Experience with Bullying among Employees from the Managerial Perspective

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou šikany na pracovišti, především mezi zaměstnanci, z pohledu manažera. Teoretická část je zaměřena na úvodní vymezení pojmu šikana a následné detailní popsání tohoto jevu v pracovním procesu. Cílem praktické části je zmapování zkušeností vedoucích pracovníků se šikanou na pracovišti mezi zaměstnanci. Důraz je kladen především na účinnost preventivních a jiných opatření proti tomuto problému. Výzkum byl proveden kvalitativní formou a aplikován na vedoucí pracovníky státního zdravotnického zařízení Psychiatrické nemocnice v Kroměříži.

Klíčová slova: šikana na pracovišti, mobbing, prevence, manažer

ABSTRACT

Thesis studies bullying from the managerial perspective, primarily among employees in their workplace, in other words mobbing. The theoretical part is focused on defining the term bullying and subsequently deals with more detailed description of the bullying within the working process. The aim of the practical part is to map experience with workplace bullying among employees from the managerial perspective. The research is performed on the managers of the state medical facility Psychiatric Hospital in Kroměříž.

Keywords: workplace bullying, mobbing, prevention, manager

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Certain people see their job as a meaning of life, for some it represents just a necessary part of life, something that is essential for meeting their needs. An individual in most cases has to work along with other people therefore it is essential to co-operate, communicate and maintain relationships. Good working environment has a positive impact on human's psychic, performance, efficiency and also on the whole organisation as well. Unfortunatelly the situation is not always perfect and certain relationship problems may happen. It is usually caused by the lack of communication or unresolved conflict however this could lead to something more serious and dangerous such as mobbing and bossing. These terms are still new for the majority of Czech people, although everyone understands the meaning of the workplace bullying and many of them already have experience with this issue from the perspective of a mobber or a victim or a neutral observer.

Thesis studies long-term bullying among employees in their workplace, in other words mobbing. The theoretical part is focused on defining the term bullying and subsequently deals with more detailed description of the bullying within the working process and its impact on the health and state of a victim, organisation and society. The crucial part examines prevention and other strategies used to fight against mobbing.

The research is made by means of qualitative method, which has form of structured interview. It is applied on ten managers of the state medical facility. The aim of the research is to map experience with workplace bullying among employees. Emphasis is put on effectiveness of bullying prevention and other strategies.

I.   THEORY

1 BULLYING: AN OVERVIEW

The term bullying represents a form of negative behaviour towards another person which happens repeatedly and consciously. It disturbs a feeling of safety, basic and the most essential personal need. Therefore, this type of behaviour is perceived as abusive and intimidating one.

Bullying can be physical or psychological in character and takes place between all social and age groups. Generally it involves the repeated abuse of a weakness in another person or, conversely, using a personal advantage over that person. The person who is being bullied is called "the victim", whereas the person who performs the act of bullying is called "aggressor."

The onset of the bullying is led mostly through the psychological form (insulting and swearing at the victim) which can also lead to physical bullying (harming and attacking) as long-term bullying has a tendency to escalate. When the victims do not defend themselves against repeated attack or, more precisely are not able to defend themselves, the aggressor can receive signals that allow him to continue. This case when the victims are unable to help themselves it is important to turn to somebody for help, for example a teacher, group leader or family member. When the problem arises it should not be ignored and should be dealt with very quickly to protect the victims from being harmed. That is why it is vitally important that the correct help is given by a third party, because a failure to admonish or punish the bully could result in increased bullying and aggression.

Indirect bullying is also possible through a gossip or social isolation when the victim is intentionally selected from the group, no one speaks to them and in this way they are tormented. The victim could sometimes change normal behavior in attempt to better the situation, however it could result in making it even worse and the mobber can become more aggressive and the bullying escalates.

The last understood division of bullying is active and passive where the passive represents the generally passive attitude towards the victim. It depends on the kind of bullying, where these categories are combined. For example physical, direct and passive bullying might include that the victim is being denied access to an area by the aggressor who blocks the door, or psychological, indirect and passive bullying which means that friends and colleagues intentionally ignore the bullying and do not defend the victim.

Bullying changes its form according to the social and cultural environment, meaning it adopts a kind of character which differentiates it by form. For example, psychological terror, intimidation, bossing about,mobbing abuse and others. These terms have the same substance, however, the number of victims and aggressors, their positions, characteristics and their specific actions make it difficult to define.

Regarding the development of levels of group bullying, there are five different levels according to the work of Dr Michal Kolář:[1]

- The first level practically refers to selected unpopular individuals, outsiders who are seen by others as a weak link. Mostly this involves joking, insinuation, gossip which is a mild form of psychological form of violence which could still cause harm to the psychological well-being of an individual.

- The second level involves more aggressive forms of psychological and the beginnings of physical aggression where the bully tries to see how far they can go and is overwhelmed by the power they exert over the victim, where manipulation, threats and humiliation are used. The aggression will not stop by itself, but needs important intervention by an outsider, which will stop further escalation.

- The critical third level is where others join the aggressor.

- The fourth level involves the participation of normally kind and conflict-free members of the group who are experimenting with the feeling of power and the tormenting of the victim brings them a form of satisfaction. They mostly join through fear that they will become victims themselves so they adopt the position of the aggressor.

- The fifth stage is unbearable for the victim. The aggressor has the position of leader and the group follows them. The victim under pressure tries to find escape and in the worst case, commits suicide.

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[1] Kolář, Michal. 2000. *Skrytý svět šikanování ve školách: příčiny, diagnostika a praktická pomoc.* Portál.

2   BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

In the previous chapter I dealt with a general selection of terms of bullying. In the following chapters I want to introduce the reader to the subject of bullying in the workplace and concentrate on individual aspects typical of these situations and give most attention to bullying between ordinary employees.

Bullying in the work place is a major and very real problem. Every society or organisation is made up of people who have between them a variety of working relationships, which influences their social satisfaction in work and therefore general productivity. Dissatisfied employees could bring to work many mistakes which are initially unconscious, later they could become conscious. The perpetrators in bullying can even be a whole group of employees who continually pass this infection further.

Communication between employees is important as well as with managers within the company and those in the lower hierarchy. Company has a duty to make the time spent at work more pleasant, to try to solve work problems and support the development of working relationships for example through team building, training and out-of –work activities such as sporting events or parties.

According to the research of STEM/MARK more than one fifth of people (21%) over the age of 15 have experienced some form of bullying in the work place. In addition it is not only concentrated on those with lower educational attainment and women, as it was in the past. The agency also conclude that the number of bullying victims from the latest set of data gathered in 2011 showed an increase of 2% on the previous figures, which means the problem is current and growing.[2]

2.1 Forms

In the working process psychical bullying forms the majority of cases compared to schools or the army. For the aggressor this form provides something of a more refined way without clear proof of action, it could be, for example, hidden behind seemingly innocent jokes.

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[2] Večerková, Barbora. 2013, June 26. „Šikana na pracovišti." Společnost STEM/MARK. Praha. Retrieved February 9, 2015, from http://www.stemmark.cz/mobbing_2013/.

In addition to dividing forms of bullying by psychological and physical, direct and indirect, passive and active in the work place it can also be categorised according to its origins. The first way starts simply through graduated conflict. The second is more complicated and it does not need to involve any conflict - de facto the conflict has nothing to do with the victim. It can simply happen when the victim appears at the wrong time in the wrong place when the aggressor wants to resolve their personal problems and frustrations with the victim playing the role of the sacrificial lamb.

2.2 The danger of origins

It is important to give attention to the kind of situations where the possibility of the beginnings of this phenomenon develops. For instance when the group has increased working demands; where the widespread recruitment and redundancies together with the relocation of the employees takes place; when the ways to improve working relationships are ignored. This puts employees in stressful situations which often brings conflict in the work place and which can lead to the beginning of bullying.

2.3 Consequences

Depending on the cause and type of bullying the victim's experience will differ, but what is common in all cases is the negative impact on the mental health of the victim. Impact of the physical bullying does not have such a defined characteristic as it is usually noticeable action, but when a person is regularly bullied psychologically it may not be seen in the first instance at all. The results of different forms of bullying can be seen in ; stress, anxiety and depression, sleep-related problems and health problems linked to stress, stomach ache, migraine and suppressed immune issues. Depression becomes deeper with more serious forms of bullying, people begin to feel worthless and they close up. This state of being leads to social isolation and sometimes even to self-harm, very serious example of a self-destructing behaviour which can develop into possible suicide attempt.

2.4 The Prevention of Bullying

Every organisation, if it wants to be successful, should have the target of creating a healthy working environment where employees will be satisfied and self-assured, where there is support and high-qulaity leadership to minimise stress resulting from changes in leadership or the main working group and excessive demands on the work-force. Stopping

the origins of bullying is also possible through other arrangements with clear and fair rules. Unfortunately there is a border between what bullying really means and what is just innocent joking, in addition every work-based conflict does not necessarily mean there is a danger of it escalating and repeating.

Many countries define bullying in the workplace differently. In EU countries it is mostly in the form known as mobbing, but the Western countries of the EU call the same behaviour, bullying. In the USA is widely used the term "employee abuse" to describe mistreatment or misuse of workers.[3]

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[3] Ferrari, Elena. 2004. *Raising Awareness on Mobbing. An EU perspective*. p.2

3   BOSSING, STAFFING, SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Bossing, staffing and mobbing are the most common terms used along with bullying. Terms such as charring, defaming and shaming are only sub-specific terms of mobbing, bossing and staffing. Chairing focuses on the highest positions in company. Shaming means to cause a feeling of shame, embarrassment or guilt through gossip and lies. Defaming is similar and is also used to spread slander and rumour. Sexual abuse can be added to the term mobbing when the victim is harassed repeatedly over longer period of time.

The bachelor thesis focuses on bullying among employees therefore I present just a brief summary of the terms bossing and staffing.

3.1 Bossing

This is form of bullying where the manager/senior executive bullies the subordinate colleague. This comes from the English word, "boss". The manager/senior executive uses their position and many opportunities available to make the working life of the employee an unpleasant experience. One of the key tools is to set targets that are impossible to achieve. Alternatively inferior quests are set for educated and skilled workers meaning that their potential remains untapped and they are unfulfilled by their work. Bossing is perpetrated cleverly which is why it is difficult to identify and is hard to bring perpetrators to justice.

3.2 Staffing

Next to the bossing of the work group is a similar effect known as staffing, but when compared to bossing this happens less often. Staffing represents conflict between staff and their bosses where the endangered individual is the senior executive in the organisation and the one who attacks is the subordinate worker. Staffing happens very often in cases when a new leader joins a group which has its own established rules. A group of subordinate workers become stronger and have a tendency to try to remove new leaders. The possible reason for this action is the ambition of some workers to try to attain the top positions for themselves or they might be concerned over change in the structure of the organisation.

3.3 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is another form of bullying that can be found in the work place. In many countries the debate has taken place regarding this subject and in most cases the debate has concluded that sexual harassment is a serious misdemeanour and is now acknowledged as an assault on an individual's dignity.[4]

Sexual harassment is seen as any form of unwelcome verbal or non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature which leads to a threat on the dignity of one person and the development of a negative social environment. It describes behaviour by which its very nature is sexual, however, this aspect is not always the dominant factor. Sexual harassment means sexually explicit abuse through; joking, looking touching or similar actions. It is crucial to stress that the intended target does not want such behaviour. If the victim is abused more often and over time the term sexual harassment can be replaced by the term "mobbing."[5]

Regarding the latest report from the Department of General Sociology at the Sociology Institute AV, CR in 2005 one quarter of the Czech population had some experience of sexual harassment in the workplace. It was highlighted that women experienced such behaviour more often than men. [6]

Following such behaviour the victim must clearly show that they do not wish this to continue and they are legitimately allowed to use physical defence to push off the attacker and threaten to report the attacker via an official complaint.

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[4] DiMartino, Vittorio, and Helge Hoel, and Carry L. Cooper. 2003. *Preventing Violence and Harassment in the Workplace*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. p. 8

[5] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing. Martin: Vydavatelstvo Geografie. p. 81

[6] Informační studie oddělení Gender & Sociologie, Sociologický ústav AV ČR. 2005. Obtěžování žen a mužů a sexuální obtěžování v českém systému pracovních vztahů, oddělení Gender sociologie. Retrieved February 15, 2015, from http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/1699/obtezovani.pdf.

4   MOBBING

This term comes from the English expression "to mob" meaning to attack. It was used by the Nobel prize winning ethologis Konrád Lorenz to describe the animal group attacking one victim, for instance the way in which hyenas hunt down an individual prey. The person who popularised the term was Professor Heinz Leymann who analysed and defined the issue.

„Psychical terror or mobbing in working life means hostile and unethical communication which is directed in a systematic way by one or a number of persons mainly toward one individual. These actions take place often (almost every day) and over a long period (at least for 6 months) and, because of this frequency and duration, result in considerable psychic, psychosomatic and social misery."[7]

Mobbing belongs to a special group of bullying unlike other forms. It is not as visible as other forms and lacks almost any physical characteristics, which is why it is difficult to recognise at the beginning of its occurrence. However, even though it may have quiet beginnings it can spread quickly and gradually destroy the well-being of an individual. It is important to remember that all this does not mean that a short-term conflicts or arguments in the workplace, which often occur, are necessarily mobbing, but graduated long-term conflict pointed at an individual linked to targets that are designed to force them to leave work is mobbing.[8] [9]

The victim is placed under increasing pressure through the bullying attacks which happen mostly without reason or not linked with the specific actions of the victim. Such attacks from the beginning are not always witnessed by others as they are hidden as the mobber tries to cleverly disguise their actions.[10]

In no way different or obvious are the reactions or effects on the victim which might reveal a link with mobbing. However the victim is constantly under pressure and stressed

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[7] Leymann, Heinz. 1990. *Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces*. p.120.
[8] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA.
[9] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing. p.27.
[10] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing. p.18.

which is often the reason for mistakes and a declining work-performance which exacerbates the mobber's actions and leads to greater threats to the victim.[11]

4.1 Methods and forms of Mobbing

These are linked with the position of the bully in the group or company hierarchy. In cases of low hierarchy level workers have mostly limited education and fulfil the same tasks under the supervision of a manager it is difficult for any potential aggressor to single out an individual and criticise their performance if they are on the same hierarchy level in the company. Therefore this kind of potential bully will usually attack the personal life, character or appearance of the victim. In higher positions the attacks are usually more devious and focus on productivity, unprofessionalism and a lack of relevant skills which makes the individual unsure and lack confidence and often results in them taking a decision to leave the job.

From the beginning such bullying focuses on jokes, teasing and insults aimed at the victim. Behind their back the bully tries to manipulate other employees and turn them against the victim of the mobbing which defames the victim in public and the bully attempts to win the favour of fellow employees for themselves. From this point on the bully engages in active or passive attacks on the victim (it could be both active and passive) where in the first instance it is about communication when the bully is unfriendly, aggressive or secondly, it could involve ignoring and a tendency for complete social isolation from the group. Less often bullying has a physical aspect involving breaking or stealing personal property, sabotage or the hiding of information.[12]

4.2 Sources of mobbing and the role of the company

It is difficult to make employers realise that they could be the biggest source of the origins of bullying. Mobbing starts in jobs where the work regime and the leadership is too strict, or alternatively, too benevolent. Employees will behave in either way to one another. The result of stress from work pressure is that colleagues behave to one another with extreme rivalry and enmity or, in cases with too much of a lax leadership they occupy their time instead of working in the development of maliciousness, gossiping and intrigue which

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[11] Duffy, Maureen, and Len Sperry. 2012. *Mobbing: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[12] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. *Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing.* Martin: Vydavatelstvo Geografie. p.22-24.

always results in trouble for weaker individuals. In addition jobs where employees are led to believe that they could easily be replaced thereby placing them under greater fear of unemployment offer a fertile ground for mobbing. Unfortunately such concerns as increased work pressure, changes to the group, alterations to the working environment and moving to new geographical locations leads to the reality of a nightmare situation for many employees. This is why moral and collegial behaviour is supplanted and replaced by a merciless fight to retain work positions involving intrigue and under-hand tactics by some colleagues.[13]

A very important part of the duties of leadership is to provide, by good recruitment, the employees who will work closely together and therefore stop bullying before it even begins. Psychological and personality tests and general psycho-diagnostics should be used to eliminate the possible beginning of not only mobbing, but also other forms of negative behaviour. Many organisations fortunately use proven processes where unsuitable candidates are highlighted.

4.3 The phases of origins of mobbing

- The start of the problem – At the beginning it is a simple problem that is unresolved and put to one side. In this case it can increase in intensity. Later it leads to blame and attack between the people concerned where it will be decided who becomes the victim and who is the bully.

- Psychological pressure – The bully achieves approbation from other colleagues who are linked to the problem, the victim is unable to face the pressure and needs to discuss the situation outside the group.

- Isolation – Increasing pressure on the victim becomes unbearable. Some forms of health problems linked with stress begin to appear which results in major absence and reduced productivity. Together with growing social isolation, the victim becomes resigned to their situation.

- Resignation from work – The victim in a state of depression cannot concentrate and makes many mistakes at work, does not communicate with colleagues and is unable to co-operate. The employer slowly acknowledges these mistakes and the decline of

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[13] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA.

productivity and begins to think of possible action, but not to the benefit of the victims, but to save time and resolve concerns from others. The "weak link" is directed to other areas or made redundant (or they leave by themselves) and the bully achieves their target. Unfortunately this happens in many cases and because of the laxness of managers the bully often triumphs. [14] [15] [16]

4.4 Mobber

If we think of the question of who the bully is and seek for a typical profile the professionals are unable to give us an answer because there is simply not a specified profile which fits all bullies. In reality the bully is not the main subject of analysis or research and most attention is usually given to the victim, reasons for bullying and the results of bullying. According to Bridget Huber we should regard the bully as a victim as well, who, by his/her actions, attempts to protect himself/herself. She questions whether the bully fully understands the impact of their actions and has a moral block to prevent threats to the victim.[17]

Perpetrators and participants in bullying can be divided in the following ways:[18]

- Initiators – a person who from the outset consciously bullies to achieve some goal or satisfaction.

- Coincidental/Accidental perpetrators – They do not engage in bullying consciously and can decide to participate or cease the bullying.

- Accomplices – Any person who is in the same workplace as the bully and the victim and who could actively support the bully or turn their back on the bully's actions. Colleagues who do not help the victim become passive accomplices.

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[14] Kratz, Hans-Jürgen. 2005. *Mobbing: jak ho rozpoznat a jak mu čelit*. Praha: Management Press. p.22-34.

[15] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA. p.46-47.

[16] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing. p.40-43.

[17] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. *Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing.* Martin: Vydavatelstvo Geografie. p.22-24

[18] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. *Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing*. Martin: Vydavatelstvo Geografie. p.23-25.

4.5 Targets and motives of the mobber

Mobbing usually has links with the work and personal problems of the bullies who are frustrated and try to harm someone else. It could be that they want to feel better or that they want to deflect attention from themselves. The situation starts for example when the bully has many duties, feels pressured and is worried that they cannot achieve their targets. This is why they put their energies to transform part of their responsibility and to place attention elsewhere, usually on weaker links in the chain who they are able to manipulate. In other cases there is a tendency to get rid of unpopular colleagues or bullies might achieve a kind of perverse satisfaction and entertainment from this. The victim generally loses confidence, is stressed, makes mistakes, raises doubts in others, has guilty feelings, which often leads to the victim leaving work.[19]

Generally we should classify the motives of aggressors in the following way:[20] [21]

- Jealousy or envy – The victim has for example a special skill which makes the aggressor jealous. These could be skills which the bully tries to disparage or appropriate for himself.

- Power – To achieve power and influence over what the victim does and says offers the aggressor a strong feeling of dominance.

- Manipulation – The aggressors find pleasure manipulating the victim or colleagues against the victim. Seeking out reasons, lies and gossips to achieve their own targets which are usually to set colleagues against each other or against the individual.

- Liquidation – The target is to make the victim leave work. Reasons could be antipathy or fear that the victim might put the bully "in the shade".

- Complexes – It is possible that in the past the bully was bullied himself which left an indelible impact and which made them determined not to return to that role of victim to such an extent that they take on the role of aggressor.

- Stress – This does not only have to be work-related stress, there could be stress in the personal life of the bully which results in them taking their anger and frustration out on their colleagues.

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[19] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing. p.30-31.
[20] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou.* Praha: Grada Publishing. p.49-52.
[21] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA. p.74.

4.6 The victim

As with the specification of the bully, we cannot find a specification for the typical model victim. There is no rule that exists that suggests the selection of the victim. The victim could be anybody, but it is true that some of the personal characteristics increase the disadvantage felt by some people who are in some way weaker or call for attention which makes the bully feel that their goal can be achieved relatively easily. It could be a physical handicap or disadvantage, personal, financial or other problems, lack of social connections, over-sensitivity or in most cases just a low self-confidence, as a person who doubts himself would not have enough strength to fight a determined bully. If in addition a victim faces a difficult life where they need a job and cannot afford to leave it, then it will be simply a question of time until they collapse under stress and bullying. On the other hand those who rely on the support of others and, even in the worst cases, do not need to worry about their financial situation if they leave work are able to cope with bullying, take its results easily and return to a normal life − these people present a smaller potential target, however, they can still become victims.[22]

The types of victims can be divided into four categories: [23] [24]

- Alone − The victim is disadvantaged in many ways; men amongst women, women amongst men, single against married, married against single….

- Noticeable − Generally people who attract attention or are different in some way, speech impediments, physical handicap, age or colour of their skin.

- Successful − The person becomes a target for attacks through the jealousy of other employees, for example when receiving a promotion or congratulations from the boss or other colleagues.

- New – New employees joining an existing group do not have it easy, especially in the case of when the person replaces someone who is popular. They can also be a target for jealousy because of their enthusiasm for work, age, ideas and education.

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[22] Kratz, Hans-Jürgen. 2005. *Mobbing: jak ho rozpoznat a jak mu čelit*. Praha: Management Press. p.21.

[23] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. *Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing*. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Geografie. p. 20-22.

[24] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing. p.56-60.

4.7 Mobbing regarding age and sex

Women provide a smaller percentage of the over-all work force than men and so they are more vulnerable to bullying. They are more likely to become victims of sexual oriented attacks.

Research into workplace bullying by Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) and Zogby International in 2007 showed that men bully more often than women (40%). It is interesting that women in most case (71%) choose as their victims other women. With men the differences are not so clear 54% of men bully other men.[25]

What does differ is the form of bullying in that both sexes mob. While men prefer to shout and swear, show their physical rough power or ignore others, with women it is more usual to find mockery, slander and unpleasant comments linked to the appearance of their victims.[26]

Age is another important factor in mobbing and can play a role in its beginning. The victim could be a younger colleague entering an older team or situation; or alternatively an older colleague who finds himself/herself in a rejuvenated younger team. In both cases the important factor is the balanced of the superiority of potential aggressors who have already established social relationships with others in the group.

4.8 The impact of Bullying

Every person deals with workplace bullying in different ways according to their own situation, their psychological strength, assistance available and the attitude of others, that is why the impact of such actions are very different in each case. From the outset weak consequences slowly graduate through the whole bullying period and become more serious, in the worst cases this can last even after the bullying has ended. The impact of bullying does not only affect the victim, but also their family and friends, witnesses to the bullying, the organisation where it took place and wider society.[27]

Victim – Some stronger individuals are able to face bullying and also defend themselves from the initial phases and practically without any impact they can return to the

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[25] Workplace Bullying Institute, and Zogby International. 2007. Workplace Bullying Survey. U.S. Accessible on www.workplacebullying.org/wbiresearch/wbi-2007/

[26] Ferrari, Elena. 2004. *Raising Awareness on Mobbing. An EU perspective*. p. 4-6.

[27] Ferrari, Elena. 2004. *Raising Awareness on Mobbing. An EU perspective*. p.3

workplace. For others who are unable to satisfactorily deal with bullying it has a short and long-term impact on their character and it is very difficult to return to the work situation – sometimes it is impossible.

A common characteristic of bullying is increased stress and a poorer psychological situation which leads from irritation and annoyance to the emergence of stress-related health problems which in some cases might not register with those around the victim. Related health problems emerge including increasing problems with immunity which leads to an increased tendency to fall ill leading to absence from work, skin problems, migraine digestive problems and other ailments.[28]

More serious bullying related health problems include; anxiety, depression, worries and psychosomatic problems. The victim exists in permanent stress and anxiety about the aggressor's attacks leads to the victim avoiding others and changing their behaviour. Loss of cognitive skills, impaired relationships and social isolation are all aspects of victimisation.[29]

Defence against bullying often involves the victim running away from the problem through medication, alcohol, reliance on coffee, food or alternatively, fasting. All cases may led to the development of addictive behaviours or serious health problems such as anorexia or bulimia, high blood-pressure or the emergence of heart problems, cirrhosis and kidney disease. From the published analysis of Hamburg's anti-bullying which 21,000 people called for help over a three year period, it is clear that most individuals had psychosomatic problems (31%), digestive problems (25%) whilst 22% complained about sleep-related issues and 15% were in physical pain.[30] [31]

In the situations without clear solutions the damaged individual rather leaves their work. Depending on the length of the bullying, there is a possibility of them facing long-term psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or paranoia.[32]

In absolutely the worst case escape comes from suicide. In the Czech Republic according to Pavel Bena, every fifth attempt at suicide is caused by problems at work.[33]

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[28] DeLongis, A., and S. Folkman, and R. S. Lazarus. 1988. *The Impact of Saily Stress on Health and Mood: Psychological and Social Resources as Mediators.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Vol.54. No.3. p.486-495.

[29] DiMartino, Vittorio, and Helge Hoel, and Cary L. Cooper. 2003. *Preventing violence and harassment in the workplace.* European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. p.60.

[30] Kratz, Hans-Jürgen. 2005. *Mobbing: Jak ho rozpoznat a jak mu čelit.* Management press. p.35.

[31] Novák, Tomáš, and Věra Capponi. 2003. *Sám sobě psychologem.* Praha:Grada Publishing. p.67.

[32] Duffy, P. Maureen, and Len Sperr. 2012. *Mobbing: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions.* Oxford University Press. p.26.

Organisation – Bullying has a negative impact also on the organisation. Very often it is a question of high absence and complaints from employees, declining productivity and work-satisfaction levels.

In a study in Great Britain which analysed the influence of bullying in the decline of employee productivity, it was found that employees who admitted that they were currently the victim of bullying had 7% less productivity than other employees. It was also found that employees who had become victims of bullying at any time in the previous five years had lower productivity by 4% compared to other employees. Together these employees lower productivity between 0.5 and 2%.[34]

In many cases bullying leads to the victims leaving work or taking early retirement so the organisation loses experienced high-quality employees. Due to this fluctuation in the work-force the company incurs higher expenses on recruitment and training new work-force. Besides that this may harm the trustworthiness and reputation of the company, which in turn leads to financial losses. According to research by WBI – Zogby, nearly 40% of bullying victims leave their jobs.[35]

The bully as well as the victim loses productivity because during their working time they expend energy planning and realising their bullying schemes rather than on maintaining their professional duties. It is the same with the bully's influence on other members of the group who are able to feel the negative atmosphere and diminished psychological harmony, thereby losing motivation and productivity. Bullying is a serious problem for an organisation which should not be ignored because the impact on one person can be projected to the whole company. Ideally organisation should focus on bullying already on an organisational level responding to complaints from workers in a serious manner which would prevent the harm created by subsequent escalation.

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[33] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA.

[34] Hoel, Helge, and Kate Sparks, and Cary L. Cooper. 2001, January 1. "The Cost of Violence/Stress at Work." International Labour Organization. Retrieved February 10, 2015, from http://www.ilo.org/safework/info/publications/WCMS_108532/lang--en/index.htm

[35] Namie, Gary, and Ruth Namie. 2009. *The Bully at Work: What You Can Do to Stop the Hurt and Reclaim Your Dignity on the Job.* Sourcebooks, Incorporated. p.8.

4.9 The Prevention of and Solutions to Bullying

It is often difficult to identify mobbing and extract it from within existing forms of conflict. The solution depends on many circumstances, particularly on the phase in which mobbing occurs, the impact made and on the nature of the aggressor who began the attacks. Prevention should rely on the training of responsible workers to communicate with fellow employees and be able to recognise mobbing and intervene to take action in the early phases they should determine the reasons for the bullying and inform the aggressor of the feelings of the victim. It is important to give frequent information about this problem to employees including basic advice on how to defend oneself against bullying and create an environment where employees are not afraid to share their problems with responsible people.

Generally it is possible to summarise these organisational preventative measures in a few points:[36] [37]

- Make an issue of mobbing – Provide leadership training and inform all employees about the problem, ensuring that all in the company are aware of the issue through, for example by questionnaires.

- Select mobbing and create anti-mobbing rules – For workers it is important to know exactly how the company defines mobbing, which tools the victim should use for defence and the likely consequences for the bully. These rules or agreements should be in the form of internal documents in every workplace.

- Organise meetings in the company – In these meetings discuss internal problems, suggested solutions and future arrangements.

- Create an independent advice bureau.

In case prevention does not work and bullying occurs, it is important to find a solution. The foundation of this is to define a new problem and determine its core and reason. It is pointless to punish the aggressor without finding out the reasons behind the actions. The

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[36] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. *Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing*. Martin: Vydavatelstvo Geografie. p.130-134.

[37] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing. p.90-91.

reason could be, for instance, a long-running conflict without resolution which could have been resolved through simple compromise.[38]

At the outset of mobbing, the victim does not even know that they are being mobbed, they do not realise where the problem began and why there is enmity. When the issue emerges and realisation dawns, the victims may try to persuade themselves that the pressure will be temporary or they may keep going in the belief that it will pass. This attitude is in most cases, mistaken. Another way in which victims try to cope is to fawn over the aggressor, agreeing with all their comments and trying to win favour by fulfilling all their requests attempting to turn a negative relationship into a positive one. Unfortunately even this attitude is mistaken. Ignoring the bully in everyday working life is also pointless as there is a requirement for all workers to communicate and co-operate which makes this tactic even more difficult.[39]

The question of how to defend oneself against mobbing starts with the choice of workplace, when every employee before beginning their job should find out the nature of the job. After joining a new job it is crucial to integrate, but correct integration comes easily from the outset without sharing negative comments and complaints. It is important to adapt to the work, new environment and in the case of higher education above other employees to try to behave as a worker who is learning. During the initial phase the worker needs to give their best and fulfill all expectations if they want to achieve long-term satisfaction and prevent conflict.[40] [41]

In the case that managers fail and the employee becomes a victim of bullying and there are no clear rules or advice available on how to resolve conflict, there are likely to be three possibilities for the victim:[42]

- Hand in their notice and change job.
- Stay at work and face the attacks of the mobber.

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[38] Huber, Brigitte. 1995. *Psychický teror na pracovišti. Mobbing.* Martin: Vydavatelstvo Geografie. p.114-130.

[39] Kratz, Hans-Jürgen. 2005. *Mobbing: Jak ho rozpoznat a jak mu čelit.* Management press. p. 85.

[40] Fehlau, Eberhard G. 2003. *Konflikty v práci.* Praha: Grada Publishing. p. 94-95.

[41] Kratz, Hans-Jürgen. 2005. *Mobbing: Jak ho rozpoznat a jak mu čelit.* Management press. p. 105–109.

[42] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou.* Praha: Grada Publishing. p.91.

- Stay at work, fight the bully and defend oneself.

If the victims try to fight mobbing and they cannot defend themselves then they need to ask for help from leadership or their colleagues. In either case both sides should be able to help, however in many organisations it is not possible, even though the statute book might place a duty on an employer to resolve such situations.[43]

People in contact with the victim cannot ignore the problem and should realise that if they do not intervene they become passive participants in mobbing even if, in reality, they do not agree with the bully. Colleagues should see the mobbing in the first instance and they could help from the outset. Unfortunately, the reality is that not many of them will be strong enough to fight for the rights of someone else if there is a danger that they will imperil themselves. People in these cases worry mostly that they will become another victim of the mobber. If there is a colleague who is prepared to stand with the victim then they will have a few opportunities to do this. Perhaps the best way is to stand behind the victim in public which should prick the conscience of the mobber and simultaneously help those colleagues who are undecided or frightened. This also allows an opportunity to talk to the victim, name the bully and involve the employer.

In the event of the victims trying to defend themselves alone, there are a few possibilities of defence. One of these is a straight discussion with the mobber regarding their behaviour. The mobber does not need to admit that their behaviour is wrong. In this case it is important to seek psychological support from colleagues or family to help the victim be heard and supported so that the individual loses the negative feelings and begins to think positively. To achieve this it will help if they can list their achievements, take up sport or relaxation training.[44]

In case the victim does not want to deal with their problems and talk about it with their family, they should contact an advisory institution where they could be helped to fight mobbing, for example a civil associations. They can also approach a civic advice centre, crisis centre or help is available from a psychologist. In case of real need the victim should inform the leadership of the company, unions or work-inspectors.

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[43] Zákon č. 262/2006 Sb., zákoník práce. §14 odst. 3.
[44] Kratz, Hans-Jürgen. 2005. *Mobbing: Jak ho rozpoznat a jak mu čelit.* Management press . p. 101–103.

The problem of mobbing exists in many European countries and it is resolved through laws aimed at tackling it. In our law, unfortunately, mobbing is not defined consistently and there has not been a law enacted to provide a clear solution to mobbing, so that suing for mobbing is very difficult when compared to Scandinavia or Germany where anti-bullying laws, counselling and institutions exist. In Norway a law was passed in 1994 which stated that employees should not be subjected to unwarranted behaviour. In 2002 France and Belgium introduced two new laws regarding mobbing which focused attention on the responsibilities of employers to ensure that preventative measures were put in place providing wide ranging protection to victims of mobbing. In 2001 in Denmark an agreement was signed where organisations had to take action against bullying. In Finland in 2002 a new law was announced to protect Health and Safety where mobbing was also mentioned, placing an emphasis on co-operation between employers and employees to resolve mobbing cases.[45]

Employees in the Czech Republic will not have a chance to resolve this issue until it becomes important to law-makers, even though research by GFK Prague showed in 2007 that personal experience of bullying in the workplace has affected 16% of the population aged over 14 years old and more than a quarter of those face mobbing at least once a week and almost half of those affected (45%) experienced it for more than a year." [46] [47]

In case the victims want to defend themselves by law in the Czech Republic there is only a general text. They could use for example a document of basic laws and freedoms or anti-discrimination which selects the term discrimination and gives the principle of equal treatment and permissible forms of different treatment. The labour-code relating to work introduced equal treatment and the issue of work conditions which should not go against natural morality. The civil code defined protection of personality and the criminal code should be used in cases where these issues are relevant, for example the criminal act of malicious slander, racketeering threatening and, of course, physical attacks.

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[45] Ferrari, Elena. 2004. *Raising Awareness on Mobbing. An EU perspective*. p.12-13.

[46] Svobodová, Lenka. 2007. Mobbing – nebezpečný fenomén naší doby. Výzkumný ústav bezpečnosti práce.

[47] Omnibus GfK Praha 2001,2003,2005,2007: výsledky šetření marketingové agentury GfK.

II. ANALYSIS

5   INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

5.1 The aim of the research

The research focuses on the surveillance of the managers of the state medical facility and their experience with mobbing in the work place as well as the effectiveness of bullying prevention and other strategies.

5.2 Characteristics of research sample

The informants of the research are emploeeys of the state medical facility Psychiatric Hospital in Kroměříž. Due to (it is a) heavily psychical oriented workplace full of exhausting stress it is most likely the place to find a signs of mobbing, on the other hand that could mean it is the right place to find one of the most informed and experienced managers.

The Psychiatric Hospital in Kroměříž is a part of the public sector controlled by the state. Patients are divided into separated departments according to their illness. On every department works a team of nurses, assistants, attendants and practitioners with a ward sister in charge, and thus they are the manager of the whole department. The ward sister gives orders to her/his personnel and cares about the functioning of the department. Approximately every three departments form a unit called „primariát" which represents the position of senior consultant who is in charge. The unit includes also nurse in charge, a psychologist and social worker. Besides ward sisters, there are also separate managers as the head of the laboratory, kitchen, laundry, pharmacy, technical service, client therapy and personnel department.

The research sample consists of ten managers working in this hospital. The main selection criterion was work experience of a minimum of 5 years in order to ensure the high probability of rich experience and valid viewpoints, policies and approaches. It was important, in this particular hospital with mostly female employees, to involve also male employees to secure all possible varities of answers.

The selected informants are as follows:

- Alena T., a ward sister, work experience 30yrs, 15-20 subordinates
- Dagmar D., a ward sister, work experience 19yrs, 15-20 subordinates

- Dagmar K, a manager of ambulance services, work experience 14yrs, 5 subordinates
- Hana P., an internship manager, work experience 10yrs, 10-15 subordinates
- Jarmila H., a ward sister, work experience 5yrs, 15-20 subordinates
- Marcela K., a ward sister, work experience 8yrs, 15-20 subordinates
- Pavel P., a central admission manager, work experience 7yrs, 5 subordinates
- Radim H., a ward sister, work experience 5yrs, 15-20 subordinates
- Radmila N., a head nurse, work experience 15yrs, 45-50 subordinates
- Věra S., a head nurse, work experience 16yrs, 45-50 subordinates

5.3 Form of the research

The study is based on the qualitative method using the structured interview as a tool, where all informants answer individually the same six open questions. This type of interview follows a carefully prepared interview schedule which lists a certain number of questions which are presented in the same wording and sequence.

Qualitative research which was used to collect the data enabled me to acquire a complex portrayal of mobbing in the way it is perceived by particular managers. It discloses their thoughts, opinions and experience related to this issue. It also allows for a detailed account of various answers which subsequently depict sentiments and stances towards the individual research subquestions. Qualitative research differs from the quantitative research not by specific techniques of gathering information but more by specific analytic processes used by work with data.[48] The individual answers were recorded due to taking notes and thoroughly analysed by "open coding" method performed immediately "in hand" onto the aswers.

The main benefit of this method is there is no necessity for a large number of informants. It provides more detailed information, which are more valuable and relevant. The possibility of lying or misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the question is minimal as it is possible in quantitative form. Every manager provides his very own valuable experience, thoughts and information due to which we get a better view on the whole topic and the reality around us. Interviewing managers we can learn new things

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[48] Švaříček, Roman, and Klára Šeďová. 2014. *Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách.* Portál.

worth once some of us become managers too. Managers can share their methods used against workplace bullying, which may differ, thus are more effective.

5.4 Ethics of research

All informants participating in my research were informed and familiarised with the research and its aims. They knew what their answers will be used for and all of them agreed to publishing it for the purpose of this bachelor thesis.

5.5 Research subquestions

1. How to prevent bullying among the employees?
2. How to deal with workplace bullying?

6 ANALYSIS OF ACQUIRED DATA

6.1 Open coding

Open coding is a technique developed in relation to analytic apparatus of theory, however, due to its comprehensibility and efficacy it is widely used in qualitative projects. Generally, coding represents those proceedings in which the data is analysed, conceptualised and assembled in a new way. While using open coding, a sequence of a text is broken down into the units. A title is allocated to each unit and the researcher proceeds to work with the new titled (marked) fragments of the text. Development of the strategy progresses as follows. First of all, the analysed text (transcribed interview) is divided into the units. A unit may be presented by a word, a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph. A code, therefore a title or a label, is assigned to each new unit.[49]

Following the interpretation of the transcribed text into tens and hundreds of codes, it is possible to begin their systematic categorisation. The listing of the codes created on the basis of open coding is then grouped into the categories according to their similarities or other inner relations. In this manner, a complete list of categories which includes the index of the codes, is produced. Among other techniques used in this process, a "laying down the cards" was brought to my attention.[50]

6.2 Technique "laying down the cards" ("vyložení karet")

A text is gradually compiled from the content of the individual categories. There is no need to analyse all the categories, the categories suitable for our research are selected on basis of relevance to research questions as well as mutual relations. Further analysis involves defining and interpretation of the codes in the particular categories.[51]

Based on open coding, the following categories were established:

Category No.1 – **General perception**

Category No.2 – **Confrontation with mobbing**

Category No.3 – **Communication portrayed as prevention**

Category No.4 – **Mobbing solutions**

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[49] Švaříček, Roman, and Klára Šeďová. 2014. *Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách.* Portál. p.211
[50] Švaříček, Roman, and Klára Šeďová. 2014. *Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách.* Portál. p.221-222
[51] Švaříček, Roman, and Klára Šeďová. 2014. *Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách.* Portál. p.226

6.3 Category No.1 – General perception

The summary of the informants' responses is presented in a way to avoid repetition of the same answers in the event of the answers overlapping. I am concentrating on highlighting new and interesting facts. In the case of the same responses I usually disclose a response from one of the participants as well as the number of the informants with the same opinion.

The main aim of this category was to learn about general sentiments towards bullying in the workplace as perceived by managers – whether bullying is regarded as current or minor issue. I was able to gather relevant information from the first question of my interview. The codes were mostly identical among all participants.

The labelling 1/1/1 is being used; the first number represents a category, the second number a question which provides the answer and the third number represents an informant.

It is worth mentioning that all the informants agreed that bullying in the workplace is a current issue, despite a few exceptions. A further matter, agreed on independently by all the informants, suggested the presence of bullying in most workplaces. Most informants, however, stated that type of workplace is crucial and as such determines the scale of bullying.

- Alena (1/1/1): *"I consider bullying in the workplace a current issue. In my opinion, bullying has been increasing, obviously depending on the type of workplace."*

- Dagmar (1/1/2): *"...it [bullying] has been spreading unexpectedly to new workplaces. It is not really related to a type of workplace, but to extremely stressful and unstable times we live in, as well as low morals."*

The opinions provided by Alena and Dagmar are interesting and beneficial. In line with their theory, bullying has been increasing, although according to Dagmar, the growth is related to the adverse effects of the society today rather than types of workplaces. The circumstances of our times are also mentioned by Věra (10).

- Jarmila (1/1/5): *"Bullying certainly belongs to the most common problems in the workplace. However, bullying was, has been and will be around, and it depends on a specific workplace determining its extent."*

Jarmila's view is distinguished and all in all suggests that bullying is old, however, very up-to-date issue. Primarily, she pinpoints the significance of a specific workplace.

- Marcela (1/1/6): *"Not much attention has been paid to it [bullying] and it was not called bullying or mobbing."*

Marcela follows Jarmila's thoughts and deliberates over the past. However, she comments on the fact that previously bullying was somewhat undefined as well as overlooked. Radmila answers in a similar spirit.

- Pavel (1/1/7): *"In my view, it is up to people and their relations in the workplace."*

Evidently, Pavel attributes bullying to human factors rather than the influence of the workplace.

- Radim (1/1/8): *"Despite the insufficient information I have, it [bullying] is surely a problem of most workplaces."*

6.3.1 Summary

The overview presents us with several dissimilarities; however, it is worth pointing out that these are merely moderate anomalies. Therefore, as a result, I confirm that bullying in the workplace is perceived as a topical issue and we can presume it is an issue in most workplaces. Nevertheless, we need to take into consideration the influence of human factors in the specific workplace, the current circumstances and all of this in relevance to the extent of the occurrence of bullying.

It should also be noted that the informants' view of the intensity and frequency of bullying in various workplaces may be distorted. As such it may not be based on reality and their personal experience, but correspond to subjective assumed perception. Consequently, without thorough research, I cannot produce a conclusion of the reality in other workplaces. I can only display the views of the informants.

6.4 Category No.2 – Confrontation with mobbing

The managers' paraphrased experience gained as the basis for the second category. It discloses accurate and real situations from their personal experience which enable us to better understand the reality surrounding us. Conclusive agreement was registered among the employees in the matter of psychological bullying. This type of bullying involved predominantly malicious gossiping, errors being pointed out and intentional 'blanking'.

Alena (2/2/1): *"I remember a new young nurse who was hard working, obliging, welcoming, in other words an 'angel' nurse. This nurse was supervised by a more experienced nurse – a heavy smoker. At first, the overseer in question was delighted to pass some of her duties onto the younger colleague as she herself could spend more time smoking. She picked on the young woman, joked with her, however when she realised that the new nurse was becoming very popular due to her pleasant attitude, she became agitated. The joking escalated and became hurtful with the young nurse unable to defend herself. The supervisor constantly pointed out to small failings and humiliated the nurse in front of the patients as well as other employees. The completely opposite situation happened when perceived by a confident young nurse. She perceived her experience supervisor as 'retired' and commented on her lack of computer skills, slow walk and other character features specific for each person. Subsequently, the young woman bad-mouthed the older colleague to other employees, discredited her experience and tried to convince everybody that the woman must retire."*

Alena presents the circumstances of two different cases. In the first case the main issues are jealousy and sense of insecurity caused by the presence of the new colleague. In the second case it is the age difference causing the conflict and subsequently results in the bully achieving her aim – the departure of the colleague.

- Dagmar (2/2/2): *"Although they [the victims] are both targets of jokes, they are different in some aspects. Such behaviour may possibly lead to mobbing, however it is not always the case."*

Attention is drawn to differences which usually form minority groups. This aids the development of mobbing.

- Dagmar (2/2/3): *"This was a case of psychological bullying, mainly bad-mouthing...and they did not want to work the same shifts with her [the victim]".*

Dagmar is one of many informants describing her experience with the effects of emotional abuse including criticising and discounting.

- Hana (2/2/4): *"Not only the weak and unpopular individuals but also the successful ones are exposed to danger of bullying."*

According to Hana, success generates jealousy which may lead to bullying. This phenomenon was also described by Alena.

- Jarmila (2/2/5): *"Frankly, no manager would be happy to confirm bullying in his or her workplace. Inevitably, the tendency among people is to attribute bullying to bad management which discredits the manager."*
"Sometimes they simply do not fit in with the team and become an easy target."

A thought to be considered was presented by ward nurse Jarmila who expressed her doubts about the managers' responses. She considers the employees to be solely responsible for their position in the workplace.

- Pavel (2/2/7): *"...not forwarding the data and information at shift change, ignoring and bad-mouthing behind the back."*

Forwarding the data at shift change is an important condition to employees' effective performance. This includes the written records of the events occurring throughout the shift, the up-to-date personal health records of the patients, further plans, tasks and other relevant information. All these are forwarded to a colleague at shift change.

- Radim (2/2/8): *"I have mostly encountered this issue when a group of well acquainted middle aged colleagues was being weakened and its members replaced. The core of the group responded with negative attitude to such changes. They did not forward the data to them [new colleagues], concealed important information and prevented the training."*

Radim was describing his experience with the employees not accepting their new colleagues. However, according to his opinion, such situation can occur anywhere.

- Radmila (2/2/9*): "Most often they highlight small mistakes and bad-mouth their older colleagues. They (the older colleagues) are more tolerant to younger employees."*

  "In solely female environment these signs disappeared after the first man was signed up."

  "Employees who smoke form a majority and they use cigarette breaks to bad-mouth the non-smoking minority."

Head nurse Radmila introduces some beneficial examples from working experience and she highlights the connection of bullying to age, sex and majority of people.

- Věra (2/2/10): *"It [bullying] was caused by merging of two working groups, where the new group had a higher number of members. Alternatively, there were two colleagues-friends who encouraged each other in slandering their colleague."*

In this case, head nurse Věra also points out the issue of the majority of people which contributes to a high risk of bullying. Clearly, the feature of majority is stated by other aforementioned informants.

6.4.1 Summary

As relevantly described by Jarmila, not every managerr is able to report on a situation accurately. Some informants go into the details, others are more all-embracing. Fortunately, there were only few of the latter. One of them was Jarmila, however, this may be due to her younger age and short working experience. She may have been afraid to get involved or simply not know how to deal with the situation. On the contrary, the older employees were more unreserved.

The research verifies the dominance of psychological bullying with manifestations of slandering, pointing out mistakes and intentional ignoring. At the same time, the occurence of bullying is accompanied by various circumstances; these may be summarised as 'dissimilarities' and intensifying aspect of bullying 'majority of people'. Regardless of the victim being successful or not, a smoker or a non-smoker, according to other employees, the crucial fact remains whether such person belongs to minority or majority of the workplace. In my opinion, the victim is most often a member of a minority group. The actions and confidence of a bully are strenghtened in a more dominant group.

6.5 Category No.3 – Communication portrayed as prevention

Bullying prevention is without a doubt the most important undertaking. We have to consider engagement within the organisation as well as its employees to achieve valuable results. For this reason, I asked the informants what preventive steps are usually taken by the company and what steps by the individual employees.

In the workplace researched by me, all informants listed the following prevention measures; questionnaires, conducted several times a year, which monitor employees' level of contentment and also regular working boards. Equally important is transfer of data at shift change, firstly, to support productive work and secondly, to ensure effective communication amongst employees.

The additional question related to training the managers how to deal with bullying generated the same replies. All of the informants confirmed that they do not attend any seminars.

- Hana (3/3/4): *"Seminars and trainings are available. These are accredited meaning we receive credits in order to accomplish the assigned number of credits. The topics include domestic violence or fire protection. I am not aware of any topic on bullying."*

- Marcela (3/3/6): *"Twice a year we all fill in a questionnaire in our hospital (psychiatric hospital) which monitors employees' level of contentment. Furthermore regular working boards take place and there are also shift changes where the employees hand over reports before and after each shift."*

- Věra (3/3/10): *"There are various seminars and trainings, but as far as I know, none related to bullying."*

Most informants agreed that a crucial part of bullying prevention which can be secured by managers, is indeed communication; not only amongst employees but also between employees and managers.

- Alena (3/4/1): *"The employees do confide in me with their issues. Were they to become a victim of bullying, I am sure they would approach me."*

- Dagmar (3/4/2): *"The main thing is to create a work environment in which employees feel safe and confident to approach their manager. They will be listened to and offered a solution to their problem. These employees also need to be reassured that their issue is taken seriously and will be dealt with discreetly."*

- Dagmar (3/4/2): *"I communicate with them. There is mutual trust and that is the most important thing."*

- Hana (3/4/4): *"I arrange regular meetings with my employees. In my opinion, communication is crucial."*

- Pavel (3/4/7): *"I treat my employees fairly, they know they can turn to me and do not hesitate to do so."*

- Radmila (3/4/9): *"I arrange regular meetings with my employees and every day with those serving that particular shift. The door to my office is open at all times and they all know they can come any time. What is more, they (subordinates) know my personal telephone number so they can call any time; they mostly make use of this to write text messages."*

- Věra (3/4/10): *"In my opinion, it is very important to be a part of the team, speak to them and treat them as equals and do not patronise them."*

In the matter of other prevention steps offered by managers, some interesting ideas were suggested, namely psychological tests which could improve overall the preventive measures.

- Hana (3/5/4): "As *a psychologist and an intern tutor I would recommend psychological tests. We would be able to detect a few things beforehand."*

- Jarmila (3/5/5): *"We are not able to select employees, they are simply assigned to us. Psychological testing would be useful not only to tackle bullying."*

6.5.1 Summary

Most of the informants agreed, directly or indirectly, that the main element contributing to satisfied and positive employees is communication. If I correctly understood the results, proper communication may serve to create the right environment of trust and collegial as well as professional attitude of employees. Proper communication is able to prevent complications and my understanding is that such communication is rightly perceived by managers as a key to success. According to my research, most of the informants communicate with their employees and thus ensure sufficient support to maintain healthy environment and guidance. Beside appropriate preventive measures of the whole establishment, the employees and their initiative may also be relied upon.

As mentioned earlier, the workplace enables employees to participate in questionnaire inquiry related to their level of contentment; this inquiry takes place several times a year. There are also regular board meetings for managers.

Psychological tests would contribute, and not only in this particular workplace, to better employee selection, therefore, personally I am in favour of these tests. I would also recommend expanding seminar and training choice and include the subject of bullying.

6.6 Category No.4 – Mobbing Solutions

Bullying in the workplace must be dealt with swiftly before it escalates to more serious problems. Any threatening behaviour has an immediate impact on the victim as well as other employees who may become involved or also victimised. Bullying is detrimental and causes emotional harm to its victims. It also lowers the effectiveness of the victim and rest of the people at work. Surely, no manager is willing to tolerate such an environment.

- Alena (4/6/1): "At first, directly addressing the aggressor, discusssing the incorrectness of his actions, possibly impose harsher punishment. Another option is to interview all of the people involved and together seek suitable solutions. Strenghtening the victim's self-respect and confidence is very important. The victims are allowed to sue their bullies and I can certainly assist with that."
- Dagmar (4/6/3): "To reprimand the aggressor and if the situation does not improve, cut down his or her salary or benefits, perhaps even demote or discharge the aggressor."
- Pavel (4/6/7): "Certainly, I would listen to both employees. Subsequently, I would reprimand the aggressor and reduce his or her personal benefits."
- Radim (4/6/8): "Discussion with the bully would be a priority. We have already dealt with mobbing and one consultation was sufficient so far; at first with the individuals and then with everybody involved. We did not encounter any problems afterwards. Those in question should not work the same shift."
- Radmila (4/6/9): "In case of emerging bullying, asking the two employees to work the same shift, proved beneficial. I apply methods of psychotherapy with all employees involved and at same time I try to strengthen the victim's confidence. I reprimand the aggressor or present him or her with a written warning and afterwards observe the aggressor's behaviour."
- Věra (4/6/10): "I would reprimand the aggressor and arrange for different colleague to work with them. If there is no improvement, he or she would have to be transferred to a different department."

6.6.1 Summary

The informants agreed that the best method to deal with bullying is a discrete conversation with the aggressor followed by careful observation. If these means should fail, a reduction of salary or alternative harsh measures should be applied.

One of the interesting and contradicting results was an opinion related to the victim and the aggressor working the same shift. Radmila, as opposed to her two colleagues, believes that the aggressor and the victim should work together. It is worth mentioning that her viewpoint is based on her experience.

7 CONCLUSION

The practical part of the bachelor thesis presented the experience of bullying as perceived by the managers at the state psychiatric hospital in Kroměříž. Primarily, the research was aimed at addressing the issue of prevention and solutions related to this matter. The study was based on a structured interview which contained six open questions. These questions were asked individually by the fixed sequence and were applied on ten managers. The answers were recorded due to taking notes and thoroughly analysed by "open coding" method.

Based on the codes in the individual informants' answers, there were four elementary categories established. These categories corresponded with two research questions in order to enable the evaluation of the research.

The first category was regarded as an introductory part of an interview aiming to outline circumstances related to bullying in the workplace. The results in this category unanimously confirmed that bullying is considered to be a current issue and, according to the informants, appears in most workplaces. Nevertheless, other factors influencing the occurrence of bullying need to be considered. These are for instance; relations amongst people, various circumstances in workplaces, age differences and others.

The second category related to the actual managers' experience with mobbing. All the informants verified as the most common - psychological bullying - with frequent displays of slandering, drawing attention to mistakes, withholding information and ignoring colleagues. The victims are most often bullied on the basis of some differences which provoke the aggressor. The aggressor usually involves other people in bullying.

The third category revolves around one specific feature and that is communication. Most of the informants indicated as the best bullying prevention the ability to communicate with their employees; to gain their trust and also encourage effective communication in the workplace. Every informant is pursuing this particular ambition. Considering the managers' consensus and positive experience the aforementioned ambition of effective communication may be viewed as the answer to the first research question: "How to prevent bullying in the workplace."

It is not of course the only precaution, but it seems to be the most essential one. Besides the importance of communication several informants indicated that manager should be a part of the team which means participation in after-work activies and events,

partially helping with duties and just behaving gently. This allows employees to communicate and trust in their superiors.

Questionnaire inquiries and board meetings related to precautionary measures take place in the researched establishment several times a year. The managers are required to attend a certain number of seminars and trainings, however, they agree, the topic of bullying is missing.

The feedback by informants is fairly consistent also in the fourth category discussing mobbing. Most managers would personally interview and reprimand the aggressor. Subsequently, the aggressor' behaviour would be closely monitored with the threat of other possible sanctions. The informants, having encountered some form of bullying, confirmed that by taking the mentioned measures the situation was dealt with and did not require any further intervention. Therefore, their statements serve as the answer to the second research question: "How to deal with bullying in the workplace." When an aggressor is just under a suspicion of bullying without any testimony and even in the case that he even declines any form of negative behavior towards individual, the manager cannot do anything else than keep an eye on him and constantly ask his colleagues about him and his behaviour.

The managers submitted their knowledge, experience and thoughts on bullying in the workplace, especially the aspects of mobbing and they also hinted at the possible prevention measures and solutions. We may conclude that the managers in this particular workplace are experienced and well-informed. As such they are capable of dealing with bullying not only by following the establishment's general guide, but also by acting on their own initiative. Managers care about relationships in the workplace and they improve it mainly through the communication which allows them to precede particular problems and conflicts.

I mention my own suggestions and thoughts as well as analysis of the answers obtained from the informants in discussion.

8 DISCUSSION

I have described the severity and consequences of the issue in the chapter "Bullying in the working process." The content of this chapter was accompanied by the research of STEM/MARK agency. Based on this research, the bullying in the workplace continues to spread. The results provided by the informants may be considered as valid and very much up-to-date.

The informants described their personal experience with mobbing in the second chapter. In my opinion, the key factors in their experience are 'differences'. Recalling the words of Lenka Svobodová, this seems to be no coincidence. In her book "Mobbing-the dangerous phenomenon of modern society" (translated by the author of this thesis), she proposes the following victim typology: [52]

- Psychological differences
- Physical differences
- New employees

According to Svobodová, the differences are the first 'signaling devices' to irritate the aggressor and possibly set off further domineering behaviour. Our research validates that this often happens in reality.

The differences directly place the person in a minority (for instance; a new employee or a person from different ethnic group). The aggressor is then more confident and able to manipulate other employees into taking his side (possibly turn them against the victim), all this further stimulates the aggressor's sense of power and superiority. Initially, bullying occurs in a form of slandering as the aggressor is not brazen enough to challenge the victim directly. This theory was also supported by our research and the informants agreed on the aspects of psychological bullying and slandering. Please see the theoretical section "Motives of a bully" and the books mentioned in the footnote.[53] [54]

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[52] Svobodová, Lenka. 2007. *Mobbing – nebezpečný fenomén naší doby.* Výzkumný ústav bezpečnosti práce. p. 15-16
[53] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou.* Praha: Grada Publishing. p.49-52.
[54] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA. p.74.

The importance of communication and the right environment is described in the chapter of the theoretical part: "Bullying prevention and solutions"; in this part I refer to Heinz Leymann. The direct link of the theory with our research is yet again demonstrated with this topic. The matter of precautions against bullying secured by the managers makes me wonder whether they should be doing more to tackle bullying. In my opinion, the result of this particular part of the research is the most important task of every manager.

I believe that the questionnaire, inquiries and board meetings in the researched workplace present sufficient measures to prevent bullying, moreover it is even possible to lean on the managers and their initiative. However such prevention system and employees care most of non-state organisations lack.

Perhaps one improvement could be arranged in the area of seminars and trainings. This would ensure adequate knowledge of the topic for all managers. Having said that, most managers have reasonable insight into the matter. I would also recommend, and not only in this workplace, to introduce psychological tests which could help with more effective employee nomination.

Throughout the whole research, I have only encountered one aspect on which the managers disagreed. Relevant to tackling bullying, the managers could not agree whether the aggressor and the victim should work the same shifts. The solution depends on the circumstances of the particular situation, where the major role represents the personality of a mobber and a victim; and state in which the bullying is in.

For example Pavel Beňo mentions the type of mobber named a "coward". Such type usually avoids open confrontation and prefers to bully by the form of slander. According to the research results we can assume that this exact type is linked with the majority of cases, at least concerning this workplace. [55]

Particular stages and phrases of bullying according to Dr. Michala Koláře[56] were mentioned in theoretical part at the end of the chapter "Bullying: An overview." If the victim finds himself/herself on the early stages of bullying when he/she did not resign on the position of "victim", the confrontation is possible. It is even possible to stop its futher

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[55] Beňo, Pavel. 2003. *Můj šéf, můj nepřítel?* Šlapanice: ERA. p.75-76
[56] Kolář, Michal. 2000. *Skrytý svět šikanování ve školách: příčiny, diagnostika a praktická pomoc.* Portál.

development. In the opposite cases, the belated stages when the mobber has superiority over a victim who is broken, the confrontation is not recommended.[57]

To summarise, I can find my research satisfactory and productive. I am pleasantly surprised that the hypothesis outlined in the theoretical part is consistent with the results acquired in the practical part. It may be declared that the theory truly agrees with the practice. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the informants for their candid answers and their willingness to share their valuable experience.

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[57] Svobodová, Lenka. 2008. *Nenechte se šikanovat kolegou*. Praha: Grada Publishing.

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APPENDICES

P I.   Workplace bullying - Structured interview

APPENDIX P I: WORKPLACE BULLYING – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1) Jak vnímáte aktuálnost problému šikany na pracovišti?
   What is you opinion concerning currency of the workplace bullying issue?

2) Jaké máte Vy osobně zkušenosti se šikanou mezi Vašimi zaměstnanci, čili mobbingem, na vedoucí pozici?
   What are your experiences with workplace bullying/mobbing among your employees?

3) Jaké preventivní kroky podniká vaše pracoviště proti šikaně? Nabízí zařízení, ve kterém pracujete školení či semináře?
   What kind of steps towards prevention does your facility perform? Does your facility offer some kind of training courses or seminars?

4) Jaké preventivní kroky proti šikaně na pracovišti podnikáte Vy?
   Which sort of precautionary steps against workplace bullying do you perform?

5) Jaké preventivní kroky byste ještě navrhoval?
   Are there any additional steps that you would recommend?

6) Jakým způsobem jste šikanu řešil, nebo byste řešil?
   How did you solve, or would you solve workplace bullying?

Sex: Male   Female

Manager post:

Number of subordinates:

Years on the manager posititon: