

MOBBING PHENOMENON - FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION AND STRESS

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Abstract

This article focuses on exemplifying the features of discrimination phenomenon in the workplace, a phenomenon that has appeared in the Romanian social studies only in the last 4 years. Mobbing phenomenon has been analyzed by several countries in Europe such as England, France, Germany; after these analyzes it has been found that this phenomenon refers only to actions of intense psychological pressure. Actions are geared to a single employee, in order to cause it to leave its job. Without these measures, dismissal of the employee would lead to numerous legal problems on the employer. In conclusion, employee who is the subject of mobbing phenomenon must endure a long period of time a series of injustices focused on himself, but also extremely high humiliation, which determines him to mentally give up and take the decision to resign.

Keywords: discrimination, phenomenon, mobbing, work

Clasificare JEL: G31; M10; M14.

1. Introduction

Mobbing is a phenomenon similar to discrimination and can be partially considered a kind of discrimination. It refers to job and actions of psychological pressure made on an employee by the employer or by a group of colleagues to determine that individual to leave the job, given that his dismissal is not possible, has no reasons from point of view of professionalism of the individual and / or would lead to legal problems on the employer [1].

An employee who always bear the injustice and humiliation is unable to fulfill his duties, so he mentally gives up and choose to resign, because these conditions may affect his health.

Mobbing can be also linked to the classic type of discrimination. Although, mobbing is linked to many times of the troubling professionalism of the individual that becomes the victim, other reasons may give support to mobbing phenomenon. For example, if it is desired dismissal on grounds of sexual orientation, then the employer will not be able to dismiss the individual considering the fear of repercussions, knowing that discrimination can be judged. But he can assail employee with a number of major inconveniences, so the psychological pressure makes the employee to mentally give up and to resign.

Other examples of pressures are: moving to another office, further access to the Internet, hiding documents, lack of communication, all causing unable to fulfill his tasks. In conclusion, mobbing phenomenon is hardly to be intercepted, and the subjective perception of actions make it harder detectable in everyday life and quite difficult to remove.

2. Generalities and specific characteristics of mobbing

The concept of mobbing originates from the English word "mob" that in Romanian language is equivalent to the word "gloata", the word was first used by ethologist Konrad Lorenz when he described the behavior of animals. Thus, Lorenz defined it as the attack or threatening behavior of a bigger animal or of a smaller group of animals.

Therefore, the phenomenon of mobbing occurs when a person receives more tasks than can fulfill, then he is accused of poor performance, being ridiculed in front of other people.

At socio-emotional level, the concept of mobbing [6]:

- leads to an extremely high stress and diminish self-esteem;
- leads to anxiety and reduction in workforce;
- may cause certain behavioral disorders by altering eating behavior or aggressive reactions;
- leads to psycho-physiological balance alteration, such as gastrointestinal disorders, insomnia, dizziness or headache condition.

Over time, the phenomenon of mobbing has been defined in many forms such as:

- constitutes maltreatment of an employer or coworker on a simple employee, by nature aggressive behaviors in order to dismiss it or to determine him to not be effective;

- is a way to punish or humiliate another coworker;

- involves abuse at work accomplished by methods such as harassment, humiliation or social exclusion on a minimum of 6 months. So, an individual reaches a lower position, being the target of periodic adverse social acts.

The phenomenon of mobbing can be differentiated to stress at work by:

- intentional negative actions carried out by a group of individuals;

- frequently harassment on a long time;

- existence of an asymmetric power relationship between aggressor and victim, normally between employer and employee and also between colleagues.

The main specific causes of mobbing. According to the literature, it is found that mobbing may worsen due to individual factors - that determine the phenomenon, these factors are [2]:

- deviations in human resource management;
- tolerance towards moral harassment and lack of recognition of this problem;
- all groups in the firm;
- major and periodical organizational changes;
- the uncertainty of employment;
- poor relationships between coworkers;
- type of duties, socio-organizational background;
- organizing the work;
- characteristics of the individual's personality or group of individuals;
- organizational stress;
- racial discrimination on grounds of sexual or political orientation;
- no mercy;
- personal problems of individuals.

The way you can avoid the phenomenon of mobbing, is that the employer and employee make additional efforts to avoid a situation or more cases of psychological harassment, with the aim of improving psychosocial relationships at work by [4]:

- the possibility of any individual to choose how to fulfill their duties;
- reducing the monotone and repetitive tasks;
- providing more information on the objectives of the tasks to be performed;
- increasing the management capacity;
- eliminating confusion regarding to activities and duties.

When a person feels that he is the victim of mobbing he must know that the most important aspect is to completely ignore and never blame himself for what happened at work. For a person to pass as easily over mobbing phenomenon is important:

- to recognize the clues that lead to this phenomenon;
- to accumulate enough evidence leading to negative actions of mobbing;
- to seek permanent allies and remain calm;
- not to isolate itself and to psychical resist;
- to change jobs only if found another otherwise and to take action in terms of legislation.

In 2012, within the project Woman Counts from Romania has opened the first anti-mobbing center, financed by the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

Women who become victims of discrimination and harassment at work, have the opportunity to address the center for combating mobbing and seek counseling in order to reintegrate more easily into the labor market. With all these, Romanian law provides no restriction on the phenomenon of mobbing and people who are victims, they can only accuse his abuser of discrimination, and if this turns out will be punished for this crime.

In Fig. no.1 it is given the short typology of mobbing phenomenon and its specific features.

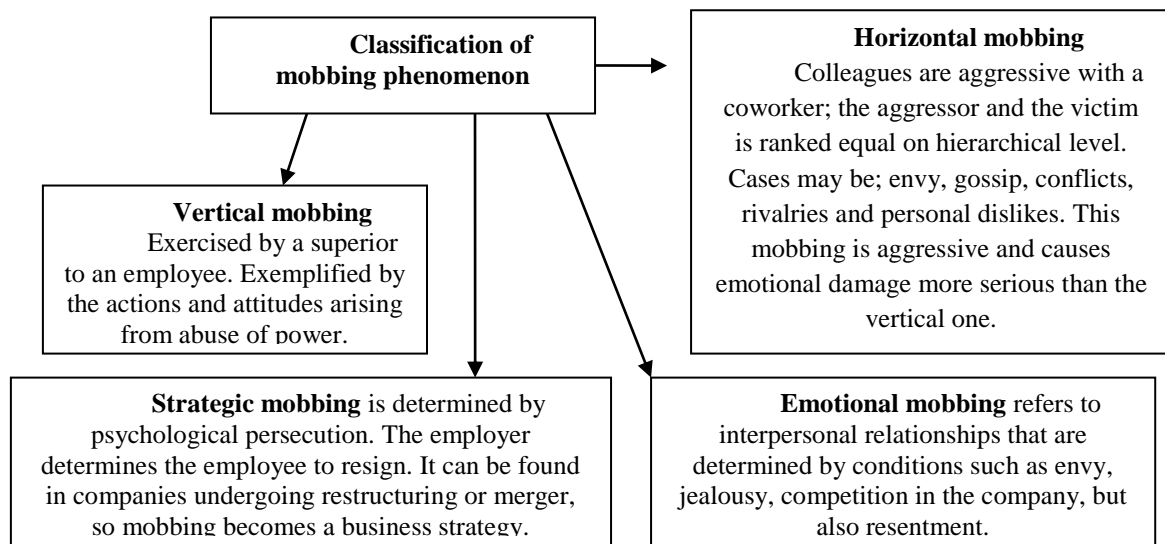


Fig. no. 1: The main forms of mobbing [3]

After a careful consideration it has been identified two types of mobbing, such as:

- mobbing from the bottom up - using the power of a group of individuals who have no power, but together they manage to eliminate a person with a superior power;
- mobbing each other - relates to two groups until one of them loses its dominance and remain in each other's group, turning them into victims.

In relation to the degree of damage victims with similar experiences, Davenport, Schwartz and Elliott set mobbing assessment as it follows:

- grade 1 mobbing, also called warning mobbing: it is identified when the victim resists and escapes by early stages or it is completely rehabilitated at work;
- grade 2 mobbing: is identified when the victim does not resist, passes early stages, later mental and/or physical suffer on a short or long time, and finally is unable to quickly integrate on labor market;
- grade 3 mobbing: is identified when the victim is no longer able to reintegrate into the labor market, or the mental and physical alterations can not be removed without professional support;

In conclusion, mobbing does not disappear on target counterattack, but it can change its form of expression and intensity. So discrimination specific to mobbing phenomenon can alterate to a certain extent the employee's mental state because it is directed against an individual, with a minimum duration of 6 months.

3. The features and causes

Mobbing is a form of psychological harassment in the workplace, harassment that occurs over a long period of time, at least 6 months in order to intentionally harm and it is identified by attacking an employee in different forms such as[5] :

- isolation and physical violence;
- rumors and defamation;
- intimidation and verbal violence;
- humiliation and criticism;
- discreditation and remarks;
- insults.

Agressor in mobbing phenomenon may be a colleague, a group of colleagues or even the employer. Thus in most cases the victim can not answer to that confronts attacks, for which reaches to suffer depression, insomnia, and abnormal behavior and psychosomatic illnesses. The victim ends up losing and trust himself, can not concentrate at work, causing unable to carry out his tasks and is permanently the subject to acute and posttraumatic stress.

All these symptoms are similar, they are identified by some states of trauma, such as aggression or natural disasters, all these symptoms of mobbing persist for a longer period of time, even a few years, which would cause some consequences such as[2]:

- social isolation of the victim;
- family issues;
- economic problems caused by lack of a job.

Heinz Leymann was specialist in labor psychology, which imposed on the labor market and within business activities, the concept of mobbing.

Mobbing in Europe is very well known, being carefully analyzed by the major research centers and controlled in various meetings. On average, 9% of European workers said they were victims of mobbing in 2015, according to studies conducted by French researchers. However they were found numerous differences in approach the phenomenon between countries, cultural and communication differences.

Among the causes of mobbing can be determined the factors that have led to its appearance, such as:

a. individual factors, applied to both the victim and the aggressor, refer to:

- socio-demographic variables;
- personality traits;
- style of approach the problems;
- behavior at work.

b situational factors, refer to:

- job insecurity;
- changes at management level.

c. organizational factors, refer to:

- different type of leadership;
- restructuring;
- climate and organizational culture.

d. social factors, refer to:

- economic changes;
- emigration and unemployment.

Other risk factors, refer to:

- unprofessional relationships between coworkers;
- the high level of work-related stress;
- organizational stress, on management, on style of communication and also on work organization.

In conclusion, if you do not control the phenomenon of mobbing, then it can seriously affect labor relations, can cause bulky and unprofessional communication, can lead to diminished work productivity, the splitting of the working staff in several groups, these tracks lead to a decrease in the efficiency and effectiveness of the company. Therefore, coordinating mobbing tasks is beneficial for the correct identification of attacks within an organization.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, similar to the concept of discrimination, mobbing phenomenon is less extensive and more difficult to identify because it is found in firms where staff set its tasks individually. The main targets of mobbing are loyal employees, but the most affected targets are those that are subject of mobbing actions. Mobbing cases are due to lack of rules, procedures of work development within the firm, to unclearness in resolving individual and group tasks, but also due to the application of inappropriate or uninvolved management. Thus the phenomenon of mobbing is competing to professional harassment. The most significant specific causes of the phenomenon of mobbing are failure to disclose promotion within the company, the lack of promotion regulation where to clarify and correct the criteria of managerial leadership, but also the development objectives of the company that create the continued interest of employees to own and company performance. In conclusion mobbing adversely affect any business, professional performance affects the person who becomes a victim, leading to loss of confidence in his own power or to effects on the medical plan, for example based on the emergence of mental stress.

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