THE DIAGNOSTICS OF MOBBING AS DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AIMING TO IMPROVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN LITHUANIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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The dysfunction of employee relations, which manifest in discriminating actions of mobbing is analyzed in the article. When analysing the influence of superstitions and stereotypes existing in social environment upon employees’ behaviour, the definition of mobbing is specified and expanded. The article presents the diagnostic model of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations in order to improve the climate of Lithuanian organizations, which allows estimating of the state of climate and the expression of mobbing according to distinguished dimensions. The formulated hypotheses have been checked. Managerial decisions for minimizing mobbing as discrimination in employees’ relations and improvement of climate are presented.

Keywords: mobbing, discrimination, employee relations, organizational climate, diagnostic.

Introduction

In employee relations mobbing as discrimination reveals those dysfunctional aspects of interpersonal relations which are based on intensive and long-term oppression. There is a habit to divide all the people according to certain peculiarities of physical, psychological and other nature, but this division into groups can acquire a negative meaning which influences unequal perception of a person or group. The rights limitation of a person or group is evaluated as a discriminative action. Discriminative actions are described as relations which hurt the pride and dignity of a personality; their goal is to cause the damage – physical or psychological. By changing the existing attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes (discriminative actions) discrimination without purposeful actions is not disappearing. In the society the stable attitudes and values of an organization become the basis of the employee relations. All this influence the nature of employee relations. But the question how mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is recognized at Lithuanian organizations emerges. Is mobbing as discrimination in employee relations connected to the condition of organizational climate and are there any measures taken to reduce the discrimination and improve the climate? The analysis of discrimination in employee relations is influenced by the recognition of the climate importance and real life, which influence modern Lithuanian organizations; make them search for new decisions. After having opened the economical and political space of the EU, the globalization and demographic tendencies, work power-drain create new objectives to business organizations: how to keep their professional employees; how to integrate the variety (representatives of other nationalities and races, different cultures, religions, sexual orientation and different social group members), how to create and
keep a proper level of organizational climate, which would guarantee quality work results, etc. Organizations seek to become attractive employers and an employee wants to become a member of such organization. There is no organization which could function without the interaction of its employees. The quality of an activity result as well as profit of a business organization depends on effectiveness and quality of this interaction. Employee relations are one of the factors which influence organizational climate. The successful management of employee relations and the principles which lessen the discrimination in employee relations influence positive changes of organizational climate. Mobbing as discrimination in employee relations – chicaneries, veiling of work information, sneering and so on – creates negative organizational climate and can be a reason of employee loss (Kolodej, 2005; Vasiljevas, 2005 etc). This also influences functional disorders of an employee, causes illnesses, psychological and attention disorders, depression and can become a reason of suicide (Kolodej, 2005; Litzcke, 2005; Malinauskienë, 2005, etc). This dysfunction of organizational behaviour is very popular, but it is not very widely analyzed in Lithuania (Vasiljevienë, 2000). Partial withdrawal from the workplace due to an illness, the lack of work power, decrease of working capacity cause moral (an organization is considered to be unattractive for the employees, to have bad reputation) and economical damage (the work quality becomes worse, the productivity recedes, the resources and energy are wasted to search for new employees). The analysis of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations phenomenon is very broad; it integrates lots of scientific spheres and a wide spectrum of empiric research. However, in Lithuanian scientific literature on management, discrimination in employee relations at business organizations is not widely analysed phenomenon; that it is why its analysis is relevant from scientific and practical aspects.

**Scientific problem and its exploration level.** The mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is analyzed as stating the situation but not as an aggregated phenomenon. Coherences between the discrimination in employee relations and organizational climate have not been widely studied in scientific literature devoted to management and in practice. *Mobbing in employee relations* was analyzed by many foreign authors (Leymann, 1990; Björkqvist, 1994; Zuschlag, 1994; Neuberger, 1994; Diergarten, 1994; Niedl, 1995; Knorz, 1995; Einarsen, 1996; Vartia–Vaananen, 1996; Rayner, 1997; Quine, 1999; Hoel, 2000; Godin, 2004; Salin, 2005; Tracy, 2006; Møle, 2007; Grunau, 2007; Wood III, 2008; Bultena, 2008 etc), and only few Lithuanian scientists (Vasiljevienë, 2000; Gruževskis, 2004; Malinauskienë, 2005; Vveinhardt, 2009; Žukauskas, 2009 and others).

**Scientific problem** is how to warrant a good condition of organizational climate by managing the mobbing process. **The object of the research** is mobbing as discrimination in employee relations. **The aim of the research** is to prepare the diagnostic model of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations, ensuring the improvement of organizational climate. **The objectives of the research:**

1. To conceptualize discrimination in employee relations.
2. Having analysed mobbing as discrimination in employee relations, to formulate the conception of mobbing.

3. Having disclosed the conceptual essence of organizational climate, to substantiate mobbing as a factor of organizational climate.

4. To form the diagnostic model of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations and to construct the tool to diagnose mobbing as discrimination in employee relations.

5. To analyze the applicability of the model of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations in Lithuanian business organizations as well as to suggest the ways to improve the organizational climate in business organizations of Lithuania.

The main work hypothesis: mobbing negatively influences organizational climate. **H1.** Mobbing as discrimination in employee relations exists in Lithuanian organizations of different spheres of activity. **H2.** The factors of organizational climate and mobbing correlate with each other. That is why after getting rid of mobbing factor the climate becomes better. **H3.** The successful functioning of the organization, in the studied case – organizational climate depends on the managerial decision, that is why when the climate is improving the occurrence of the mobbing as discrimination on employee relations lessens.

**Methods of the research.** The research is based on the analysis of scientific literature, synthesis, deduction and induction, modelling, summarizing and comparison. The practical research is based on the methods of qualitative and quantitative data processing methods. The methodological basis of the research is made with the help of the diagnostic model, empiric selective methodology of research. The research tool consists of: interview, expert evaluations, partly-structured interview and a closed type questionnaire. In the work there were used multi-indexed statistical methods: correlation, factoring analysis (Principal Component and Alpha factoring methods), dispersion analysis (One–Way–Anova method), and multi-indexed scale model (MDS), multi-dimensional regression, descriptive (non-parametric) statistics ($U_{\text{man Whitney}}$) was also used. The Operationalization method as the matrix of the research, which was formed by calculation principle (was measured by enumeration method) was used. The hypothetic model as a system of preconditions, hypotheses was used. The psychometric characteristics of the tool were revealed by means of Cronbach Alpha, Spearman Brown coefficients; methods of dispersion, primary and secondary factorization are explained. The data were processed with the help of SPSS program.

**Research limitations.** The work does not analyse management as development of a separate scientific branch. The main object of the work is mobbing as discrimination in employee relations. This work has not analyzed racial, ethical, gender, age, cultural and other discrimination types, which are regulated by law acts; they have been shortly discussed. In this work the reasons of cultural, social, psychological discrimination in employee relations are not analyzed; thus only a general survey of reasons and factors is given. Mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is analyzed only as much as it can influence organizational
climate and how much it is possible to minimize it by managerial means, without going deep into discrimination in employee relations. Organizational climate is analyzed as a part of organizational culture. Mobbing at a work place is analyzed only together with bossing and staffing. The deep analysis of mobbing is performed on individual and organizational levels. Social level is discussed only in theoretical part.

The Diagnostics of Mobbing as Discrimination in Employee Relations

The article consists of three main parts. Describing the article structure, it is important to mention that the work consists of introduction, three parts and conclusions. In the first part of the article ‘The theoretical preconditions of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations’ discrimination in employee relations is analyzed as a dysfunction of interpersonal relations, as the role of prejudices and stereotypes in discriminative relations. The mobbing in employee relations as an object of the theoretical researches is also analyzed by revealing the definition of mobbing as a factor of organizational climate. In the second part of the article ‘The methodology of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations aiming to improve the organizational climate of Lithuanian organizations’ the level of mobbing researches in Lithuania and abroad is presented. The model of mobbing is presented and its stages are discussed: diagnosing of the organizational climate condition, mobbing, and the choice of mobbing intervention methods. The methodology of the research is presented and five formation stages of the instrument are introduced. In the third part of the article ‘The diagnose of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations’ the characteristics of the research sample are described, statistic methods and factors, the problem of mobbing in Lithuania are analyzed by means of partly-structured interview, i.e. specialists have been interviewed in order to react flexibly to the knowledge presented by the informants. The results of the exploratory research and main research as well as methodological and psychometric characteristics are presented.

Scientific significance of the research: The scientific literature and researches aimed at mobbing have been systematized. Different definitions of discrimination have been reviewed and, referring to interpretations of authors, the conception of mobbing has been presented. Referring to different scientific sources and empirical researches, the importance of mobbing diagnostics for organizations have been identified in order to improve organization’s climate. The universal model of mobbing diagnostics, which allows evaluating the condition of organizational climate and the level of mobbing expression, has been formulated. The theoretical significance of the work is determined with the fact that this work will add to the development and concretization of certain scientific concepts. A new term defining mobbing, i.e. discrimination is the Lithuanian equivalent for mobbing term, has been offered. Coherences between mobbing as discrimination in employee relations and
organization’s climate have been determined. The theoretical basis of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations has also been developed.

**Practical significance of the research:** The measurements of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations and organizational climate show that they are interrelated. The created model aims to identify mobbing in organizations as discrimination in employee relations and minimize it by improving the organizational climate. The results of the performed empiric research allow evaluating the characteristics of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations and organizational climate in Lithuanian organizations. The created model of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations will help leaders and employees of organizations to identify mobbing and apply interventional measures on time. Having evaluated and generalised the conceptions presented in the works of foreign and Lithuanian authors as well as integrating discrimination and mobbing in employee relations, which have been discussed in theoretical researches, it has been identified that mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is a detachment of a victim; application of sanctions with which it is intended to humiliate, push out of the organization; mobbing is a discriminative action within the borders of the organization and organization’s members. The following components prove the concept that mobbing is discrimination in employee relations: Detachment of the minority; Separation from the social system; Unequal treatment; Minimization of possibilities and rights; Damaging. It has been proved that the process of mobbing is a discriminative action, which includes the support of organization’s members and inaction; it has been defined with the help of harassment regularity and quantity criteria. The consequences of mobbing to the victim (psychological, physical, and professional) and to organization (not received income, the change of the personnel, expenses, unemployment, and compensations) have been identified. It has been proved that without the intervention measures the phenomenon of mobbing will not disappear after the victim’s withdrawal from the organization, and as in some Western countries the usage of some intervention measures is only a goal for Lithuania. Having analysed the conceptions of organizational culture and climate presented by foreign and Lithuanian authors, it has been stated that: the notion of organization culture is still mixed up with the notion of organizational climate. Organization culture strongly affects organizational climate. There is no unity in criteria, which define organizational climate. Organizational climate is a phenomenon, which consists of interpersonal relations of organization’s members and their reactions to these relations. It has been proved that the condition of climate is only one of the signals, which inspire to look for mobbing as discrimination in employee relations amongst bad climate conditions. The formulated main work hypothesis that mobbing negatively influences organizational climate has been proved.

Comparative analysis of mobbing instruments shows that mobbing as a phenomenon of work organization in Western countries has been studied since the beginning of the ninth decade of the last century. Researches are orientated to mobbing behaviour, the ways of impact and influence upon the personality and
organization. Even if the researchers differently characterize the attacks of mobbing, the research shows that the influence of mobbing affects the functioning of social relations. It means that somebody tries to hurt the dignity and self-esteem of a personality, professional sphere or work relations by isolating or creating the situation of physical danger. That is why LIPT questionnaire can be used as a basis. Mobbing consequences to the organization are reflected in the following indexes such as stress and its results, such as rotation, isolation, satisfaction or motivation, nonrational work, cooperation, support, destabilization. The research shows a big gender role in mobbing processes. The researches which were performed in Lithuania proved the existence of mobbing in country’s organizations, negative effect to the health condition. But at the same time we should mark a specific nature of the research – the main researches of mobbing which were performed in Lithuania are focused on the system of education, that is why there exists an actual need of the research in the organizations of public and private sectors. There was created a diagnostic model of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations in order to improve the organizational climate in Lithuania, which ensures the management of the process while monitoring the condition of organizational climate. The introduction of this model would generate the conditions to use the created instrument in order to diagnose mobbing in the early phase, before the condition of the organizational culture becomes worse. The diagnostic model of mobbing discrimination in employee relations in order to improve the organizational climate in Lithuania is being introduced in three steps: identifying the condition of organizational culture; diagnosing mobbing as discrimination in employee relations; foreseeing the management of the mobbing as discrimination in employee relations process, which means to rehabilitate the organizational climate using the preventive means.

This model can be applied as a universal tool for the constant monitoring of organizational climate. The primary diagnostics – (done at the first stage of diagnostics) the condition of the climate has been studied. If the condition of the climate is good, the search for mobbing as discrimination of employee relations is finished and later the favourable condition of mobbing is being preserved at the same level and developed. Having found symptoms of unhealthy organizational climate, it is necessary to search for the reasons and to identify the criteria of the climate, through which the dysfunctional behaviour of the organization’s members is revealed. In case mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is not found, the mechanisms of the climate’s improvement are being activated. Having diagnosed the existence of the phenomenon and its proportion in the organization, the certain determined reasons and criteria are being stated, the reasons through which the dysfunctional behaviour is being revealed, where the correlation links with the criteria of organizational climate are being stated, which means that the decomposed view of the mechanism of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is being received, to which at the third stage the interventional activity is being projected. After the decision to apply the interventional measures is taken, the question whether
the organization has created or can create the conditions to identify the victims of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations becomes one of the very important issues. This condition the success and the possibility to form interventional strategy and choose the tactics on the individual and organizational levels depends on. When certain actions are projected the reasons are evaluated – the links between actions and consequences with the organizational climate and the characteristics of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations. Having applied the intervention, the secondary diagnose is being performed; its aim is to state whether the actions determined positive changes in climate and have withdrawn the mobbing as discrimination in employee relations. In this way it will be stated whether the model has been applied successfully, which interventional methods have been successful. The diagnosis can be performed in several circles (if one is not enough), until the organizational climate becomes favourable – ‘becomes healthy’. When performing the diagnostics (both stages) and intervention, the constant monitoring is necessary or the introspection which would determine operative changes of the actions, which could be influenced by the changing processes or new circumstances. The diagnostics of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations in order to improve organizational climate is initiated and constantly influenced by four closely connected fields of purpose: the field of leader’s purpose, the field of employee’s purpose, financial / economical and ethical / moral fields. The interest of the employees, as the sum of individuals, is to have favourable conditions in order to achieve individual and organizational goals. Financial / economical purpose field makes to solve problems which disturb achieving the optimal result of the organization’s activity. Ethical / moral system presupposes the humanization of organizational activity; the requirements of social and moral responsibility, the understanding of the meanings which (together with economical actions) influence the actions of organization’s leader and the actions of the organization’s members. In other words, the appliance of diagnostics of dysfunctional processes and intervention are inspired with the task to optimize the performance of all the systems of organization and it is very important to stay orientated to the tasks which are held in the organization.

In order to underline the possibilities of empiric research, based on the stated characteristics (mobbing as discrimination in employee relations features; mobbing as discrimination in employee relations factors; additional features of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations) and their criteria, a research instrument to improve the mobbing as discrimination in employee relations has been created. The poll that was performed among the specialists by using a partly structured method of the interview has proved that people who work in the organization suffer from the long-lasting stressful situations, escalated conflicts because of which their health becomes worse and they have to seek for help in medical organizations. Even if the informants do not name the mobbing or discrimination, but according to the nature of the described relations it is possible to state that the first hypothesis has been proved – mobbing as discrimination in employee relations exists in Lithuanian organizations. The applicability of the research methods to state the mobbing as discrimination in
employee relations has been checked by means of the exploratory research in which the representatives of 20 professional activities took part. Having analyzed the results of the exploratory research, it has been stated that in private sector the chicanery is experienced more often, but their duration is shorter than in public sector. It has also been stated that the expression of mobbing is bigger in the service sphere. After the exploratory research, the instrument was improved introducing two levels: subdivision and organization. A demographic question about the work experience in the present organization was also added. By the performed research of the organizational climate it has been stated: bad organizational climate signals that the relations between the employees can contain mobbing (it was checked by Z scale standard deflection). The phenomenon of mobbing does not terminate only within the borders of a social system and affects the results of the activity of the whole organization, because it can involve the head and influence the organizational climate. If mobbing is in the division, it exists within the organization and influences the results of the whole organization. To solve this problem the resources of the whole organization should be used. By invoking statistic exceptions, non-parametric statistic method $U_{\text{Man–Whitney}}$, $Z$ scale, it has been stated that the occurrence of mobbing is more active and the climate’s condition is worse on the level of the whole organization. After analyzing the occurrence of mobbing in division and the occurrence of mobbing together with the climate’s condition on the organization’s level, it has been stated that, where bad organizational climate occurs, the mobbing could be found. With the help of the performed research of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations it has been stated that: ordinary employees most frequently become victims of mobbing. In Lithuanian organizations mobbing emerges in the most productive age period. Harassment is experienced by every third employee of a Lithuanian organization. Mobbing more frequently emerges among people with higher education.

The verification of the first hypothesis. The results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses have proved that mobbing as discrimination in employee relations exists in different sectors of activity in Lithuanian organizations. The verification of the second hypothesis. The correlation analysis has revealed very important facts of the research: the coherence between mobbing as discrimination in employee relations and organizational climate is absolutely reliable (i.e. very strong, strong and average), the hypothesis that the reciprocal coherence between mobbing and organizational climate exists has been proved. The verification of the third hypothesis. Having pointed out the decisions for improving the organizational climate, the hypothesis that the successful organization’s functioning, in the studied case – organizational climate, depends on managerial decisions; thus, when the climate is being improved, the expression of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is decreasing has been proved. The main work hypothesis that mobbing negatively influences organizational climate has been proved. The factors of mobbing as discrimination in employee relations allowed viewing this phenomenon from different points considering it as a problem of organization’s management.
Conclusions

1. Having summarised the theoretical analysis performed in the article, the following conclusions can be drawn: Mobbing as discrimination in employee relations is treated as long-term discriminating psychological terror in work environment, which is defined as frequency of attacks and duration of assault; the victim feels psychological discomfort, pain; his / her social, professional behaviour is influenced negatively. The outcomes of the phenomenon for a victim, an organization and its climate are discussed. Organization’s climate is analysed as a part of organization culture; its structure is disclosed.

2. Having summarised the methodological part presented in the article, it is possible to draw the following conclusions: the cohesion of mobbing intensity and the state of organization’s climate is stated; correlation between mobbing and dimensions of climate is analysed. The model involves the choice of the methods for diagnosis of the state of organization’s climate, mobbing and intervention. The model can be applied as a universal tool for constant monitoring of organization’s climate.

3. Summarizing the results, which were presented in the article, it is possible to draw the following conclusions: the empirical research has disclosed the expression of mobbing in organizations and the state of organizations’ climate; the respondents of different organizations of public and private sectors were interviewed. Differently from the western researches, mobbing that appears is Lithuanian organization happens not at the beginning of the career, but in its most productive period. At the beginning of career the discriminative actions are very frequent – a very important factor, which should be taken into consideration while creating the prevention measure of mobbing. Work experience in an organization is a very important factor in order to describe the picture of mobbing victim, because the employees with the experience, who have a possibility to climb the career stairs experience the discriminative actions of the colleagues, which transform into mobbing.

Literatūra

MOBINGO KAIP DISKRIMINACIJOS DARBUOTOJŲ SANTYKIUOSE DIAGNOZAVIMAS SIEKANT GERINTI LIETUVOS ORGANIZACIJŲ KLIMATE

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Santrauka


Raktiniai žodžiai: mobingas, diskriminacija, darbuotojų santykiai, organizacijos klimatas, diagnozavimas.
інтенсивності мобінгу та стану організаційного клімату, аналізується кореляція між мобінгом і деменціями клімату.

У статті розглядається мобінг як модель діагностиування дискримінації в виробничих відношенах, з огляду на поліпшення організаційного клімату. Модель діагностиування клімату організацій Литви дозволяє оцінити стан клімату, а також, судячи з окремих деменцій, визначити прояв мобінгу в ньому. Модель включає в себе підбір методів діагностиування та інтервенції для встановлення мобінгу і стану клімату в організації. Модель може використовуватися як універсальний засіб для постійного моніторингу організаційного клімату. За допомогою ампірного дослідження, опитуючи респондентів державних та приватних секторів, виявлено прояв мобінгу в організаціях і стан організаційної культури. Підтверджено гіпотези. Запропоновано управленські рішення для мінімізації мобінгу як дискримінації у виробничих відношениях і для поліпшення клімату.

Ключові слова: діагностиування, дискримінація, мобінг, організаційний клімат, виробничі відношення.

**ДИАГНОСТИРОВАНИЕ МОБИНГА КАК ДИСКРИМИНАЦИИ В ОТНОШЕНИЯХ РАБОЧИХ С ЦЕЛЬЮ УЛУЧШЕНИЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННОГО КЛИМАТА ЛИТВЫ**

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Резюме

Рассматривается дисфункция рабочих отношений, проявляющаяся в виде дискриминационных действий мобинга. Анализируя суеверия, влияние стереотипов, существующих в социальной среде, уточняется и расширяется дефиниция мобинга. Мобинг, как дискриминация в отношениях рабочих, трактуется, как постоянный террор, проявляющийся в частоте нападений и их продолжительности, описывается, как психологический террор дискриминационного характера в рабочей сфере, его жертва подвергена психологическому дискомфорту, боли, это отрицательно влияет на социальное, профессиональное поведение жертв. Рассматриваются последствия данного явления для организации, её климата и самой жертвы. Климат организации анализируется с точки зрения организационной культуры, выделены её составляющие. Констатируется взаимоотношение интенсивности мобинга и состояния организационного климата, анализируется корреляция между мобингом и деменциями климата.

В статье рассматривается мобинг как модель диагностирования дискриминации в рабочих отношениях, учитывая улучшение организационного климата. Модель диагностирования организаций Литвы позволяет оценить состояние климата, а также, судя по отдельным деменциям, определить проявления мобинга в нем. Модель включает в себя подбор методов диагностирования и интервенции для установления мобинга и состояния климата в организации. Модель может использоваться как универсальное средство для постоянного мониторинга организационного климата. При помощи ампирного исследования, опрашивая респондентов государственных и частных секторов, определено проявление мобинга в организациях и состояние организационной культуры. Подтверждены гипотезы. Предложены управленческие решения для минимизации мобинга, как дискриминации в рабочих отношениях, и для улучшения климата.

Ключевые слова: диагностирование, дискриминация, мобинг, организационный климат, рабочие отношения.