

BULLYING AND EFFICIENCY

BULING I EFIKASNOST

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Abstract: *Bullying, a specific form of behavior at workplace is characterized by a systematic psychological terror and abuse, verbal and non-verbal, hostile, and non-ethical communication one or more coworkers with their colleagues. Bullying includes giving humiliating jobs to the staff, slandering, constant control and critics by management and colleagues, exposing to a stress of various psychic and psychosomatic disturbances (they cannot get sick leave, and they are sexually disturbed), attacks to religious and national minority affiliation.*

Negative influence of bullying is double. On the one side, it causes mental, psychosomatic and social sufferings of victims. On the other side, the employed lose motives to work, productivity and efficiency decrease.

Bullying is a very difficult problem in organizations in Serbia and the loss of job is the first fear in the list of all fears, therefore the employed are often too afraid to inform on disturbing them. D 83; O 32

Key words: *Bullying, Psychological Terror, Non-ethical Communication, Suffering, Fear.*

Abstrakt: *Buling, uznemiravanje na poslu koje se ponavlja tokom dužeg vremenskog perioda, podrazumeva psihološki teror, bilo verbalni ili neverbalni, neprijateljsku, neetičku komunikaciju jednog ili više pojedinaca sa kolegom. Buling obuhvata davanje ponižavajućih poslova zaposlenima, ogovaranje, stalne kontrole i kritike od strane kolega i rukovodstva, napade na zdravlje zaposlenog (ne dobija bolovanje, godišnji odmor, seksualno se uznemirava ...), napade zbog pripadnosti nekoj manjini.*

Negativno dejstvo bulinga je dvostruko, s jedne strane dovodi do mentalnih, psihosomatskih i socijalnih patnji žrtava a s druge strane zaposleni gube motiv za rad, produktivnost i efikasnost opada.

O težini problema mobinga u Srbiji govori podatak da je na listi strahova građana prvi strah od gubitka posla, zbog čega se zaposleni često plaše da prijave da ih neko uznemirava, dugo čute i trpe i ono što im rade na radnom mestu.

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Ključne reči: *buling, psihološki teror, neetička komunikacij, patnja, strah.*

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1. Introduction

Another sickness of the contemporary civilization in Serbia are getting the proportion of epidemics, every day any new reported case, many cases are still silent. Also, other countries are not immune to this illness. It is about mobbing. Some prefer the term bullying (*the process of intimidating or mistreating somebody weaker or in a more vulnerable situation*). Many newly created bosses behave like slaveholders and

their staff is the victim of bullying. Bullying, intimidation of a weaker person at job which repeats during the longer time period, understands the psychological terror, both verbal and non-verbal, hostile, unethical communications of one or more individuals with their colleagues. About the problem of bullying in Serbia speaks the fact that the first fear in the fear list of citizens is the fear of job losing. According to the researches of the Medium Gallup

Agency, Serbia is the second country in the world for the fear of job losing (even before the fear for health). The workers in Cameroon hold the first place. This fear is increased by impossibility to find new job. The employed are often afraid to announce those who disturb them, they are silent for long and suffer for being abused at work and so the door for bullying is wide open. The negative effect of bullying is double, on the one side it brings to the mental, psychosomatic and social sufferings of the victims and, the employed lose the motive to work, productivity decreases and it exerts influence on efficiency, on the other side.

In the system where the moral and positive value system are in crisis, some employers often do not know what bullying is, they even do not have the idea of the social responsibility.

The final objective of bullying is that the victim breaks off his/her job and leaves the firm.

2. On Bullying

Konrad Zacharias Lorenz (eminent Austrian-German ethnologist, 1903-1989), used the term 'mobbing' to describe the behavior of animals becoming associated against one their member, so they attack it, expel it from the herd, bringing it sometimes to death.

According to Heinz Leymann 'mobbing or the psychological terror in the business world relates to the hostile or unethical communication oriented to the systematic way by the side of an individual or more of them, mostly to one individual, who is, because of mobbing, put in the position in which he/she is helpless and unable to defend and he/she kept in it by means of constant maltreating activities. They are develop with high frequency (once week at least) and in the long period (six months at least). This maltreatment brings to the painful mental, psychosomatic and social sufferings because of high frequency and long-lasting hostile behavior'.

The victims of bullying can be the employed independently of the age, social status, level of education, men or women.

According to the researches of the European Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions carried out in the EU countries, there are differences between workers subjected to mobbing. In Finland 15% of workers is subjected to moral maltreatment at work, in Great Britain and Holland about 14%, in Sweden 12%, in Belgium 11%, in France and Ireland 10%, in Denmark 8%, in Germany and Luxemburg 7%, in Austria 6%, in Spain and Greece 5%, in Italy and Portugal 4%.

3. Kinds of Bullying

Bullying can be vertical and horizontal. Vertical bullying occurs when a superior harasses one of his/her subordinate worker or in attempt to destroy the whole group he/she harasses one by one worker, it is the so-called the strategic bullying. Countries in transition, like Serbia, are specially exposed to strategic bullying. In the conditions of performed privatization, new employers often solve the problem of surplus manpower just in encroaching on bullying.

One of the variants of the vertical bullying is that the group of the employed (the subordinate) harasses a superior, and according to researches, it is the rarest case (in Italy, for instance, it is about 5%). Horizontal bullying occurs between the employed being equal in the organizational hierarchy scale. The most usual victim of horizontal bullying is the young, ambitious man who has just begun to work. The group experiences him/her as a threat, envies him/her because of his/her capabilities, bullies and abandons him/her.

Bullying in Serbia has its specificities and it is its political background. The people in managerial positions in public services and functions are not appointed on the basis of capabilities and personal quality (although it is part of election campaigns and promises of the parties) but to the party affiliation. Politically suitable people cover up their inexperience by constant accusation of workers.

4. Areas of bullying

Activities of bullying are oriented to the following areas:

Communications – the victim is limited, often forbidden to communicate with other colleagues, other colleagues are said not to communicate with the victim, the victim is not allowed to get the floor, he/she is interrupted in speech, when he/she comes into the room, and the conversation is interrupted. Communication is hostile, unethical. The basis of bullying is the disturbed communication.

Professionalism – the victim gets the tasks below his/her qualifications, or at the level of adequate qualification but with much bigger scope of work which cannot be carried out. The victim's work is underestimated, he/she does not get the work, the telephone or computer is taken away, he/she has no the worktable or it is overburdened with work, constantly gets new tasks which objectively cannot perform in order to prove his/her unfitness, the control of job presence increases, and the victim is often accused for neglects he/she has not done.

Social Relationships - the victim is left out of the social life; he/she is isolated, moved to another place far from colleagues, omitted from the meetings, education and parties. The victim does not feel as the member of the group and he/she is only physically at work.

Personal Reputation – slanders and lies are rumored, and the victim has not any possibility to deny them. It is mocked at the victim's appearance, speech, walk, nationality, religion, ethnic affiliation, and so on.

Health – the victim gets the task which is harmful to his/her health, vacations is not allowed, as well as days off, sick leaves. Workers voluntarily become the victims of mobbing because their boss offers them overwork beyond the legal maximum. He who cares about his/her family does not think about his/her health and some of them being afraid of being fired cannot refuse overtime work. The law permits 40 hours of overwork per month and the worker has 140 hours of overwork per month. Victims of bullying have become ill mentally and physically, there are suicidal tendencies with fatal consequences.

They scream at the victim, sometimes the victim is physically and sexually mistreated.

As a rule, the victim does not know the reasons why they behave hostile to his/her.

The Aim is to humiliate and destroy the victim and that he/she terminates employment and leaves the firm.

In 2007, in Serbia (according to the Agency for Peaceful Settling of Labor Disputes) 55% of victims of all forms of violence were the victims of bullying.

According to the researches of Mirjana Vukсанovic, the clinical psychologist, published in Belgrade this year, bullying is done in all the fields. The most often forms of men bullies are overburdening with work, assigning too heavy jobs, inadequate communications, negative criticism for every work and excessive control. The leading position of women's way of bullying is slandering and the lack of communications (ignoring), isolation, criticism of work and inadequate communication.

Both men and women are exposed to the constant verbal but also sexual maltreatment. About 7% of tested men found themselves at least once in this situation during their working life, while women were bullied more than three times. Women were exposed to physical threats twice more than men.

Vesna Baltezarevic, the author of the book "I want to know what mobbing is" carried out the

research in 2006 where she tested 400 people, of which 250 employed in the state institutions and 150 in private firms. 70% of them were women and 30% of men.

According to this results, 43% of polled confirmed that they were exposed to different kinds of disturbing more than six months, 18% to verbal threats and physical attacks, and 11% or 0.6% to sexual harassing. The research showed that in Serbia the underestimation of work was present and it was confirmed by 46% of respondents, while more than 68% were affected by the activities of rumors, slanders, slinging mud at sexual affairs in order to humiliate the person. Almost 57% cited the existence of laughing at the way of speech, behavior, walk and fashion, and more than 30% cited the intense scorn because of sex, nationality, social origin, private life.

The accusation without blame were 55%, and 24% of the polled said they were in the position of the "culprit on duty", while 39% cited they were excluded from the social activities, 53% were excluded from the program of education. Respondents complained about the so-called syndrome "empty table" (about 24.5%); it occurs when the employer takes away the job in order to force them to leave the company, i.e. the "very full table" (54%) when they are pressed with work in order not to think to leave or to bring charges against the employer.

The existence of different bullying activities, like excessive supervision and control with intention to find compromising material at any price which should be used to bring charges or to intrigue was confirmed by 28% of respondents. The absence of direct business communications was confirmed by 36% of the polled, constant criticism of the superiors were 28.5% and over 24% of them complained on the criticism of their colleagues. Therefore, it's no wonder that 62% of respondents felt tired because of the work they performed, 37% felt psychological disturbances, and 30.5% felt physical disturbances.

5. Who the victims of bullying are

The victims of bullying are usually the people who noticed and announced irregularities, the so-called honest people, then young and newly-employed people, part-time workers and aged workers who are shortly before pension. Somebody decides that the aged workers should retire on pension, but why? The most often reason is to keep them from receiving the social program, to realize pension, to eliminate them because they disturb somebody, or to employ somebody else.

The targets of bullying are capable, hard-working and creative people, those who want to think over by their own heads and those who look for better working conditions, more independence at work or wage increase.

The victims of bullying are also disabled people and ill people who are often absent from work because they are on sick leave. Such people are often moved to jobs which even more endanger their health as a method of pressure to leave their jobs themselves.

6. The consequences of bullying and efficiency

The victims of bullying are usually left to themselves. Their colleagues do not dare to help them. Under conditions of great competition among the staff, there is less and less solidarity, and they often join to the superior in bullying, keeping their jobs. Mistreated people sometimes persevere to the end and win the bullies, but they often become ill.

The consequences of bullying are very harmful, often dangerous for the individual, his/her environment, firms, but for the society, too. Is the society healthier with ill people?

The person with enthusiasm and the wish to be successful changes his/her attitudes towards the work because of bullying, loses idealism, energy, and the sense of his/her own work. Being afraid of losing the job, the victim of bullying puts greater efforts into realizing better work results so, at the first moment, in the short-run, the result of bullying can be the increase of productivity and efficiency.

The victim often does not dare to speak about the problems at work so from the phase of intensive efforts comes into the phase of unwilling going to work, it is followed by the syndrome of chronic fatigue, then he/she takes sick leave and is absent from work.

Bullying exerts influence on health causing numerous changes with the victim. According to the researches of Andreja Kostelic-Maric, the psychologist, these changes can be classified into:

- ❑ Psychological changes: depression, anxiety, crises of crying, attacks of panic, social isolation,
- ❑ Changes in behavior: passiveness, increased consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs,
- ❑ Changes in the health and physical conditions: headache, insomnia, dizziness, increased blood pressure and diabetes, skin changes, heart problems.

Unfortunately, very often, the victims of bullying decide to commit suicide. In Sweden 10-20% of suicides is directly or indirectly associated with the problems at work; in Italy 13% of suicides is caused by mistreatment at work.

There are no data how many people in Serbia die as the direct consequence of bullying and it is difficult to prove, but there is often news in the papers that a worker committed suicide in front of the workshop.

The victims of bullying are tired of work they perform (60% of the polled cited it) and have no motivation. As motivation, per definitio, is the main driving force of human activities, it motivates to creativity, to the appropriate results of work. The worker who is not motivated comes to work, but he/she is not interested in it, doing only what should be done. Unhealthy working environment decreases productivity and it leads to the decline of economic efficiency. Therefore, bullying destroys not only an individual and his/her family, but also the enterprise.

Researchers have proved that one of important factors in increasing cost is bullying. Leymann evaluated costs of the enterprise because of bullying (annual loss was from \$30,000 to \$100,000 per worker who was victimized at work).

In Germany, one worker exposed to bullying costs the enterprise between €25 and 75 thousands a year for losses caused by the absence from work because of sick leaves, decrease of performance and errors at work. Statistical data point to the fact that 50% of workers exposed to bullying take sick leaves of six weeks per year, 31% from 1.5 months to 3 months, and 11% of workers stay at home sick leave more than three months a year.

7. How to stop bullying?

Bullying does not exist in the Serbian laws, contrary to the European countries where it is sanctioned. In 2001, the European Parliament obligated its member countries to pass the law on bullying protection.

Practice in the world has shown that according to the criminal law and the law of torts the victim can bring criminal charges against bullying. There are court experts who interrogate and process the victim and if they prove guilt, a fine is very high, from €10,000, 20,000, and 30,000 to €100,000. In France, bullying is sanctioned from the fine of €15,000 to arrest.

In Serbia, there is not any law on bullying, and the Labor Law forbids discrimination, disturbing and sexual disturbing, and dignity violation. To stop

bullying, we should recognize it; therefore, education on bullying is necessary. The legal protection is also necessary, but legal measures must be obeyed in practice, as well as a better trade union organizing.

The Trade Union of Serbia has submitted proposals on the Draft of a law on preventing bullying in Serbia, from the objection that it is not necessary to hurry with passing so delicate Law to the objection that this Law will enable unscrupulous workers to accuse employers for bullying because they require qualitative work.

Serbia will have to fulfill the EU Directive and build on sanctions against bullying. A shining point in this dark appearance is the fact that an increasing number of people decide to announce bullying at work because it is the way to stop this appearance.

According to the EU studies, it has been proved that bullying decreases if it is talked about it.

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Conclusion

To treat the disease (epidemic) of bullying, it is necessary to make a diagnosis. Therefore, the first step to fight bullying is to recognize it. To recognize it, education is necessary. The next step which the State must take to protect the employed is to pass the Law on Bullying. The State must provide observing and obeying the Law in practice. Better trade union organizing would also contribute to the decrease (tendency to eliminate) of bullying. The less bullying, the less stress at work, better communication, more motivation, the increase of productivity and economic efficiency.