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## THE IMPACT OF MOBBING AND CONSEQUENCES OF WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

### Abstract:

Mobbing and discrimination are all around us. The terms of mobbing and discrimination appeared twenty years ago. These terms represent specific behavior in the workplace. Mobbing and discrimination in the workplace include individual or group of people targeting a co-worker for mocking, isolation and exclusion from the work, humiliation, etc. Mobbing and discrimination are not something new. There existed and there will be exist in the future in all organizations. Mobbing and discrimination are not just the problem of an individual. There is the problem of the whole society. Mobbing and discrimination create large costs for the whole society and destroys the organization. Prevention of workers is a tool against mobbing and discrimination.

The best prevention against mobbing and discrimination is the awareness of employees, employers, and professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and doctors. The aim of the paper is to analyze whether or not is there mobbing and discrimination in the workplace.

In this study is included a survey conducted in the company. The topic of the survey was mobbing and discrimination in the workplace. The survey included 60 people in ages 18-53. The survey contained 20 questions. Respondents had to answer with YES or NO.

The key research questions were about isolation and exclusion from the work, mocking, humiliation, turning others against them and sexual abuse.

### Keywords:

Mobbing; discrimination; worker; society; organization

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## Introduction

In the last 20 years of the 20th century, the concept of attitude towards of the worker and the employment relations changed. A new work culture is emerging in which workers have great value and rights. Therefore, many studies have been made of this phenomenon with the desire to recognize it as well as to determine its characteristics so that it can work to improve interpersonal relationships and to prevent mobbing. At the same time, great competition in the market, the globalization of organizational change, the economic crisis, the new economy, job insecurity and the expectation of workers' flexibility have led to an increase in the frequency of mobbing. Employers are forced to analyze every problem that has a negative impact on productivity and production costs. Research has proven that one of the important factors in declining productivity is mobbing.

The terms of mobbing and discrimination appeared twenty years ago. Mobbing and discrimination in the workplace include individual or group of people targeting a co-worker for mocking, isolation and exclusion from the work, humiliation, etc. There are the problem of the whole society.

The best prevention against mobbing and discrimination is the awareness of employees, employers, and professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and doctors.

This paper deals with the phenomenon of mobbing and discrimination, their consequences, prevention and measures to protect employees from mobbing and discrimination.

The aim of the paper is to analyze whether or not is there mobbing and discrimination in the workplace. In this study is included a survey conducted in the company. The topic of the survey was mobbing and discrimination in the workplace.

## Mobbing and discrimination on the workplace

### Mobbing

Mobbing or psychological terror at the workplace refers to hostile and unethical communication that directed by one or more individuals to an individual [1]. The definition of Heinz Leymann wants to show that mobbing aimed to destroy a person. The consequences of mobbing are the health, social and psychological problems of the victim.

A person who practices mobbing do it consciously with a view to force workers leaving the workplace. Mobbing consists of several activities. The first activity is a change in work climate. Work climate consists of feelings, sensations and perceptions that are not just the words. The person first detects the distance from a colleague or superior, neglect or excessive viewing. Thereafter various activities effect of the victim's behavior.

Mobbing divided on horizontal and vertical mobbing but it all depends on who is the abuser and who is the victim.

Vertical mobbing is the situation when superior mobbing one subordinated worker, or, if mobbing is serial, the superior mobbing one by one worker until he destroyed the whole group or one group of

workers (subordinates) mobbing one of the subordinates [1].

Horizontal mobbing is the situation when harassing actions occur among workers in the same position in the hierarchical organization [1]. The group of workers can join against one worker and trying to prove himself that they are more capable and powerful. The cause of horizontal mobbing can be internal problems and jealousy. If a worker is conducting mobbing to another employee, it is often the case to eliminate him because of his career prospects, feelings of endangerment, envy and jealousy.

### *The consequences of mobbing*

What will be the health consequences of mobbing depends on three important factors:

The intensity of mobbing,

The period of mobbing,

Criminal personality of the abuser and the victim [1].

All the health distress and symptoms of mobbing divided into three categories:

1. Changes in social-emotional balance (equilibrium),
2. Psychophysiological Balance Changes and,
3. Behavior changes [1].

Changes in the social-emotional balance are depression, panic attacks, depersonalization, crying crisis, etc.

Changes in the psycho-physiological balance include rapid heartburn, sleep disorder, headache, dizziness, chest tightness, lack of air and gastrointestinal disturbances.

Behavior changes include isolation, passivity, aggressiveness, anorexia, bulimia, alcoholism, drug addiction, and sexual dysfunction.

### *Prevention*

There are three categories of mobbing prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary prevention is to prevent stress and mobbing, and those who are responsible for human potentials should consider those. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to impose penalties for mobbing in the workplace in the work contracts, to educate and inform employees, to regulate hours of work and to promote work culture. Investing in mobbing prevention will make a big benefit for the company, as it will reduce the possibility of mobbing.

Secondary prevention is keeping mobbing under control by taking effective measures. It is important to listen to anyone who thought that it is a victim of mobbing, and the counselor of trust assumes this role.

Tertiary prevention has the role of helping the mobbing victims getting back as soon as possible and restoring balance in health and dignity. Ways to help mobbing victims are rehabilitation in specialized institutions, self-help groups, early diagnosis and law.

### **Discrimination**

The right to freedom from discrimination is universal human right. Discrimination is an inadmissible and unjustified distinction of persons based on some of their characteristics [2]. The term discrimination came from the Latin

word *discriminare*, which in translation means to separate (to make a difference).

Forms of discrimination are direct and indirect, segregation, harassment and sexual harassment, failure to make reasonable adjustments, and incitement to discrimination.

Direct discrimination is treatment based on any of the grounds of discriminatory behavior whereby a person is, has been treated, or would be treated less favorably than another would in a comparable situation. Direct discrimination consists of unfavorable treatment conditioned by some of the discrimination grounds.

Indirect discrimination is specific provision that is neutral and puts people at a disadvantage in relation to another person in the same situation.

An example of indirect discrimination is not allowing the marriage to persons of homosexual community.

Harassment is a term that encompasses a wider distribution. It is divided into sexual harassment, racial, ethical and other types of harassment. Sexual harassment is any verbal, non-verbal or physical unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that seeks to, or actually violate, the dignity of a person, which causes a fearful, hostile, degrading or abusive environment [2].

Segregation is the separation of persons forcibly or systematically on some discriminatory grounds. Examples of segregation are classrooms for students of different religious backgrounds.

According to the Labor Law, direct or indirect discrimination in the field of work and working conditions are prohibited, including selection criteria and employment conditions, advancement,

professional guidance, vocational training and refinement and retraining [3].

The Labor Act exists to prevent and limit the occurrence of discrimination. Employers have a number of obligations to avoid discrimination and mobbing at work. The implementation of legal regulation ensures equal and lawful fulfillment of rights and obligations from employment [4].

## Measures to protect workers

The victims of mobbing and discrimination can get more types of help. The victim of mobbing or discrimination is difficult to instruct how to protect itself. In order to facilitate this, there are introduced laws that protect the victim and punish abusers. However, it often does not help. The abuser creates a climate of insecurity at the victim and the victim does not dare to seek help later. Informational interviews are important because the victim can advise on mobbing or discrimination at work.

### Measures to protect employees from mobbing

There are several tips to help a person if someone become a victim of mobbing. The victim needs to strengthen itself and never give in. First, the victim must recognize that he/she became a victim of mobbing and must try to find a way to help itself. It is important to seek help from psychiatrists, doctors, and others but they will hardly replace its own actions.

In the case of mobbing, the victim should not quit or leave the workplace but should respond to attacks. It is very useful to respond to harassment

in a calm but clear and decisive manner, and to show the abuser and witness that the behavior of the abuser is now known as mobbing or psychological, moral abuse [1]. If possible, it is necessary to try to leave that situation calmly by finding a common language.

Another thing that a person has to do is try to collect information that they can use if there is a court proceeding. Such information will serve as proof of the victim of mobbing.

The third thing a person has to fulfill is to find witnesses, allies, and help. Victim support can be:

- Senior colleagues or colleagues who are protected
- Trade Union
- The Association for Helping the Victim of Mobbing
- A general practitioner or a physician working in medicine
- Psychologist, psychiatrist
- Lawyers
- Self-help groups for the victims of mobbing [1].

Getting away from work is the fourth and final way. Before the victim decides to leave the workplace, it needs well thought out. A victim decides to leave the workplace when the work stress becomes unbearable.

The victims of mobbing are exposed to many more consequences. For example, after losing a job, they may have trouble finding a new job. Even if they find a new job, they could have permanent sick leave because of their poor health and exhaustion. As a result, the person may unfortunately be fired again.

## Measures to protect employees from discrimination

The measure and protection of the dignity of a worker is regulated by a collective agreement and an agreement concluded between the workers' council and the employer. The collective agreement is a two-sided legal act concluded by the union and the employer. An employer may not modify a collective agreement to his or her will [5]. An employer who employs more than 20 workers must publish a work rulebook in which will be clearly defined what are the salaries of the workers, the organization of work, the protection at work and other important issues. The employer is not obliged to publish the work regulations if the issues above are regulated by a collective agreement.

In most work regulations has noticed that there is no established procedure and measures to ensure the conditions in which an employee will not be exposed to harassment or sexual harassment [5].

## Research of mobbing and discrimination in the workplace through a survey in the „XY“ company

In this study is included a survey conducted in the company. The topic of the survey was mobbing and discrimination in the workplace. The survey included 60 people in ages 18-53. The survey contained 20 questions. Respondents had to answer with YES or NO.

The following graph shows the gender of the respondent.

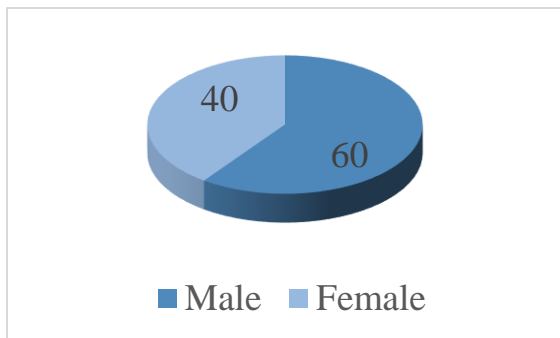


Figure 1. Gender of the respondent ;Source: created by authors

It can be seen from the graph that 60 percent of respondents were male and 40 percent were female.

The following graph shows the percentage of respondents, who have experienced the invasion of privacy. It can be seen from the graph that 15 percent of respondents had experienced the invasion of their privacy.

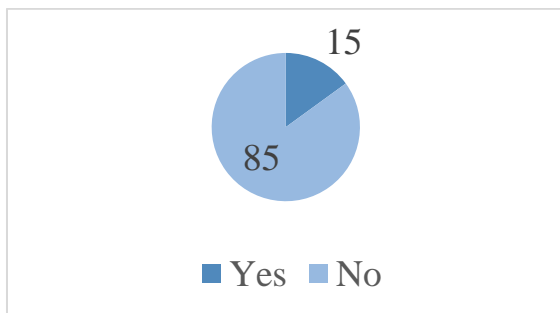


Figure 2. Invasion of privacy; Source: created by authors

The following graph shows the percentage of respondents, who find hard to get a day of vacation for no reason, who are forbidden from attending any course and who hard to get a salary raise.

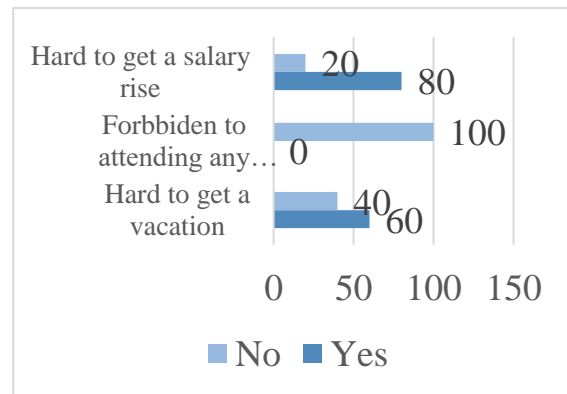


Figure 4. Experiences of respondents (3); Source: created by authors

It can be seen from the graph that none of respondents experienced forbidden from attending any course, but even 80 percent of respondents experienced hard to get a salary raise and 60 percent of them experienced hard to get a vacation. The following graph shows the percentage of respondents, who excluded from communication or from meetings.

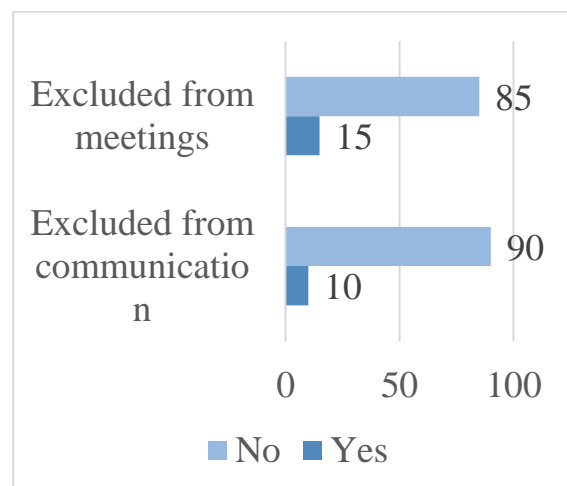


Figure 5. Experiences of respondents (4); Source: created by authors

It can be seen from the graph that 10 percent of respondents excluded from communication and 15 percent of respondents excluded from meetings.

The following graphs show the percentage of respondents who experienced isolation and exclusion from work, mocking and humiliation, turning others against them, physical and sexual abuse.

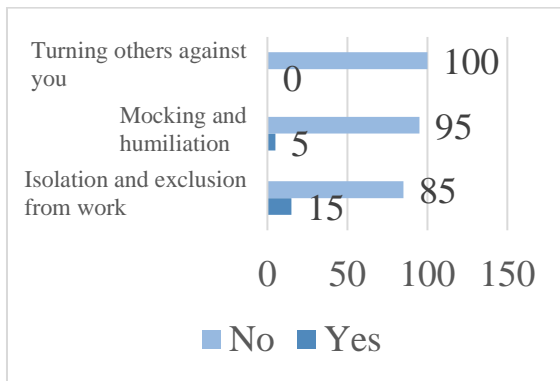


Figure 3. Experiences of respondents (2); Source: created by authors

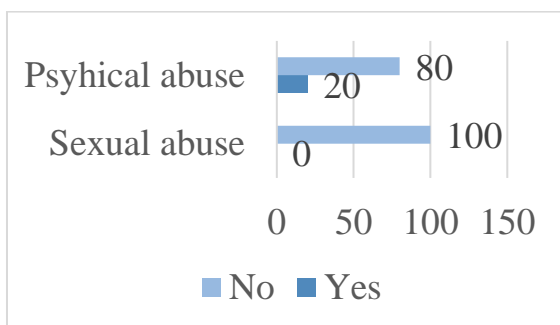


Figure 3. Experiences of respondents (2); Source: created by authors

It can be seen from the graph that none of respondents experienced abuse or turning others against themselves on the work but 20 percent of them experienced physical abuse. The 15 percent of respondents experienced isolation and exclusion from work, and 5 percent of respondents experienced mocking and humiliation. The following graph shows the percentage of respondents who have been criticized based on

religion and sexual orientation or without any reason.

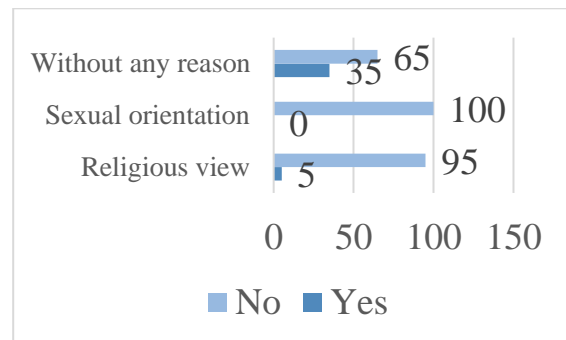


Figure 7. Experiences of respondents (6); Source: created by authors

It can be seen from the graph below that none of respondents experienced criticism based on sexual orientation, but 5 percent of respondents had experienced criticism based on their religious view. About 35 percent of respondents had experienced criticism without any reason. The following graph shows the percentage of respondents who were a victim of mobbing and discrimination.

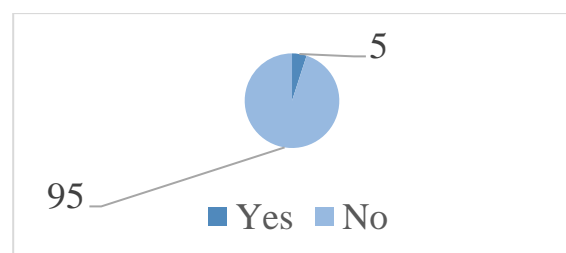


Figure 8. Victim of mobbing and discrimination; Source: created by authors

It can be seen from the graph that 5 percent of respondents were a victim of mobbing and discrimination.

## Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to analyze whether or not is there mobbing and discrimination in the workplace. In this study was included a survey conducted in the company. The survey included 60 people in ages 18-53.

Analysis showed that none of respondents experienced abuse or turning others against themselves on the work but 20 percent of them experienced physical abuse.

Also 15 percent of respondents experienced isolation and exclusion from work, and 5 percent of respondents experienced mocking and humiliation.

The 15 percent of respondents had experienced the invasion of their privacy. Furthermore, 60 percent of respondents find hard to get a vacation and even 80 percent of respondents find hard to get a salary raise.

The 10 percent of respondents excluded from communication and 15 percent of respondents excluded from meetings.

Even 85 percent of respondents overloaded with work and 20 percent of respondents thought that their merits attributed to others.

Neither one respondent experienced of ignoring its suggestions and ideas.

None of respondents experienced criticism based on sexual orientation, but 5 percent of respondents had experienced criticism based on their religious view. About 35 percent of respondents experienced criticism without any reason.

Even 5% of respondents considered as victims of mobbing or discrimination in work and private life.

Therefore, it can be conclude that mobbing and discrimination existed and there will be exist in the future in all organizations.

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