

Jolanta Kowal

University of Wrocław
Institute of Psychology
College of Management “Edukacja” in Wrocław
e-mail: jolakowal@gmail.com

Grażyna Gwiazda-Sawicka

University of Wrocław
Institute of Psychology
College of Management “Edukacja” in Wrocław
e-mail: grazyna.gwiazda@wp.pl

Mobbing as a problem in management ethics^{*}

Abstract

A positive company image and its good reputation are usually results of ethical and honest behaviour towards employees and may improve competitiveness, increase profits, customer satisfaction, and create new job jobs. However, it often occurs in dynamically developing firms where ethical norms are not kept and this process can be seen in the lack of equal chances to get a job – people without connections remain without work. According to research, mobbing is a very serious problem.

Psychological terror or mobbing in work life involves hostile and unethical communication that is conducted in a systematic manner by one or more individuals, mainly toward one individual, who, due to mobbing, is pushed into a helpless and defenceless position and held there by means of continuing mobbing activities. These actions occur on a very frequent basis (statistical definition: at least once a week) and over a long period (statistical definition: at least six months' duration). Because of the high frequency and long duration of hostile behaviour, this maltreatment results in considerable mental, psychosomatic, and social misery.

^{*} The article is an updated version of the paper published in Polish in the *Annales. Ethics in Economic Life*, 14(1), 227–240

Keywords: mobbing, ethics, management, mobbing victim

JEL Classification: J00, J30, J31, J32, J40, M50

1. Introduction

The ethical rules in a given profession can be seen through a socially accepted moral code, which includes matters regarding internal actions and social responsibility connected with the job. Companies that achieve lasting economic success usually treat their employees as the most important assets in managing the firm. The real benefits of the company owners, its management, its environment and workers come from the management styles based on respecting and appreciating their people, sharing responsibility, participation in the results of company actions, possibilities for development. A positive image of companies and their good reputation result from an ethical and honest approach to their staff, which can lead to increased competitiveness, increased profits, customer satisfaction, and creation of new jobs. However, in a dynamically developing private sector as well as in the public area, ethical norms are not always observed, which can be clearly seen in the lack of equal access to jobs—people without connections do not get jobs. According to many analyses, including Polish research, mobbing has become a serious problem in many organisations.

2. The concept of mobbing

The concept of mobbing was introduced in 1984 by Heinz Leymann, a born in Germany Swedish psychiatrist and psychosociologist (Leymann, Gustavsson, 1984). He claimed that mobbing had always been present but it had never been analysed in any systematic way (Leymann, 1996).

The phenomenon of mobbing is affecting more and more employees. It refers to the quality of interpersonal relations in the workplace and how these affect the functioning of people and the institutions. Mobbing means actions or behaviour relating to an employee or directed against them, which consist in continuous and long-lasting harassment, or threatening the employee, which lowers their belief in their professional usefulness and results in or is intended to humiliate or ridicule them, isolate or eliminate them from the team of their co-workers. It is the most dangerous and destructive phenomenon occurring in a workplace, one which has been growing drastically claiming more and more victims (Milerski & Śliwerski, 2000, p. 126).

Mobbing, or psychological harassment in the workplace, has been perceived as a social issue since the late nineteen-eighties, at the end of the yuppies' era who treated professional aspirations as their highest life ambitions (cf. Maciejewska, 2002, p. 71). Dan Olweus was the first to use the word "mobbing"—he borrowed the term from the work of the ethnographer, Konrad Lorenz. Some researchers call this phenomenon bullying. In a book edited by Jerzy Kwaśniewski titled *Badanie problemów społecznych* we can also find the phrase "ganging up on someone," or "harassment," (Babik, 2003, p. 186) and psychological terror (Hirigoyen, 2002, p. 13).

The term mobbing is applied to psychological terror connected with provoking, isolating, gossiping about, unpleasant comments or behaviours of a group or a person toward another group or person that are aimed at excluding the person from their social or professional group their lives (Moszczyńska, Pałyska & Raduj, 2002, p. 52). Psychological aggression is defined as subjecting an individual selected to become a scapegoat for systematic and stigmatising destructive actions, aiming at damaging their dignity, and physical and psychological integrity. When such an aggression lasts for a longer time, it leads to initially passing, then permanent consequences for the physical and emotional life of the victim caused by prolonged exposure to stress. The most common symptoms are anxiousness, depression, anxiety disorders, phobias, or PTSD.

Research on victims of workplace harassment shows that long-lasting mobbing results in temporary or permanent unfitness for work. The unprecedented proliferation of mobbing in companies clearly leads to an increase in the number of medical leaves, days off work, and increased turnover, which results in multi-million losses for the companies and for the employee it means losing their job due to permanent unfitness for work or disability. Research clearly shows that an employee exposed to long-term moral molestation becomes unable to function properly in any professional context. According to this amendment, mobbing in the workplace in Polish Labour Code means...

actions or behaviour toward or against an employee that consists in continuous and long-term harassing or threatening the employee, resulting in their lowered assessment of the professional adequacy and causing or aiming at humiliating or ridiculing the employee, isolating or eliminating them from the group of other employees... (art. 94, § 2)

3. Conditions and characteristics of mobbing systems

In the literature, there is no single definition of mobbing. All known definitions include only a system of psychosocial characteristics of relations found in the workplace. Lidia Grzesiuk (2008, p. 230) writes about:

- (1) its duration—at least half a year;
- (2) continuity of harassment that occurs at least once a week;
- (3) intentionality of action—of mobbing perpetrators;

- (4) seclusion of the victim—the mobber creates a barrier between them and their surroundings, manipulates other employees;
- (5) use of malicious means such as lies, plotting, slander, gossip, deception—this is why mobbing has such serious consequences for the its victims.

Irena Pospiszyl (2008, p. 279) also mentions conditions and characteristics that must be met for us to speak of mobbing. These are:

- (1) duration of harassment (usually a few months or at least half a year);
- (2) repetitiveness of harassment, at least once a week (although this is not defined very precisely since it comes from employees' habits);
- (3) imbalance of power between the mobbed and the mobbing;
- (4) negative health consequences for the victim.

An expert on mobbing in Poland, Prof. Jarosław Marciniak (2004, pp. 16–17), suggests the following diagnostic criteria for mobbing:

- (1) continuous harassment conducted in routinely and consequent manner but with various intensity; the mobber has a consistently negative attitude toward the victim and acts permanently regardless of the change in the victim's situation or behaviour;
- (2) long-term psychological harassment (at least half a year);
- (3) mobbing is purposeful, the mobber is hardly ever unaware of their actions; it aims primarily at eliminating an individual from their closest surroundings, weakening their position, forcing them to leave work, but it can also be used for sophisticated manipulation of others and their limitless exploitation;
- (4) relation (not only professional); it involves creating pathological relations between people, creating an abnormal system of dependencies between the harassing and the harassed with the former usually abusing their position to make others accept their mobbing actions;
- (5) maliciousness and calculation (the perpetrator uses all possible unethical means to achieve the desired goal);
- (6) exclusion and isolation of the victim; creating an artificial barrier between the victim and their surroundings leads to their genuine alienation from their social environment or to eliminating them from the team of employees.

4. Phases of mobbing

Mobbing is a gradual process without any clear boundaries between its phases. Stanisław Kozak (2009, p. 174) mentions the following four phases:

- (1) rise of conflict, which according to the employee so far unaware of the threat can still be overcome, the conflict escalates and another phase begins;
- (2) mobbing action, the victim is in a subordinate position to the perpetrator and finds no support in the workplace;

- (3) mobbing intensifies, the victim who defends themselves, sometimes aggressively, becomes a scapegoat because their attempts to intensify their defence result in unjust punishment or their demotion;
- (4) aggravation, the number of delegated tasks decreases, the critical position of the victim makes them reach a settlement and quit their job.

These phases show the gradual, seamless intensification of destructive behaviours and actions.

5. Mobbing strategies and perpetrators

Sven Max Litzke and Horst Schuh write that mobbing perpetrators are usually the victims' superiors or co-workers. They mention several mobbing strategies such as (Kozak, 2009, p. 171):

- (1) the strategy of belittling competence—the victim faces the threat of losing some of their responsibilities and duties in the workplace and even of losing their job;
- (2) the strategy of isolation—isolating the harassed individual from the rest of the employees;
- (3) the strategy of intimidation—enforces certain behaviour intended by the mobber using blackmail or threats;
- (4) the strategy of humiliation—humiliation, ridicule or demeaning the harassed individual in the eyes of other employees.

Piotr Chomczyński mentions the three-stage model of Einarsen and Bjorkvist (2008, pp. 92–93), based mainly on the observed change in the intensity of mutual interaction of the parties. It includes:

- (1) indirect actions such as spreading rumours, disturbing work (demeaning the victim in the eyes of others);
- (2) more direct strategies based on isolating and public criticising or ridicule (public justification of one's own actions by means of discrediting the victim and eliminating any possible remorse);
- (3) actions focused on forming a public image of the victim as somebody mentally ill, irrational; at this stage, the person is often blackmailed (the victim is often prevented from fighting for their rights and from winning over their environment).

6. Mobbing behaviours

Leymann claims that in order to understand the structure of mobbing it is necessary to identify the hostile actions of the mobber. He listed 45 mobbing behaviours grouped into five general categories (Table 1):

Table 1. Mobbing behaviours according to Leymann

<p>I. Actions obstructing communication:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. limiting communication by the superior 2. constant interruptions 3. limiting communication by co-workers 4. reacting to remarks with shouting, scolding and threatening 5. constant criticising of one's work 6. constant criticising of one's personal life 7. harassing on the phone 8. verbal threats 9. written threats 10. limiting contact with humiliating and demeaning gestures and glances 11. various allusions without any straightforward communication 	<p>II. Actions disrupting social relations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. avoiding conversations by the superior 13. not letting the victim speak 14. moving the victim to a place away from their colleagues in the workplace 15. forbidding the victim's colleagues to speak to them 16. ignoring the victim.
<p>III. Actions focused on disrupting the social reception of the victim:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. speaking ill of the victim behind their back 18. spreading rumour 19. attempts at ridiculing the victim 20. suggesting mental illness 21. referring to the mental examination 22. mocking disability 23. mocking their gate, way of speaking or gestures in order to ridicule the victim 24. criticising their political or religious views 25. joking about and laughing at their private lives 26. laughing at their nationality 27. forcing the victim to do jobs violating their personal dignity 28. evaluating the victim's work engagement unjustly 29. questioning the decisions they make 30. calling the victim bawdy names or other names aimed at humiliating them 31. unwanted come-ons or sexual advances 	<p>IV. Actions affecting the victim's professional and life circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. not assigning any tasks to the victim 33. taking away the work that was assigned earlier 34. assigning pointless tasks 35. assigning tasks below the victim's competence 36. flooding the victim with ever new tasks 37. ordering the victim to do tasks that are offensive to them 38. assigning tasks that are beyond the victim's abilities in order to discredit them
<p>V. Actions harming the victim health:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 39. forcing them to do unsafe work 40. threatening to use physical violence 41. using minor physical violence 42. physical harassment 43. creating costs to harm the victim 44. doing physical harm in the victim's workplace or at home 45. sexual harm 	

Note. Adopted from "The Mobbing Encyclopaedia, Bullying, Whistleblowing," by H. Leymann, 1996.

A one-time conflict is not mobbing. For us to recognise the above actions as mobbing other conditions must be met (Litzke & Schuh, 2007, pp. 134–135):

- (1) harassment lasts for six months,
- (2) occurs quite often,
- (3) the victim is unable to defend on their own.

With respect to the aim of actions, we distinguish the following forms of mobbing behaviours (Sidor-Rządowska, 2003, pp. 78–79):

- (1) perverse molestation—the destruction of an individual in order to strengthen one's power,
- (2) strategic molestation—forcing the demission of an individual the mobber wants to go but has nothing against. Here the goal is for the victim to capitulate emotionally,
- (3) institutional molestation—a management style involving harassing the employees with assigning them tasks that cannot be accomplished which makes them feel permanent guilt and exposes them to criticism. In this manner, one can easily manipulate and exploit without any limits.

Characteristics of a mobbing victim: research on victims of psychological harassment in the workplace show that they are not helpless in the face of life nor psychologically weak. They are usually very ambitious and conscientious individuals; they are engaged in their work and show a willingness to work hard. They often take on more responsibilities than is expected of them. They usually are better educated and better qualified than their superiors are. Research shows that women fall victim to mobbing more often than men do. According to one French survey, women account for 70% of workplace harassment. The analyses also show that some employees are more susceptible to mobbing than others. These are the lonely individuals—their loneliness pertains to the workplace rather than their private lives; these are people without connections, often in their pre-retirement years, individuals who stand out (because of their religion, culture, ethnicity, political views, sexual orientation, etc.). These are predominantly single women rejecting sexual advances, women living with parents, pregnant women, or, single mothers. Alternatively, workers over 50 years of age that the superiors want to eliminate from the workplace. Despite their experience, they do not fit with the younger staff. In such cases, the bosses may resort to psychological terror, forcing them to leave. Individuals that seem as too engaged, conscientious, multi-lingual and well educated, individuals who have participated in international internships and trainings pose a threat to the more experienced but less educated employees (Kozak, 2009, pp. 178–179; cf. Mazurowska, 2006).

Characteristics of a mobber: they include: past record of violent behaviour, high level of aggression, impulsiveness, past history of mental illness, power, also envy, competitiveness, lack of analysis of own behaviour. Most scholars agree that there are more male mobbers than female but the number of women mobbers is visibly growing. Sven Max Litzke and Horst Schuh (2007, p. 146) describe a mobber as a person who, among others, has a narcissistic personality, does not have a clearly defined concept of themselves, overestimates their value, who is aggressive and angry.

Witnesses of mobbing: a co-mobber witness (who supports and gives more power to the aggressor) and a side-mobber witness (who uses their own creativity to provide the mobber with new ways of harassment).

7. Consequences of mobbing for the victims and their families

Lidia Grzesiuk (2008, p. 239) writes about the consequences of mobbing for its victims and their families, for the employer and the company, and for the society as a whole.

In the case of the first category, we can see the deterioration of mental and physical health of the victim as well as a deterioration of their family relationships. Lidia Grzesiuk (2008, p. 241) lists—based on Zimbardo—four main reactions to stress caused by mobbing are:

- (1) negative emotional reactions (anxiety, distrust toward their surroundings, feeling lost, frustrated, medication) and positive emotional reactions related to the feeling of appreciation and excitement;
- (2) non-specific somatic reactions (headaches, diarrhoeas, vomiting, sleeplessness, lack of appetite, excessive appetite);
- (3) negative behavioural reactions (absence, medical leaves, a drop in work effectiveness) and positive behavioural reactions (raising one's qualifications);
- (4) cognitive reactions (impaired concentration, memory problems, impaired speech and performance at intellectual tasks).

As mentioned above, high frequency and long periods of harassment have destructive consequences for the health of the victim. Consequences of mobbing can be divided into two categories (Kmieciak-Baran & Rybicki, 2003, p. 47):

- (1) psychological consequences: depression, impaired concentration, doubt and fear that can often lead to nervous breakdowns or suicide attempts;
- (2) psychosomatic consequences: arrhythmia, breathing problems, headaches, back and neck aches, sleeping disorders, skin disorders, gastrointestinal.

When it comes to consequences for the employer, we should first mention the decrease in work effectiveness of the victim and the resulting financial losses for the company. The society also bears the costs. These are related to the cost of treatment and therapy of mobbing victims. Long-lasting mobbing result in isolation from the society. A mobbing victim loses touch with their friends. Their work problems affect the victim's personal life. The feeling of helplessness, consternation and family conflicts often result in separation or divorce and harm to the children (Grabowska, 2003, p. 12).

Professor Leymann treated 1300 victims of mobbing. He stated that before the individuals fell victims they were not any different from other people. According to Leymann, a person becomes a victim of mobbing not because of their personal qualities but mainly from the situation. Clearly, long-lasting mobbing can

affect one's personality negatively. A person can become suspicious, withdrawn, irritable, and focused on their own suffering. Perpetrators of mobbing do not feel remorse because they do not relate their actions to the victim's behaviour (Kaczyńska-Maciejowska, 2002, pp. 31–32). To defend oneself effectively against mobbing, we should react quickly, document all symptoms of mobbing, and find friends and witnesses of the unpleasant events. Regardless of one's emotional condition, we should remain indifferent and not react aggressively. It is important to do one's work and not be provoked to neglect it regardless of the atmosphere in the workplace. It is also important not to remain alone with the problem. We should seek support in the workplace and look for help in anti-mobbing organisations (cf. Mazurowska, 2006, pp. 28–30). according to prof. Dariusz Doliński, mobbing victims often do not want to leave work because of the following reasons: lack of alternative positions; fear of change; the fallacy of sunk cost is at play here—the more effort we put into doing something, the more difficult it becomes for us to abandon it. Professor Doliński also claims that those who experience mobbing have to accept that if their mobbers have a higher position in the hierarchy, they will not be able to deal with the problem on their own (cf. Kalinowska, 2007, p. 115).

8. Research on mobbing in Poland in the years 2001–2010

8.1. Research in the years 2001–2005

A report by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) published in 2002 stated that 5% of working Poles were harassed by their supervisors every day in their workplace. However, 12% admitted that they experienced such treatment at least once in their professional career. Moreover, workers at small companies were more likely to experience ill-treatment by their employers whereas in large corporations harassment was more likely to come from their co-workers. Mobbing was experienced by 10% of women and 7% of men (Matuszyński, 2004). It can be seen that mobbing was the greatest threat in the countries of Northern Europe and the smallest in Mediterranean countries. It is possible that high occurrence in Scandinavian countries can be explained by better worker rights awareness and, as a result, the fact that more such activities were spotted. The highest risk of mobbing was found in the public sector. From the economic perspective, mobbing in UE pertains to: public administration and uniformed services—14%, education and healthcare—12%, hospitality and catering industries—12%, transport—12%, trade—9%, real property—7%, manufacturing industry, mining—6% (Matuszyński, 2004).

Earlier, in 2001–2002, research on mobbing was conducted by, among others, Mieczysław Cenin (2001). He presented his results on moral-ethical attitudes of Polish managers in a two-fold perspective: he showed negative and positive phenomena and analysed the conditions for their occurrence (it is a continuation of

the author's earlier work, cf. Cenin, 1997). He devoted special attention to mobbing—psychological harassment of subordinates. Poland is at a stage of intense restructuring of the state, its economy and all social institutions into a system of parliamentary democracy and market economy. Referring to Durkheim (cf. Podgórecki, 1976), Cenin claimed that all crises, even positive social change, trigger a temporary devaluation of social control mechanisms. Anomy appears. It is a condition that results from the disintegration of widely accepted norms (lawlessness) and it is a situation where moral norms and patterns of behaviour are absent, unclear and/or conflicting. They lead to a state of alienation for an individual who, more or less consciously, breaks free from former social rigours and legal responsibility for certain crimes, e.g. theft, robbery, etc. In the contemporary period of transition, i.e. of socioeconomic transformation, old regulations and codes of action were long abandoned and new ones were not created yet or were not accepted.

According to the data presented by National Labour Inspectorate, in 2004, 395 mobbing complaints were filed, among these 31 were fully justified and 76 bore hallmarks of mobbing but were not sufficiently documented (Miedzik, 2008, p. 31).

Mobbing in Poland is often connected with the risk of being fired from work. According to research conducted by Public Opinion Research Center among Polish employees in 2002, we can see that such a form of harassment was experienced by 19% of the polled. Irena Pospiszyl writes that the most common method of mobbing in our country is creating a bad atmosphere at work by means of offending remarks. Such a situation was experienced by 21% of the polled. Another form is penalty, limitation and repression that were experienced by 20% of the polled. Seventeen per cent experienced unjustified criticism, work evaluation forging and belittling employees' value. This research shows that women were harassed more often (55%) than men (45%). According to research done a few years ago by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the International Labour Organisation, on average 9% of workers experience mobbing (Pospiszyl, 2008, p. 282). The percentage of employees harassed in the workplace in different countries was: Portugal and Italy—4%, Greece and Spain—5%, Austria—6%, Luxemburg and Germany—7%, Denmark—8%, France and Ireland—10%, Belgium—11%, Sweden—12%, the Netherlands and Great Britain—14%, Finland—15%.

8.2. Research in the years 2009–2010

In 2009, comprehensive research was conducted on mobbing in Polish stores and supermarkets. The news portal *Gazeta.pl* presented the results that showed that statutory working time was not observed, leaves were not granted willingly, workers were forced to bear an excessive professional burden or mobbed and even blackmailed. The research showed that the rights of supermarket employees were not observed and the existing system of their protection was failing. The problem pertained mostly to women who account for around 90% of supermarket work-

force. Mobbing was widespread. According to Aleksandra Sokolik from the “Karat” coalition striving to protect supermarket employees’ rights, “Mobbing, meaning harassing and humiliating supermarket workers is so widespread that it can be considered an element of HR management in such places.” The most common forms of mobbing are: punishing the workers fighting for their rights with inconvenient working hours, threats of dismissal, and difficulties in getting deserved leaves. The analyses show that workers are fired and the remaining staff are given more and more responsibilities. Interviews reveal that in some places there were 50% fewer workers and those who remained had twice as much work without any increase in wages. The laws were broken in the medium-sized supermarkets and grocery discount stores that were controlled less often. Employees of the largest stores were in a slightly better position because of more frequent inspections. In these places, the case of “double work schedules”—one official for the inspectors, the other for the company management which showed that working time norms were exceeded—was less of a problem.

It is difficult to assess the severity of mobbing in Poland because many workers do not fight for their rights, let themselves be mobbed, change jobs or go on leaves to escape it. Anonymous polls conducted by Waclaw Kisiel-Dorohinicki (the author of the book *AntyMOBBING. Walcz o swoje prawa w miejscu pracy*) at the beginning of 2009 show that 30 % of the respondents experienced mobbing in their professional life, 15% of whom in the previous five years, but some people overuse the term mobbing and apply it to all unacceptable behaviour of their superiors. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between a demanding boss and a mobbing boss. A demanding boss is often associated with an individual with a tough managing style who treats their employees instrumentally. Such a management style can provoke aggression and various negative emotions among the employees which may result in them trying to vent them off by, e.g.: mobbing, boycotting or sabotaging others; there is a high risk of behaviours such as: loud admonishing, shouting, publicly offending others or limiting the freedom of expression—all hallmarks of mobbing. We should not always label a demanding boss as a mobbing boss. In many professions, effective management results can only be achieved through giving orders without any room for debate or discussion (Kisiel-Dorohinicki, 2009).

In 2010, research on mobbing was conducted among the staff of public and private schools in Śląsk Cieszyński (G. Pilarek under the guidance of J. Kowal).

The analysed opinions of the staff of the state institution showed that the vast majority of (83%) considered that mobbing actions and attitudes such as work disturbances, including exclusion, were not present in their workplace. 13% stated that such actions occurred once or twice a month and usually took the form of avoiding conversation or contact with the employee. The polls also indicated the presence of isolating and ignoring employees. The responses were provided by the service workers of the institution as well as those who worked there for less than 5 years. Workers with 10 or more years of experience pointed to excessive workload experienced once or twice a month. Thirteen per cent of the respondents stated that situations where work was disturbed or the workers were

isolated happened several times a week and manifested with excessive workload. These answers were provided by workers with five or fewer years of experience. The poll showed that 1% of respondents thought that situations where work is disturbed or the workers are isolated happened once a week and manifested itself by excessive workload.

The information provided by the staff of the private institution showed that the vast majority of respondents (86%) that mobbing actions and attitudes such as work disturbances, including exclusion, were not present in their workplace. 6% stated that such actions occurred once or twice a month and usually took the form of avoiding conversation or contact with the employee. The answers also indicated situations where the employees were not provided with information related to their responsibilities and were later accused of laziness. Workers with 10 or more years of experience provided these answers. Such an excessive workload was experienced once or twice a month. Four per cent of the respondents stated that situations where work is disturbed or the workers are isolated happened several times a week and manifested itself by excessive workload. These answers were provided by workers with five years or less experience. Four per cent of respondents thought that situations where work is disturbed or the workers are isolated happened once a week and manifested itself with an excessive workload.

It turned out that mobbing in the state institution was much more long-term. The respondents from the state institution with more than 10 years of experience pointed to several years' duration. In addition, younger workers mentioned that mobbing actions and attitude were present for many months. In the private institutions 80% of the staff chose none of the possible answers (their experience did not match any of the given timescales). However, most answers showed that least experienced workers complained about mobbing actions.

The occurrence of mobbing in the form of work disturbances (including isolation) was comparable. It can be seen, however, that it occurred more often in the state facility and was more severe. Most often, it pertained to excessive workload and affected new workers. The least experienced staff felt overloaded with work and the expectations of the management and more experienced teachers, so they saw these actions as targeted against them and thus as mobbing. When it comes to workers with 10 or more years of experience, we can trust that their interpretation of mobbing was accurate. Such behaviour is well known to them and therefore correctly classified as mobbing actions or attitudes.

The staff of both facilities did not have sufficient knowledge of support institutions or providing help to people in need of it. Victims or witnesses of mobbing do not know how to react to it, which facilitates its occurrence in their workplace.

9. Fighting mobbing effectively

In order to combat mobbing effectively we should recognize the factors that increase the likelihood of the occurrence of mobbing against an individual. Among these factors, we can find (Grzesiuk, 2008, p. 234):

- (1) social factors—large unemployment and risk of losing a job;
- (2) characteristics of the firm, company, organisation, where mobbing occurs—chaos, mismanagement, rigid and hierarchical organisational structures, wrong management, changes (usually unforeseen) in the company (e.g. budget cuts to improve the company's competitiveness), managing from the position of power, excessive and misunderstood discipline, strong emphasis on the company's productivity, chaos in social relations, but also power struggles, promoting competition.

Fighting mobbing effectively, as shown by experience, is possible. It is also useful to spread didactic materials thanks to which employees become more aware and more willing to apply suggested amendments. Support of anti-mobbing organisations is also helpful. Due to the didactic materials and trainings, one can increase the prevention awareness and effectively fight against mobbing, i.e., psychological harassment, and openly discuss the problem of mobbing, its economic, health and moral consequences and help the victims from social exclusion and counteract all forms of discrimination in the workplace. The end goals have to be the gender equality, improved working conditions free of any psychological harassment, and to provide legal and medical counselling, mediating services, to cooperate with individual and institutions on collecting information and exchange experiences.

References

- Babik, M. (2003). Mobbing: prześladowanie psychiczne w miejscu pracy. In J. Kwaśniewski (Ed.), *Badanie problemów społecznych* (Vol. 6). Warszawa: Instytut Profilaktyki Społecznej i Resocjalizacji Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Cenin, M. (1997). W poszukiwaniu wzorca osobowego Szefa 2000. In S. Witkowski (Ed.), *Psychologiczne wyznaczniki sukcesu w zarządzaniu* (Vol. 4). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Cenin, M. (2002). Mobbing i inne grzechy menedżerów. In J. Kowal, K. Węglowska-Rzepa (Eds.), *Etyczne i psychospołeczne aspekty badań rynkowych*. Wrocław: Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania EDUKACJA.
- Chomczyński, P. (2008). *Mobbing w pracy z perspektywy interakcyjnej. Proces stawiania się ofiarą*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

- Grabowska, B. (2003). *Psychoterror w pracy. Jak zapobiegać i jak sobie radzić z mobbingiem*. Gdańsk: Studio Kreacji Wizualnej "Wielbłąd".
- Grzesiuk, L. (2008). *Mobbing w miejscu pracy – czynniki ryzyka i konsekwencje*. In J. M. Brzeziński, & L. Cierpiałkowska (Eds.), *Zdrowie i choroba. Problemy teorii, diagnozy i praktyki* (pp. 227–274). Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Hirigoyen, M. F. (2002). *Molestowanie moralne. Perwersyjna przemoc w życiu codziennym* (J. Cackowska-Demirian, Trans.). Poznań: Wydawnictwo "W Drodze".
- Kaczyńska-Maciejowska, R. (2002). *Koszmar w godzinach pracy. Charaktery*, 3(62).
- Kalinowska, M. (2007). *Mobbing – nie musisz być ofiarą. Claudia*, 9(173).
- Kisiel-Dorohinicki, W. (2009). *AntyMOBBING. Walcz o swoje prawa w miejscu pracy*. Gliwice: One Press.
- Kmieciak-Baran, K., & Rybicki, J. M. (2003). *Mobbing – zagrożenie współczesnego miejsca pracy*. Gdańsk: Pomorski Instytut Demokratyczny.
- Kowal, J., & Pilarek, G. (2011). *Mobbing jako problem etyki w zarządzaniu. Annales. Ethics in Economic Life*, 14(1), 227–240.
- Kozak, S. (2009). *Patologie w środowisku pracy. Zapobieganie i leczenie*. Warszawa: Difin.
- Kwaśniewski, J. (2003). *Badanie problemów społecznych*. Warszawa: Instytut Profilaktyki Społecznej i Resocjalizacji Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Labour Code [Kodeks Pracy]. (1974). *Rozdział I – Obowiązki pracodawcy. Art. 943, § 2. Ustawa z 26 czerwca 1974 r.*
- Leymann, H. (1996). *The Mobbing Encyclopaedia. Bullying, Whistleblowing*. <http://www.leymann.se/>
- Litzke, S. M., & Schuh, H. (2007). *Stres, mobbing i wypalenie zawodowe* (M. Wojdak-Piątkowska, Trans.). Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Łuszczki, J. (2004). *Mobbing wśród uczniów. Ergo*, 2.
- Maciejewska, B. (2002). *Terroryści w biurze. Newsweek*, 2.
- Marciniak, J. (2004). *Przeciwdziałanie dyskryminacji w zatrudnieniu. Jak w praktyce zwalczać mobbing i inne formy dyskryminacji*. Ostrołęka: Alpha Pro.
- Matuszyński, W. (2004). *O źródłach i sposobach przezwycięzania mobbingu w organizacji. Referat wygłoszony na VIII Ogólnopolskiej Konferencji "Etyka w życiu gospodarczym" zorganizowanej przez Salezjańską Wyższą Szkołę Ekonomii i Zarządzania, Łódź*.
- Mazurowska, R. (2006). *Lepszym źle. Charaktery*, 10 (117), 28–30.

-
- Miedzik, M. (2008). Mobbing – charakterystyka zjawiska w Polsce. *Polityka Społeczna*, 3(408), 31–34.
- Milerski, B., & Śliwerski, B. (2000). *Pedagogika. Leksykon*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Moszczyńska, U., Pałyska, M., & Raduj, J. (2002). Mobbing jako czynnik potęgujący przemoc w szkole. *Problemy Poradnictwa Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznego*, 1–2, 52–63.
- Podgórecki, A. (Ed). (1976). *Zagadnienia patologii społecznej*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Pospiszyl, I. (2008). *Patologie społeczne*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Public Opinion Research Centre [Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej]. (2002, June 26). Information no. 2731, office no BS/107/2002.
- Sidor-Rządowska, M. (2003). Mobbing – zagrożenie dla firmy i pracowników. *Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi*, 2, 77–85.