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**MOBBING IN THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

Bullying is one of the most widespread and important problems of our time. Bullying is an aggressive form of behavior aimed at humiliating, intimidating or discriminating against an individual or a group of people. Therefore, we believe it is appropriate to study the manifestation of bullying in the workplace, because the working atmosphere should not negatively affect the mental and physical health of employees. Bullying in the workplace is called mobbing.

Mobbing is certain actions of an employer or colleagues directly aimed at humiliating an employee's dignity, honour and professional reputation. They can take the form of psychological or economic pressure, and in most cases are aimed at creating a tense, hostile or humiliating atmosphere around the ‘victim’, whether it is one person or a small group of employees. This leads to an employee doubting his or her professional abilities or to the need to change jobs. Table 1 shows the types of mobbing.

Table 1: Types of mobbing

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| KIND | CHARACTERISTIC |
| Authoritarian mobbing | The aforementioned practice is conducted by a manager who employs a destructive management style. Such behavior may manifest as constant monitoring, humiliation, the imposition of unfair task assignments or other forms of pressure from superiors |
| Offset mobbing | Agression is directed at a third party because it is too dangerous to show it directly to the real source of the problem. It can be a reaction to authoritarian bullying, when frustration with the situation reaches a critical level |
| Mobbing ‘initiation’ | This phenomenon occurs when new team members are subjected to a kind of 'testing' or trial by more experienced employees, which manifests itself in the form of humiliation or harassment |
| Discriminatory mobbing | A victim is defined as an employee who differs from the general team in terms of their values, beliefs, or norms of behavior that are accepted by the team. Such individuals may belong to a different nationality, adhere to a different religion, or espouse a distinct set of work principles |
| Designalling mobbing | The objective of this initiative is to provide support to individuals who have disclosed negative information about their colleagues. Following such disclosures, the individual is often subjected to bullying or ostracism by the team, which serves as a form of retribution for disclosing information to management or other parties. |
| Sexual mobbing | This constitutes sexual harassment, which is a distinct form of mobbing. In a group context, discriminatory mobbing may manifest as sexual harassment when a colleague's sexual interest, whether in the opposite or same sex, is not approved by their colleagues |
| Selection mobbing | The objective is to completely exclude a specific individual from the team. This is accomplished through the intensification of aggressive actions that become increasingly violent until the objective of expelling the employee from the group is met. |

*Created by the authors based on the source [1].*

Each of these forms of mobbing has its own distinctive manifestations, yet they all ultimately result in significant psychological and professional repercussions for the victims. These consequences can profoundly impact not only the employee's well-being but also their prospective career trajectory, reputation, and even pose challenges during job searches.

This form of bullying is most often directed at newcomers, individuals lacking psychological resilience and vulnerability, or employees who have transitioned to the role from a markedly different background, including socioeconomic status, geographical location, nationality, and other factors.

The phenomenon of mobbing of relatively new employees is the result of a number of contributing factors.

1. The fear of competition is a significant factor. Those with more experience may perceive newcomers as a threat to their position, due to concerns that they may be more skilled or active, and therefore advance more rapidly in their career development.

2. The phenomenon of resistance to change. The team may demonstrate a reluctance to accept new ideas or approaches introduced by a new employee. This results in resistance to any alterations to the established work environment, with the newcomer becoming the subject of criticism or harassment.

3. The presence of hierarchical traditions. In some teams, there is an unwritten tradition whereby new employees are subjected to certain 'tests' or expected to demonstrate their loyalty or resilience.

4. The degree of cohesion within the team. In teams that are characterized by a high degree of cohesion and which have been in existence for a considerable period of time, the introduction of a new member may be perceived as a challenge to the existing social structure.

5. A notable issue is the lack of self-confidence among senior colleagues. On occasion, the mistreatment of newcomers can be attributed to the low self-esteem of senior employees who attempt to enhance their authority by subjecting new employees to humiliation.

6. The absence of adaptation programmes. The absence of sufficient support for new employees, such as mentoring or integration activities, can result in a sense of isolation, thereby rendering the newcomer vulnerable to mobbing.

Consequently, the newcomer may encounter adversity in the form of hostility, ridicule, isolation, or even deliberate impediments to their work, which has a detrimental impact on their ability to adapt within the team.

Statistical evidence indicates that the duration of mobbing is between one and five years, with 10-20% of employees becoming victims. The prevalence of mobbing in the education sector is twice as high as in other areas of activity. In 90% of cases, moral harassment is initiated by a manager [3].

A review of the literature reveals that two-thirds of victims of workplace bullying experience a reduction in work motivation, half of them experience a blockage of creative thinking, and more than 50% miss work due to various illnesses. Consequently, approximately one-third of employees change positions within the same company, 20% leave their jobs, 5% are demoted, and 15% are dismissed. [3]

It is also imperative to direct particular attention to the issue of women, given that despite the global promotion of tolerance, the fight for human rights and equality, our society still exhibits a considerable prevalence of gender-based stereotypes and a significant proportion of individuals who experience harassment are women. Sexual harassment, the manipulation of marital status, prejudice, bullying about appearance, and gossip from colleagues are among the primary factors contributing to mobbing against women.

The most prevalent manifestations of this detrimental phenomenon are bossing and bullying. The former occurs when a manager abuses their authority to exert undue influence over an individual employee or the entire team. The latter consists of cruelty, humiliation of honour and dignity, and unreasonable allegations of incompetence on the part of the labour collective or employer [2].

Those subjected to humiliation and harassment at work frequently lack awareness of where to seek assistance. It is important to note that the State Labour Service is responsible for addressing these issues. On 1 December 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the law on mobbing (No. 5749), which provides for administrative liability for mobbing at work.

The legislation delineates the financial penalties applicable to the perpetrators of harassment. For the initial infraction, the penalty is a fine of UAH 1,700-2,550 or 20-40 hours of community service. For subsequent offenses within a year or when the harassment is carried out by a group of individuals, the penalty is a fine of UAH 3,400-5,100 or 40-60 hours of community service.

Notwithstanding the government's stance on mobbing, it is incumbent upon the employer to implement measures that will mitigate the risk of this adverse phenomenon occurring within the workforce.

In the event of the termination of an employment contract due to mobbing (harassment) against an employee or the absence of measures to stop it, the employer is required to provide for the payment of severance pay calculated in accordance with the provisions of the collective agreement, but not less than the three-month average salary.

It is incumbent upon the employer to organize the work of employees in an optimal manner, to create conditions conducive to increased labour productivity, to ensure compliance with labour and production discipline, to adhere strictly to labour laws and labour protection standards, to implement measures to prevent and counteract mobbing (harassment), and to consider the needs and requests of employees, with a view to improving their working conditions.

It is incumbent upon the employer to implement measures that ensure the safety and protection of the physical and mental health of employees, prevent risks and stress in the workplace, and take informational, training and organizational measures to prevent and counteract mobbing (harassment).

In the event of damage to an employee's health as a result of mobbing (harassment), as confirmed by a court decision that has entered into force, the employee is entitled to full reimbursement of treatment costs.

In instances where an employee's legal rights have been violated – including instances of discrimination and harassment – the employer is entitled to compensation for moral damages. This is contingent upon the existence of a valid court decision substantiating the violation. The compensation is intended to address the moral suffering, loss of usual life ties and additional efforts required by the employee to organize their life that have resulted from the violation.

**Література:**

1.Мобінг – поняття, ознаки, причини та яке покарання чекає кривдника за вчинення мобінгу: стаття БЕЗОПЛАТНА ПРАВНИЧА ДОПОМОГА/ розділ Юридичні публікації [Електронний ресурс]//БЕЗОПЛАТНА ПРАВНИЧА ДОПОМОГА – 18.01.2023 – Режим доступу: <https://legalaid.gov.ua/publikatsiyi/mobing-ponyattya-oznaky-prychyny-ta-yake-pokarannya-chekaye-kryvdnyka-za-vchynennya-mobingu/>

2. Поширеність мобінгу серед керівників та роботодавців: стаття Академія праці, соціальних відносин і туризму [Електронний ресурс]//АПСВТ -2023 -Режим доступу: [https://www.socosvita.kiev.ua/sites/default/files/Visnyk\_3\_2018-90-91.pdf](https://www.socosvita.kiev.ua/sites/default/files/Visnyk_3_2018-90-91.pdf%20%20%5b2)

3. Мобінг: поняття, різновиди, причини, відповідальність: стаття WikiLegalAid[Електронний ресурс]//WikiLegalAid – Режим доступу: <http://surl.li/swvzcp>

4. Мобінг або цькування на робочому місці часто влаштовують в освітянських колективах — експертка: стаття Громадське радіо [Електронний ресурс]// Громадське радіо – Режим доступу: https://hromadske.radio/podcasts/rankova-hvylya/mobinh-abo-ts-kuvannia-na-robochomu-mistsi-chasto-vlashtovuiut-v-osvitians-kykh-kolektyvakh-ekspertka

5. Як протидіяти мобінгу в трудових відносинах: стаття БЕЗОПЛАТНА ПРАВНИЧА ДОПОМОГА[Електронний ресурс]//KadrEx – Режим доступу: <https://profpressa.com/news/iak-protidiiati-mobingu-u-trudovikh-vidnosinakh>

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