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Chapter

Impacts of Mobbing and Bossing in Human Resource Management

Darja Holátová and Monika Březinová

Abstract

Nowadays, every organisation is looking for new approaches and ways that lead to the optimal usage of workforce and potential of workers which in turn leads to improved status of the business subject within the competitive environment. A still unappreciated element in business management is the level of relationship between the managers and employees and among the employees themselves. Good social relationships, open in-house climate and quality communication significantly influence the behaviour of employees and their performance, contribute to participation of employees in fulfilling the organisation's goals and by that increasing the performance of the workers and the organisation as a whole. This sphere of social relationships, in-house climate and quality of communication is a stabilizing or unstabilizing element in businesses. In and unsatisfactory and stressful environment, undesirable fluctuations in the employees' performance occur. Harmful practices (bullying), which prevent the optimal usage of the workforce, lead to the creation of an unfriendly and disfunctional Environment, breakup of teams, they lower the creativity of the employees and encourage bad attendance and fluctuations. A decline in morale of the whole company occurs and the performance, quality of work and productivity of workers also decreases. In spite of the aforementioned reasons why we should fight against these harmful practices which show signs of bullying, more than 40% of Czech employees between 2007 and 2011 have experienced some form of bullying.

Keywords: workforce, research, social relations, organization climate, quality of communication, participation of the goals

1. Introduction

Work relationships, their quality and system of communication influence achieving the company, work and life goals of each worker. Harmonic, tactful and satisfactory work relationships, to which even interpersonal relationships and a quality system of communication are connected, create an overall company climate that is a prerequisite for being a productive one as well. This climate also has a positive influence on individual, collective and overall company performance. It reflects beneficially in the satisfaction of workers and aids in unifying both individual and company goals and interests. Work relationships in a company influence all of personal activities and usually significantly determine their effectivity [1].

Unhealthy, disorganized work and interpersonal relationships create an environment in the company where it is challenging to predict, plan ahead and fulfill work goals. In such environment, conflicts take place very often, mistrust among workers

and between workers and management rises. This creates space for more negative and socially undesirable phenomenons. Because of the reasons listed above, work relationships should be at the center of interest of every company. These relationships should be given exceptional attention and managers as well as all of the workers should collectively care about their harmony and improvement [1].

Work relationships are unfair in some companies. The crisis, threat of dismission from work, fast pace of work, atmosphere of fear and stress all contribute to this. These factors are an advantage to people at the workplace who are pushy and can use the situation to their advantage.

Conflicts and various disagreements in the workplace have always occurred. With increasing stress, competition, constant pressure to improve performance and lower costs and the effort to increase productivity at all cost, conflicts are only increasing. The situation is made worse by the supported individualism that also significantly contributes to the formation of unbalanced circumstances in the workplace [2].

Unethical behaviour is becoming the norm in some companies. The fact that an atmosphere of fear, unfair relationships and intrigue is dominant in a company is often overlooked by the management until the best workers, who are sensitive to such practices, leave. A psychological research hinted that an atmosphere which indicates unethical behaviour is present in many companies [2]. The sources of conflicts and communication defects can differ: a misunderstanding in the workplace, the style of managerial leadership, the way of forming work teams and groups, shortcomings in personal work, the personality of managers, work conditions, pressure on productivity and others [1].

A key point for an organisation to reach their goal effectively is for their goals and the goals of their workers to be complementary, if possible. If the organisation want their workers to work effectively they must strive for their satisfaction. This can, among other things, be influenced by open communication which significantly influences loyalty and performance of the workers [2].

A socially undesirable behaviour is generally regarded as one that is mostly characterized by not adhering to or violating social norms, legislation and ethical values. A behaviour that leads to damaging one's health and the environment in which they live and work in in it's consequence also leads to individual, group and societal defects and deformations. Socially undersirable phenomenons are an indicator of crisis in human conduct and in the behaviour of the organisation as a whole [1]. They are especially present when the human factor fails and also when norms and general human principles (for example ethical ones) are violated. These undesirable influences accompany the human conduct during various activities and even during their management and organization [3].

Feter [3] labels socially inappropriate and unethical behaviour as an umbrella term for unhealthy, abnormal and generally undesirable societal phenomenons and methods which society deems undesirable because they disrupt it's social, moral or legal norms. The definitions of an inappropriate behavior tend to differ, however it is a behaviour that is contradicting norms and good manners. Different, mostly sophisticated intrigues that look harmless on the surface, are used. For this reason it is difficult to prove such conduct and that is it's biggest danger.

2. Forms of inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and protection against them

There can certainly be various antipathies and divergences in the workplace. Everyone sometimes experiences an unjust action from a coworker in the

workplace. They don't fulfill a promise they made, spread sensitive information, speak badly of us in front of the boss or intrigue. Such worker feels anxiety, anger and confusion afterwards and experiences disillusion. It is not uncommon for people to jump to generalised, unjustified conclusions based on one negative experience, however we cannot assume that an inappropriate behaviour is taking place in the workplace based on a single negative experience, such behaviour has to be regular [4].

Except for unethical conduct and unfair communication there is also a deepening discrepancy in interpersonal relationships in some companies that can lead to a behaviour that is characterized by attacks and intimidation. In Great Britain, USA or Australia the term bullying is common. Sometimes including specific relationships such as mobbing, bossing and staffing, which are used to describe psychological pressure [5].

The causes of bullying can be seen in the shortcomings in organisation and management of groups, incorrect ideas about fulfilling the roles in a group contradictory to official organisation, defects in social behaviour of individuals and rarely in pathology of a personality. Vašutová [6] divides bullying into different forms: physical, verbal, emotional and psychological – spreading rumors, manipulation with social relationships, social extortion (indirect relationship aggression).

2.1 Mobbing

Represents derogatory conduct from coworkers – either individually or as a group – long-term (at least 6 months) and repeated (at least once a week) towards a specific person. Mobbing is more common in companies than we dare to estimate [5]. It can have a whole palette of forms and vary in intensity – it could be degrading, blaming, irony, underestimating, finger pointing and other disruptive behaviour. The deceit of mobbing lies in its secrecy and length. It is mostly smaller attacks that seem harmless and random on the outside but create a complex, organised and health-threatening phenomenon.

In order for us to speak about mobbing, one important condition has to be met: Mobbing is happening where there exists a system that permanently damages a chosen victim – the worker. It does not have to be a system consciously put in place, it can be created unconsciously. Mobbing is negative communication conduct directed towards a specific subordinate. It is usually happening often and last a long time. These signs clearly point at the relationship of the victim and offender [7].

According to The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic is bullying (mobbing) a purposeful and long-term, especially psychological, harm which is committed by specific people at the workplace [8]. It manifests in the form of slander, ridiculing, degrading, overlooking, embarrassing, intimidating, irony, underestimating etc. It occurs, for example, because of [9]:

- jealousy (satisfied family and family backgroung, work ideas, performance and achievements, reliable friends, fit figure, clothes, hobbies, money etc.)
- desire to control others
- show off in front of "their" people
- sexual motives
- bad moral characteristics and insufficient legal knowledge of the workers etc.

Konrad Lorenz, an Austrian ethologist, studying the behaviour of animals used the term "mobbing" in cases where he was describing the so-called territoriality of animals. A wide spectrum of animal species lives in their home territories and if an intruder appears they do not hesitate to attack. A German author Peter-Paul Heinemann, who used the term "mobbing" in 1972 when he was studying aggressive behaviour in kids at school yards who sometimes managed to even drive their classmates to suicide, is also worth mentioning, states [10].

Ziegel [11] clarifies that the credit for the word should be given to a Swedish doctor and psychologist Heinz Leymann (1932-1999) who coined the term "mobbing" in 1993 in Germany which transferred both the word and the phenomenon into psychology. He was the first to apply the analogy of animal behaviour to situations in the workplace. While studying patients with communication and relationship issues he discovered that some workers in companies treat their colleagues as an "attacking pack".

2.1.1 Mobbing as a process

Mobbing is a type of conflict which quickly escalates and also usually leads to great damage. It is an insufficient ability to communicate, insufficient personality, arrogance, jealousy, bad manners and treating others, inability to solve conflicts and approach them openly [10].

Mobbing has, according to the authors, 4 phases, Svobodová [12] states them as follows:

- First phase. It is formed with a conflict in the workplace, among the participating people. The conflict does not have to look fatal, it could be a random action.
- Second phase. A systematic psychological pressure comes in and the actions of the mobber are planned and carried out with the intent to damage a specific coworker.
- Third phase. The terror is becoming official, attacks are more frequent, the crisis between the participants is escalating. In this phase the victim is becoming aware that they are being bullied. Other coworkers can also join in in this phase.
- Fourth phase. The victim is excluded from the work group community, starts to make mistakes under the pressure and a decrease in performance occurs. An intervention from the management, personnel department or other responsible department in the workplace must take place. If the intervention does not help, the victim has only once choice and that is leaving work.

Various factors influence mobbing. For example the following:

- increased level of work stress as a whole,
- overload– extreme requirements for work,
- tension – conflict of roles, general values are not clear enough,
- poor work management – culture of the organisation, which does not see bullying as a problem and is tolerant,

- boredom and unoccupancy – makes it possible to pursue coworkers and subordinates,

- poor and inconsistent management of the company – sudden changes in organisation, poor relationships among coworkers, poor relationships between management and subordinates,

- pressure of competition.

An insufficient qualification for leading people (authoritarian style), poor ability to deal with conflict, constant pressure to increase performance and lower costs and company culture with low level of ethics could also be put in this category.

2.2 Bossing as a specific form of mobbing

If the initiator of the psychological pressure is a superior, then we are talking about bossing. The term bossing is probably the youngest in this sense of word. It's Norwegian author S. Kile [10] labeled "systematic pressure from a superior" as such in his studies and brought attention to this negative phenomenon. As Čech [13] states, bossing is a specific form of mobbing. It is a process during which a superior attacks their subordinate. Bossing is actually mobbing coming from higher (head) positions often leading to a purposeful "disposal" of inconvenient employees [5].

It is essentially the same scenario which is, considering the significant authority of the superior that they are granted by legal documents and which can be utilized, that much more dangerous. The superior can overwhelm the employee with work or assign task that they are not able to complete. On the other hand, assigning duties that are below the level of the victim's qualifications is also quite common. Everything is accompanied by an often ironic clarification; then, a critical and degrading evaluation of the work follows. Bullying manifests as slander, ridiculing, degrading, overlooking, shaming, financial damage etc.

Making disadvantages for the worker can also have different forms in bossing and manifest as for example in rewards, a part of salary that cannot be demanded, during special rewards, personal surcharges and other tangible rewards which are not in direct legal demand. In praxis, a large room for illegal discrimation or rather for favoritism to specific employees that are "friends" with the managers and for whom a reward is not for their contribution but for servility, adulation and snitching on coworkers. In regards to a considerable authority of the superior, bossing is more dangerous than mobbing.

2.2.1 The role of the head employee

Atmosphere at the workplace is closely connected to the head employee. A manager has a large amount of authority in his hands. The means of management, setting of the communication, treatment of employees and the manager's behavior has a decisive influence on the pathological relationships at the workplace. Inappropriate communication phenomenons appear in an environment in which the head employee is indifferent to the climate in the team, doesn't want to talk about problems thus doesn't want to solve them either, when the head employee doesn't have a sufficient qualification in managing workers, looks over conflicts, doesn't solve them or poorly and with a bias solves the mistakes and oversights of the workers [12].

The style of managing is very important. A democratic style is the most suitable. Autocratic and authoritative or too liberal styles evoke an atmosphere that is favorable to the development of mobbing. Liberal style and excessive freedom

evokes anarchy and chaos. Excessive directivity evokes irritability, dissatisfaction and aggression [12].

The head employee must also have the ability to relate to the problems of others and must also be able to rationally control their own emotions [12].

If the management of human resources overlooks the roots of conflicts and the problems aren't being solved, they can turn into open conflicts. Attacked employees have worse both physical and mental state and their behavior changes. They close in on themselves, lose contact with their coworkers, go into isolation, start to make work related mistakes and lose credit and trust [5].

Coworkers and, regrettably, often even managers would sometimes rather overlook the lapse of others so they don't have to solve them and not get into a conflict themselves. If even the head workers are indifferent towards unethical behavior, that behavior then becomes the norm.

If the necessary moral traits and legal knowledge are absent in the head employee, it's as if they were giving a signal to the spread of mobbing at the workplace. Such head employee often has their own complex and a strong need to control people and manipulate them [9].

Managers responsible for relationships at a workplace should be able to identify emerging problems, diagnose them and push for a change [5].

A problem of course is, when the head employee is the initiator of disagreements and worsening of relationships between people. When a person gets into a head position who's ambitious, fulfills given tasks but doesn't get along with people it's often tolerated. Only when conflicts expand and start to negatively manifest in performance characteristics and business turnovers is when owners or top management starts to get interested, but that can already be too late [5].

From it it's apparent that an inappropriate, unwanted climate which is often a key factor for the development of bullying at a workplace results in decreased work motivation and performance of employees which manifest in both the quality of work and the quality of the workplace relationships which can be seen as a driving force of any firm or company. This, in both cases, brings significant economic losses for the business [14].

Corporate culture should be a collection of written and said rules on how the company should proceed in similar cases and situations and on what the communication, atmosphere, style of work and subordination procedure inside the company is like. Thus corporate culture is more important the larger the business is [15].

Corporate culture significantly affects the satisfaction with work and the degree of identification with the company. If it's well set employees feel comfortable which has a postivite effect on their performance. However when a negative atmosphere prevails at the workplace it supports the development of pathological relationships. It's necessary that the corporate culture is based on a strong moral foundation for the creation of the correct workplace atmosphere [12].

In companies which are certificated under ČSN EN ISO 9001 is a declaration of the vision of the company and its politics a basic standard, from which further more specific in-house norms and guidelines are derived. One of its common points is a paragraph which focuses on employees and highlights their importance to the company. An extension of these basic points can even be a moral codex – rules of norms of behavior binding to all employees.

3. Negative influence on an individual and the whole organization

The influence of any form of unfair treatment such as mobbing, bossing or staffing (bullying of a superior by the employees) and its impact is very

extensive, affects the entire organisation and its consequences affect all members of the work team.

Dishonest and disloyal employees are at the same time a timed threat for the company. However companies themselves are often at fault for the problematic behavior of their employees. Employees start to intrigue and lie, leak discrete information regarding the company and its know-how and abuse their work position. With such behavior they can cause their employer high damages which can, in certain situations, liquidate the company.

Employees who have issues at the workplace have a tendency to leave it to themselves. Despite their effort, alarming symptoms start to appear: tendency to socially isolate themselves, decrease of energy and health issues. All of these issues can later become chronical, such as headaches, stomachaches, digestion issues, chronic fatigue, sleep disorders or problems with the heart. Often as well appear problems with concentration, fear of failing and loss of confidence [7]. Further moral, social, health and economic consequences befall not only affected individuals but even entire collectives. Typical response to an unfair treatment are mental disorders (such as depression, anxiety, memory disorders, problems with concentration, paranoid states, aggression, etc.) and psychosomatic illnesses (stomach and gallbladder problems, heart problems, pain, skin diseases, sight deterioration, asthma, bulemia, high blood pressure, etc.). Mobbing might only happen at work but also significantly affects the private life, adds [16].

Results of mobbing can be, according to Venglářové [17], divided into three categories:

- Mental issues – decreased confidence, concentration disorders, increased irritability, anxiety and even depression. Development of a post-traumatic disorder is considered severe.

- Health issues – (on the basis of psychosomatic reactions to stress) – decreased immunity, cardiovascular diseases, breathing problems, gastrotestinal diseases.

- Long-term influence on the private life – mental problems lead to withdrawal from daily life, victim starts to avoid being in contact with people, has problems functioning in their family life etc. [18].

Employees have worse performances, are more often ill, in the worst case they take refuge in resigning or strive to work at a complete different position, team work is disturbed and atmosphere in the company worsens [19]. Productivity of work, quality of products and willingness to innovate decrease and the company image begins to be threated. Created losses are striking [5].

Unfair treatment and stressful situations resulting from it also have context with the question of work safety. Since under its influence, concentration disorders appear in the victim which can have an increased rate of failures, errors or injuries as a result. Morbidity and incapacity increases which serve as an escape from an unsatisfactory environment. Further aspects can also according to Dědičové [20] be an affect on losses which negatively manifest in competition with other companies such as:

- Decreased productivity, effectivity and profitability

- Increased absence and fluctuation of employees

- Decreased morality and loyalty
- Increased costs due to hiring new employees and requalification
- Indirect costs related to dealing with bullying
- Negative effects on the image of the company
- Potentional fines for non-compliance to health and safety laws
- Potentinal increase in insurance costs

To that is also related a bad atmosphere at the workplace, hostile and unfonctional environment is created, team falls apart, performance decreases and so does quality. Creativity of employees is lower, worse productivity, bad attendance and fluctuation. Decrease in morality of the entire company occurs. With all of that the costs increase.

3.1 Selected influences and options of prevention

As a prevention against the consequences of this behavior, which damages the company, mechanisms are created which try to prevent this behavior – ethical codexes are accepted, a company ombucman is established, box for complaints etc. [21].

A special form of prevention of this issue can also be a collective contract, eventually a warning of an option of a legal course of action. A defense of unfair treatment is in practice very difficult. It requires a high degree of bravery and perserverance.

Above all it's important to resist the pressure and not let individuals control the entire collective, to not be indifferent to what's happening at the workplace and finding quality and honest people in the collective. Bullying needs to be reported to human resources and to superiors as it is a very dangerous matter which can even have fatal consequences. Every employee at the workplace has the responsibility to report acts of bullying. Then the true corporate culture will reveal itself [9].

Very important is also the creation of a beneficial work environment, suitable communication climate and quality work relationships.

Dědina [22] comes with a concept of a communication climate which exists in a business and severely affects the behavior of employees and therefore the entire organisation. The author states extreme cases of open and closed climates, vis. **Table 1**. Communication climates of real organisations lie somewhere between these extremes and it's important to know which climate it inclines towards.

Pauknerová [18] a Svobodová [12] state that participation of managers on the creation of concrete social conditions and social climate at the workplace is critical.

According to [11] the goal of a head employee is to lead a well integrated and motivated group in which socially harmful relationships don't occur, a group, which reacts and acts coherently and in which positive team climate prevails which is essentially important in fulfilling the business' goals.

In order to not support unfair relationships the head employee has to combat tell-tale, conspiracy, machinations, has to not downplay the complaints of employees, has to solve the causes of problems and give employees necessary information.

Svobodová [12] adds, that a head employee must also have the ability to relate to problems of others and must rationally control their own emotions.

Open communication climate	Closed communication climate
Descriptiveness Communication is informative rather than prescriptive	Prejudice Finding culprits, employees are told they are incompetent
Orientation on solving Orientation on solving problems instead of that, which can't be solved	Control Conformity is required, differences and changes are suppressed
Openness and frequency Non-existence of lateral communication paths	Infrequency Hidden meanings, manipulative communication
Interest in others Empathy and understanding, interest in coworkers	Lack of interest in others Cold and non-personal environment, lack of interest in coworkers
Equality Every member is appreciated regardless of position and role	Castes There are clear differences in state and the ability of individuals in communication
Forgiveness Mistakes are understood as inevitable part of work, focus on their minimization	Dogmatism Minimal discussion, unwillingness to accept the opinions of others, unwillingness to compromise
Feedback Positive, inevitable for both performance and relationships.	Hostility Suppressing importance of other workers

Source: Dědina and Odcházel [22].

Table 1.
Open and closed communication climates.

The way of managing, setting communication, treating subordinates and the behavior of the manager has a decisive influence on bad relationships at the workplace.

The most suitable style of managing – a democratic style. Autocrative, authoritarian or too liberal styles evoke an atmosphere favorable to a development of unsatisfactory relationships. Liberal style and excessive freedom evoke anarchy and chaos. Excessive directivity, on the other hand, evokes irritability, dissatisfaction and aggression [12].

A fundamental communication tool inside of a company should be clear rules, defined rights, duties and responsibility of the participating.

In the case of occurring problems and problematic relationships it's necessary to try to solve the conflict without outside interferences.

Attacked employee should request a talk in private. Strong voice, correct posture, topical arguments and not letting themselves be provoked and naming things without shyness are important. If the talk ends with no positive result or doesn't have sense, they should request a talk with a third person. That third person can be a head employee. If the talk is productive, the head employee or the person responsible for the given problematic has a responsibility to oversee, whether the situation is getting better. In the case that not even a talk with a third person doesn't help legal process remains [7].

From a longterm viewpoint it's necessary to start while hiring managers and paying attention to a balance between the candidates relationship towards people and tasks. It's certainly better to dedicate the needed time, energy and money to a thorough diagnosis of not only professional, but also (and maybe even primarily) to personality and characteristics of managers, than to then solve problems at the workplace [5].

4. Conclusion

For the creation of healthy and harmonic workplace relationships it's necessary to continuously observe the atmosphere and climate in the organisation and systematically recognize eventual sources of conflicts and try to prevent them and in the case of a formation, removing them.

If there's an unsuitable and bad atmosphere at the workplace, hostile and disfunctional environment forms, team breaks up and decrease in creativity of workers, bad attendance and fluctuation all appear. Decrease in morality of the entire company occurs. Performance of workers and quality of work and productivity decrease and the costs increase. Disfunctional communication between the head employee and their subordinates and the absence of information towards the subordinates evoke a feelings of neglect and even injustice.

Occurrence of unethical behavior is in fact proportional to dissatisfaction at the workplace, poor social climate at the workplace and occurs at workplaces with a low level of ethics. It occurs there, where's competitive pressure, fighting for a better position, fighting for more benefits, there, where's existential uncertainty and fear of losing employment. Relationships between workers in such places and very weak and intolerant [12].

"Cleaning" the atmosphere can be helped by setting a style of managing, corporate vision, mission, rules of cooperation and principles of a collective contract in a way, that makes (or at least restricts) the creation of socially unsuitable work relationships impossible [5].

When problems persist it's necessary to be consistent: for example establish a crisis centre, name a corporate ombucman (a person who is responsible for solving conflicts among the company's employees). A responsible person, independent of the corporate hierarchy and who doesn't work in the company but is well acquainted with the situation in the company and is eligible to solve negative situations, has the necessary jurisdiction and is able to use legislative tools, corporate norms and moral principles of organizational behavior [5].

A basic communication tool in a company should consist of clear and understandable rules, delimitation of rights and obligations, responsibility of the participating and declaration of what behavior is expected and what behavior won't be tolerated of the employees. For rules clarify relationships and prevent unnecessary misunderstandings and feelings of injustice [12].

Corporate philosophy/culture which represents a set of values that are expected and norms of behavior is helpful in prevention of socially unsuitable phenomenons and relationships at the workplace.

And the behavior of head employees is either consciously or subconsciously mimicked by their subordinates [12].

Managers could use anonymous questionnaires, monitoring of satisfaction of the employees, their evaluation of the quality of the relationships at the workplace, monitoring the employees' evaluation of the quality of communication and use "Questionnaires of negative acts", to monitor specific phenomenons.

Despite above mentioned reasons, why we should combat any behavior that shows signs of bulling in any of its form, according to Machálkové [2] more than 40% of czech employees in the years from 2007 to 2011 used any of the following practices:

1. Stealing ideas of coworkers.

2. Abusing corporate resources.

3. Indifference and tolerance of iniquity.

4. Intrigues and spreading of lies.

5. Spreading discrete information.

6. Abusing jurisdiction.

7. Accepting bribes or manipulating hiring processes.

From a psychological research it follows that Czech people have double standards when it comes to unethical behavior. When someone else breaks the rules they easily condemn them, but when they act the same way they find an excuse and an intellectual justification. Rationally explaining and upholding own unethical conduct is inherent to the human psyche. [2].

The standard in the European union in mobbing is 5-8% of bullied people [23]. In the year 2012 16% of Czech employees experienced, according to a research, mental abuse at the workplace. Most threated are newcomers and people who don't feel the need to socialize. If victims don't have evidence at hand lawyers aren't much help – domestic laws don't know about bullying at the workplace [2].

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