Quite high features of insult have been revealed in the employees' evaluation dimension, which at the same time shows the existing tension between the employees and managers. The evaluation when only mistakes are noticed in work is 4.67, and the most frequent value of answers is 5. The same most frequent value of the answer repeats when the efforts of work are intentionally not evaluated (4.33), or the results are concealed (4). The fact that the employee overtakes another person's work results was mentioned by only one victim of mobbing.

4. Mobbing prevention model for employees' relations to improve the level of management culture

After the analysis of the results from the employees' interview part entitled 'Mobbing in Employees' Relations', the following prevention solutions are offered.

The twofold problem is highlighted. Firstly, as there is some uncertainty in the descriptions of employees' functions in the organization, and the management trusts the persons who have been working for a long time, the latter have an opportunity to abuse the trust. Secondly, the rest of the employees who see this cannot be guaranteed that their complaint will be resolved objectively. The work functions and instructions should be reviewed by making them more accurate and reducing the time costs needed for a responsible manager to resolve work conflicts. The official policy for resolving conflicts that prevent informal processes should be provided. The procedure for conflict analysis and resolution should be provided and publicly presented as well. It is necessary to discuss the intercommunication rules of ethical professional behaviour not only informally, but also formally, to define what is considered to be bullying, mobbing and other intolerant behaviour. This can help to change the employers' attitude towards conflict management and their role in the organisation's activity processes.

The culture of the company is based on cooperation; this creates a positive psychological climate and has an influence on the success of the company's economic activities. Mobbing,

as well as discrimination and sexual harassment, contravenes the legislation of the country and humiliates human dignity. The employers, as well as the employees, have to know what is mobbing, how it differs from the other conflicts, how to identify it and adequately react to it in order to avoid its escalation. Mobbing is a special form of aggression that encompasses bullying, harassment (including sexual), and psychological violence, and is aimed at isolating the victim or forcing the victim to leave work. It differs from the other conflicts by the fact that the attack is ongoing for a long time and is intensive; therefore, the victim cannot fight back. The effect is on the victim's social, psychological and health spheres of life and can cause health problems. The following types of participants are distinguished: attacker, allies and victim. Mobbing is also called an insidious crackdown, because the negative opinion about the victim's personal, professional and other qualities are purposefully created (by distorting information, spreading false information, ruining work results, making the victim lose control, etc.) and presented to the employer and the surroundings, thus directly or indirectly encouraging the victim to be fired from their position. The consequences are as follows: impaired victim's health, reduced working capacity, sick leave abuse, increased staff turnover, poor working hours. Moreover, the risk of complaints for the bad psychological atmosphere to the State Labour Inspection as well the sanctions and judicial complaints, the practice of which is already forming in Lithuania, is increasing.

The typical actions of mobbing are as follows: restricted ability to speak (constant criticism, constant interruptions of the speaker), social isolation (acting as if the person were not there), destroyed social authority (spreading various rumours, giving tasks that exceed competence and presuppose failure), threat to professional and personal life (constant work criticism, useless tasks), threat to health (harmful working conditions, psychological pressure, threats, physical violence). It is important to know that mobbing is a gradually intensifying attack that has four stages. *First stage*: indirect, almost unnoticeable aggression, the victim is blamed in various situations and humiliated. *Second stage*: as the victim is already accused, there is an excuse for direct aggression: public ridicule, humiliation, isolation, threat to use physical force. *Third stage*: direct physical attack, the victim is presented as mentally ill (the victim is made to lose control and cannot tackle emotions). *Fourth stage*: victims' voluntary redundancy or firing or, in the most extreme cases, suicide.

The disadvantages of description of work functions that were found during the research provide conditions for the managers to abuse their authority. Moreover, the expressed trust for the longer working employees provide possibilities to take advantage of the management trust risks. Furthermore, by demonstrating a predetermined trust for a certain group of workers, some employees can doubt whether the issue will be solved objectively and, thus, avoid reporting the inappropriate behaviour of colleagues. Therefore, the work functions and instructions should be reviewed by making them more accurate and reducing the time costs needed for a responsible manager to resolve work conflicts. The official policy for resolving conflicts should be formed and established; the procedure for conflict analysis and resolution, which would prevent informal processes, should be publicly presented.

In order to implement this, it is first necessary to discuss the intercommunication rules of ethical professional behaviour, not only informally, but also formally, to define what is considered to be bullying, mobbing and other intolerant behaviour. Intolerant behaviour includes defamation, gossiping, hiding of information necessary for work (or disinformation), threats, insults, irony, disrespectful behaviour of the employers, violence, and discrimination. Second, if the worker feels mistreated or disrespected, he or she should

have the right to file a complaint that will be objectively analysed. The complaint can be provided to the manager of the company or personnel specialist. No later than one week after the complaint, the following actions should be taken: the object of the complaint is informed about the situation; all aspects of the complaint are investigated; individual and mutual conversations with confronting parties are organised; help and moral support is provided for the victim; and proposals on measures that should be taken are provided for the manager of the company. Thirdly, confidentiality is guaranteed. No information revealed during the complaint investigation is allowed to be disclosed to third parties. Fourth, the responsibility and impact measures are defined: for example, instructions (what behaviour not tolerated), warnings monetary sanctions, dismissal. Fifth, conflict management training for managerial staff and employee's education on mobbing, harassment and discrimination issues are organised. *Sixth*, policy of publicity declared by the managers. The employees have to be fully aware of the fact that the managers do not tolerate such unethical behaviour; they do not hide it; all the complaints are investigated objectively, and guilty persons are punished regardless of their work position, length of service, etc.

If there is no staff specialist in the company, this function is undertaken by the book-keeping employee; therefore, the distribution of functions and special training are necessary. Moreover, the attitude of managers towards conflicts, their management and role in the organisation's activity processes should change.

After the analysis of the results from the employers' interview part entitled 'Management Culture', the following prevention solutions are offered.

General questions. The priorities of the organisation are the technological advancement and advantages in new markets; however, the personnel/human resources issues are not made relevant. After the evaluation of organisation's possibilities, the orientation is towards solutions that do not require unnecessary significant additional investment but may be effective by adjusting the organisational structure.

Management culture. In the evaluation of a company's size, without the foreseen means that were enumerated by I4, it is recommended to transfer the personnel management issues from the bookkeeping employee to a professional personnel management specialist that would consult the manager of the company, organise formal communication channels and feedback between the members and the management of the organisation. It is advised that the management of the company organise the dissemination of information between the members of the organisation, stressing such aspects as market situation, the State's social and taxation policies, the financial state, the obligation to the employees and the possibilities of implementing them. The managerial staff of the company are oriented towards marketing issues; however, the development of human resource management competencies is necessary and can be achieved by encouraging personal motivation and organising training within the company.

5. Conclusion and discussion

The questionnaire for the managers is based on the literature analysis and synthesis. The diagnosis instrument adapted for mobbing in employees' relations is used to increase the level of management culture and is prepared in a written form. After the validation of the

instrument for written questionnaires, the received high values of the coefficients confirm the suitability of the instrument to implement such a type of research.

After the questionnaires were gathered from the managers of the company, it has been proved that the priorities of the organisation are the technological advancement and advantages in new markets; however, the personnel/human resources issues are not sufficiently developed. There is a lack of clearly revealed managerial policy encouragement in the organisation, especially at the individual level, and prevention and intervention systems for negative employee relationships (including mobbing).

After the questionnaires were gathered from the organisation's employees, it was found that the management culture of managerial staff is evaluated quite high; however, the relationship differences between the employees of the organisation and subjects outside the boundaries of the organisation were emphasised. Not all the employees are treated with equal respect and objectively by adequately distributing attention; a proportion of employees do not understand the tasks they are given, and the resulting tension between the employers and employees weakens mutual understanding. The dependence on the attitude towards employees and their seniority reveals the existence of pre-determined attitude risks.

This survey carried out in social enterprises has highlighted several substantial problems of relationships between employees and the problems of organisation and management of work. On the one hand, the organisations still underestimate the value of competent work with personnel. It influences both the establishing of the limits of obligations and responsibility of employees and dealing with problems of relationships between the employees. On the other hand, organisations do not have a clear competence in management personnel training and development of personal culture, so the specificity of social enterprises, which are characterised by work force diversity, is underestimated. All of this poses specific, special requirements to organisations of this nature both in terms of organisation of work and management of relationships between employees.

According to the research results, the main proposals how to improve the level of management culture in an organisation are as follows: to strengthen the work link with the staff of the company, the style of working with others should be more flexible; during the communication processes, the individual cognitive qualities of the employee should be evaluated; the processes descriptions should be made more accurate; the middle-level managers should be motivated to develop their competence. The competencies of the middle managerial staff to resolve conflict situations directly, without the help from the higher management, should be improved.

According to Zapf et al. (2000), poor working conditions and a poor organisational system is two of the key reasons for harassment. It is, in principle, approved by this study as well. According to the research results, the mobbing prevention model for employees' relations is created, in which, except for the critical zones such as, respectful behaviour, etc., it has been proposed to create a prevention system in the individual and organisational levels by stressing the management culture development tendency. The changes might be implemented in accordance with the formulated recommendations.

This designed model is applied to social enterprises, in which healthy persons and persons with disabilities are employed. The analysis of scientific literature has failed to detect analogous integrated models that would be offered in the development of the culture of management to deal with questions of the prevention of mobbing in social enterprises. Other studies carried out in organisations operating in different areas examine narrower

questions, to which the suggestions are oriented as well; for example, to define the responsibilities more precisely (Picakciefc, Acar, Colak, & Kilic, 2015), to shape the staff-oriented culture and to increase awareness of companies of the problems of harassment (Baillien et al., 2011a), to give attention to improving conflict management style is also emphasised (Baillien, Notelaers, De Witte, & Matthiesen, 2011b), and to implement prevention and management programmes (Stagg & Sheridan, 2010). However, in this research, attention is drawn to the fact that persons who work in social enterprises can have special physical needs, and so elimination of mobbing and other negative relationships is impossible without a systematic approach, which is emphasised by the management culture.

If the level of management culture is low in the organisation, then the special social status of the company does not guarantee better psychological safety and the wellbeing of all the employees. Thus, when evaluating the lack of management competence and the complexity of mobbing as a phenomenon, employees with physical disabilities are faced with the additional threat of experiencing psychological violence.

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