Climate Assessment and Experience with Mobbing among Public Administration Staff (Example from Czech Tax Office)

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the issue of relationships and climate in the workplace in public administration including the factors that have a negative effect on workplace climate and interpersonal relationships. From a theoretical perspective, the paper summarizes the knowledge of interpersonal relationships in the workplace, environmental effects on workplace climate including pathological and negative phenomena that influence workplace relationships, including especially conflicts, bullying, and sexual harassment. The objective of the research was to identify the assessment of workplace climate and relationships by the employees of the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region as a prerequisite for high-quality performance of public administration, including their experience with workplace aggression and bullying by their colleagues. The research was performed by means of a quantitative research strategy. The data were received from 305 employees by means of a questionnaire. The results suggest that about three quarters of employees assess their workplace climate in a positive way, which has a favourable effect on their work performance. The negative assessment by Tax Office employees may be related to their experience with mobbing and bossing reported by 10% of employees.

Introduction

The relationships and climate in the workplace represent a very important component and certainly affect not only employees' and managers' satisfaction in the workplace but also largely affect their work performance. In the modern era of the 21st century, strong emphasis is on supporting a healthy and positive climate in the workplace. Solid interpersonal relationships should be supported and maintained across functions. Considerable money is being spent to avoid signs of pathological behaviour and to prevent negative effects on workplace relationships in all occupational groups that meet within a society or company.

One of the most serious phenomena that can significantly disrupt the quality of workplace climate and interpersonal relationships is mobbing, which is in Czech professional terminology considered an equivalent to workplace bullying. This involves behaviour through which a colleague attacks another colleague in various ways, thereby causing a psychological or psychosomatic harm. These are not occasional conflicts which could be considered a relatively natural part of interpersonal communication and interaction but long-term and systematic attacks which may have very serious health and social consequences for the victim. At the same time, these disturbed relationships are reflected in work performance and functioning of the company or institution where bullying among employees occurs.

The term mobbing is still unknown in society. In the Czech Republic, the problems that have a clear negative effect on the workplace are a taboo and are insufficiently addressed. No preventive strategies are in place that would inform employees about these phenomena and support their competences to identify and resolve these problems. This is confirmed for example by research studies conducted in the Czech Republic, including for example a

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comprehensive study by Cakirpaloglu et al. (2016) or a study by Čech (2011) who focused on the school environment and concluded that more than 26% of teachers were not aware of the issue and would not be able to prevent bullying in the workplace.

Every work environment which includes a team of workers is characterized by social interactions between team members and conflicts inevitably occur. An unresolved conflict may become a trigger for mobbing. Therefore, one can anticipate that the phenomenon of mobbing also affects public administration. There is an absence of relevant research studies and therefore, the authors of the present paper decided to focus on the relationships and working environment in a public administration office, where various degrees of interactions involve more than 750 employees. Specifically, the administration office is the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region. The authors believe that this group will be a good research sample to assess the quality of workplace relationships and climate as well as the phenomena that can have a negative effect on workplace climate. The results have a high degree of response relevance in the assessment of the climate in the public administration institution in question and at the same time have the potential to facilitate a deeper discussion and raise awareness in relation to the quality of the workplace environment in public administration, its development and prevention of phenomena that could compromise workplace relationships.

Formulation of the Issue

Workplace climate

The climate is defined as a set of relationships that prevail among all employees in the workplace and that are affected by various material and spatial conditions (Pauknerová at al., 2012, p. 96). The climate also includes the "tuning" of the specific society. The climate is often considered a psychological concept, not a sociological one. This is probably due to the significant effect of the emotional traits of every individual.

The social climate in the workplace has a significant effect on the employees' work commitment. The way people feel in the workplace is to a large extent decisive for work commitment. Some individuals are highly sensitive to the climate and a negative climate may have a negative effect on the results of their work. Other employees can suppress the negative effects and their work performance is not affected in a significant way. This depends on the personality and character of every individual. Comfort or discomfort in the workplace is then understood as the overall work atmosphere (Cejthamr & Dědina, 2010, p. 35). According to Armstrong (Armstrong, 2007, p. 200) the climate of an organization is simply how people perceive their corporate culture, and what their opinions and thoughts about it are.

The same author (Armstrong, 2007, p. 258) claims that workplace climate reflects the tuning and satisfaction of the employees of a firm or organization. The author also suggests that the way people assess the work climate also informs about the degree of their satisfaction in their position in the organization. The important thing is the mood in the case of important issues and conflicts. The behaviour of superiors to subordinates informs about the climate in the institution. If the workplace is dominated by trust, the employees like to work together in an effective way, they can appreciate the work of others and enrich each other by opinions and advice; the work environment is harmonious. In this type of environment the employees do not work forcibly and with resistance, but instead look forward to their work and consider it a comfortable environment for the development of their personality.

Pauknerová (2012, p. 12) further states that the climate in a firm or institution is affected by the success of the employees in the accomplishment of an assigned task, their norm in society in terms of social hierarchy, mutual attitudes, and last but not least by the personality and character of every person.

According to Nový (2002, p. 97-98) the overall social climate is affected by both external and internal factors. The author suggests the following list of factors that affect the work climate:
- Factor of equality and mutual recognition – employees feel recognition of themselves and their work and at the same time recognize others;
- Factor of communication – all members of the group communicate, avoid negations, can address things in a factual way, and listen to others;
- Factor of balance – everything that occurs can be discussed and negotiated, any problem can be developed, nothing is an ultimatum;
- Factor of conflicts – any negative behaviour or small conflicts are resolved, not suppressed or concealed;
- Factor of awareness – everybody who is involved in a task should have the same information and should receive it in the same form at the same time;
- Factor of mutual respect – employees do not accuse, offend, or reprimand each other.

Concerning the list of factors mentioned above, it should be noted that the term climate has several categories and can be understood in different ways with respect to different societal areas.

Dvořáková (2004) claims that climate has several layers and types. Climate can be occupational, emotional, psychological-social, organizational, healthy, positive, and motivating for work. Looking closer at this structure, the organizational type of climate is described in his publication by Nakonečný (2005, p. 109-110), who defines the

following three types of climate: authoritarian, informal, and relatively autonomous.

- Authoritarian organizational climate means that work results are motivated by the power of the superior person or persons.
- Informal organizational climate involves primarily cooperation of all components of the occupational process irrespective of the position of function of individuals.
- Relatively autonomous organizational climate means that the management leaves a degree of freedom in order to ensure a better creative environment.

According to Dvořáková (2004, p. 18) the emotional climate refers to the entire potential and dynamics of the group in the emotional area. Positive emotions or on the contrary negative emotions create the conditions for the general development or inhibition of individuals. A stable emotional climate equals a stable working group or employment level.

Regarding the general experience of society, the work climate cannot be controlled by power and by defining the labour-law relationship. The climate needs to be created and positively influenced, which seems crucial in terms of setting the climate in every company. Focus on teambuilding (building a work group) is not only a trend of modern companies but is essential in terms of the results of work. Armstrong refers to improving workplace relationships and climate through justice across functions. According to the author, this is the so-called good policy of employment relations. It is crucial how managers approach their employees, how trade unions work (if the company has them), how the managers communicate with their employees, how instructions and decisions are communicated to the employees, and how the employees are treated (Armstrong, 2007, p. 146).

According to Koubek (2009, p 327–328), companies are increasingly involved in the examination and assessment of interpersonal relationships and workplace climate. Today, companies are aware of the importance of several principles that help strengthen good interpersonal relationships. The principles are summarized as follows:

- Everyone carefully observes the formal and legal documents including agreements and laws applicable in the country where the company or institution operates.
- The management of the company maintains high-quality communication with the trade unions and treats them with respect.
- The company involves the employees in decision making, encourages them to present their own ideas and listens to them.
- Employment contracts are clear and free from ambiguities.
- The reward policy of the company is justifiable and clear and involves all employees.
- The company regularly invests in the education and qualification of its employees across all sectors.
- The company creates positive and favourable working conditions.
- The company regularly and clearly informs all employees about its plans.
- The company has a good social policy and is helpful if an employee is in a difficult life situation.
- The company offers recreational opportunities for groups of employees or the entire company.

The two factors that affect the workplace climate were defined by Stein, Winterstein (1999, p. 136) as follows: personality factors, such as employment period, social, demographic, psychological and other attributes, and situational factors, such as the size of the organization, management style, environment of the organization, etc.

Negative and pathological signs of relationships in the workplace

Scientific literature defines three types of negative and pathological manifestations of workplace relationships. They include conflicts, bullying, and sexual harassment. We will try to clarify the first two phenomena in more detail, because we pay attention to them in the research.

Conflicts

According to Koubek (2009, p. 336), a conflict is a complementary phenomenon in every interpersonal relationship. In other words, interpersonal relationships cannot exist without conflicts. A conflict is a mismatch between the interests of the two parties. One party has different interests than the other one; an individual or a group has a different opinion and wants to assert it.

It is very important to distinguish between conflict and tension. In a usual conversation these two terms are often confused but they are definitely not the same. According to Novotná (2010, p. 59-60), a conflict is a conflict if people consider it this way. They clearly identify a situation or action as conflicting and pronounce this word aloud during a single specific situation. On the other hand, tension may be caused by multiple occasions and may last for a long time, and if not specifically asked about, nobody will probably name it.

Conflicts have always been present in society and are historically documented by various negative events. They arise primarily because everybody is an individuality with different plans, dreams, experiences, and behaviours. Whenever two individualities meet in a social environment, countless conflicts in the form of exchanges of views take place.

The important thing is the ability to communicate properly and target the same goal and the same idea in order to

resolve the conflict and avoid bigger problems. Generally, it is purely up to us how we face conflicts. If we are capable of a friendly attitude, it is never a problem to reach a consensus. However, if we have a negative attitude, the conflict is becoming a serious occupational issue, disrupts the climate within the group of people and the overall working relationship between people (Křivohlavý, 2002, p. 66–68).

According to (Cejthamr & Dědina, 2010, p. 266), a conflict is usually accompanied by nervousness or fear. What often happens is that a small conflict with an insignificant cause results in aggressive behaviours. On the other hand, a conflict may be very valuable.

Conflicts can be classified into several groups. For example, Křivohlavý (2002, p. 66) classifies conflicts by the number of people involved:
- Intrapersonal – or internal are conflicts that take place within an individual based on internal problems;
- Interpersonal – conflicts of interest that include two or more people;
- Group – conflicts between more people;
- Intergroup – conflicts between two groups of people.

Another system of classification in terms of conflict manifestations is as follows:
- Hidden – not exposed on the surface;
- Open – people know about the conflict;
- Opinion – resulting from a mismatch of opinions;
- Power – one party wants to have a bigger share of something;
- Internal – takes place within a person or a group;
- External – reaches the surface or is public (Cejthamr & Dědina, 2010, p. 266).

Veselá (2001, p. 79) also states that conflicts can be divided according to their duration:
- Short-term – conflicts that last minutes or hours;
- Medium-term – conflicts that last a day to several days;
- Long-term – most negative conflicts that last months or years.

Good conflict resolution should certainly be one of the active strategies in the workplace. Therefore, the management should promote good relationships between the employees and conflicts should never be suppressed but rather discussed and addressed publicly and according to the company's criteria. Conflict resolution must bring a sense of winning to at least one of the parties. In terms of conflict resolution, the worst outcome is when neither of the parties to the conflict has a positive feeling (Novotná, 2010, p. 88).

As a result, public conflict resolution in companies and groups of people relates only to very serious conflicts. This implies that Czech companies still have reserves in conflict resolution and do not teach their employees to turn conflicts into a discussion and a positive matter. This also brings up the issue of satisfaction and the ability of the management to resolve conflicts. This is one of the aspects that the present study analyses in the practical part. If there are too many conflicts or negative effects of an individual on other people, this may in some cases lead to a much more serious pathological manifestation of interpersonal relationships: aggression and or workplace bullying.

Bullying in the workplace

In terms of workplace behaviour, this is a very negative phenomenon and usually results in the victim colleague or subordinate leaving the company. Bullying in the workplace causes long-term deliberate mental and occupational harm to a person by one or more persons in power. According to relevant literature, bullying includes at least six months of terrorizing of a single person in a company (Wagnerová et al., 2011, p. 129). Most researchers (Koubek, 2009; Leymann, 1990) agree that mobbing is characterized by regularity, repeatability, and the long-term occurrence of negative tendencies toward one or more people. Leymann (1996) assumes the occurrence of at least one unacceptable act at least once a week for 6 months as a criterion for mobbing.

Svobodová (2008, p. 20) defines the implications of mobbing. The author claims that the victim is subject to considerable emotional and social stress, which may lead to serious problems such as anxiety, depression, burnout, or attention and concentration disorders; bullying may even lead to suicide. According to Svobodová (2008), victims of bullying also show physical problems. These physical manifestations include digestion problems, these people often go to the toilet at work, they suffer from migraine and complain about headache, in the long-term their overall physical condition is considered to be poor. The results of the survey conducted among working population in the Czech Republic (Cakirpaloglu et al., 2016, Cakirpaloglu at al., 2019) showed that bullying at the workplace is related with psychological well-being, activity, impulsiveness, tension, depression, anxiety and depression in bullied employees.

According to Čech (2011), the occurrence of mobbing in the workplace needs to be addressed as a very serious problem that affects the workplace atmosphere.

As mentioned above, in the Czech Republic this phenomenon is associated with insufficient awareness of the company management. The problem usually remains hidden for a long time. Some of the indications that this phenomenon is present in a company or in an office may be the following: increased and long-term sickness of

an employee, frustration during personal meetings, predominance of feelings of uncertainty in an employee who had previously been self-confident, detachment from other colleagues or a single colleague who is the initiator of bullying. However, if the victim does not confide to the management of the company, this can really lead to a professional disaster, because the overwhelming pressure forces the victim to leave the company (Huberová, 1995, p. 13-14).

Wagnerová (2011, p. 130-131) claims that there is no single type of employee victim or initiator of mobbing. Bullies include both men and women, young and old, experienced and novices in the company. Unfortunately, in the case of this issue no typology is reliable. It should be the responsibility of the HR officer to monitor these phenomena and protect all employees from pathological effects.

On the contrary, Svobodová (2008) defines several common features among the initiators of bullying by gender. According to the author, if the mobber - the initiator of bullying - is a woman, she primarily focuses on her own competitors. Therefore, she usually discriminates women and uses tricks, hypocrisy, and manipulation to convince others of her integrity.

A male mobber does not use tricks but prefers direct attacks. He usually humiliates the victim in public, accuses the victim of incompetence, and shows his superiority in order to make others agree (Svobodová, 2008, p. 20).

Research aimed at workplace climate and mobbing

The pioneers in research on workplace climate and mobbing are the Nordic countries. This particularly includes studies by Heinz Leymann, who also helped introduce the term mobbing in professional terminology. In one of his many studies carried out in Sweden, Leymann reported a prevalence of 3.5% of employees with experience with mobbing and 25% of potentially endangered employees. Similarly, Agervold (2007) examined a sample of 3,024 Danish respondents and observed a 3.3% degree of employee victimization. In 1996, Einarsen & Skogstad conducted a meta-analysis of 14 studies on a total sample of 7,787 employees. According to the results, 8.6% of persons were victims of mobbing, of whom 1.2% reported daily experience. Another Nordic study was conducted in Norway. Of the total of 2,539 employees, 6.8% were bullied.

Research studies conducted in other countries suggest considerably different results. For example, a research study by Vartia & Hyyti (2010) on a sample of 896 Finnish employees reported a 20% prevalence of mobbing. This result is consistent with a Europe-wide study (Giaccone, Nunzio, Fromm, & Vargas, 2015) according to which Finland is the country with the highest prevalence of workplace bullying in the European Union (cf. Cakirpaloglu et al., 2016).

Research studies in the United Kingdom suggest a high degree of dispersion of employee bullying. In one of the first research studies, the prevalence of employee bullying was 50% (Rayner, 1997) but this high estimate is related to the more benevolent definition of workplace bullying. Another study by Rutherford & Rissel (2004) also estimated 50% of workplace bullying in New South Wales, which is in strong contradiction with the 6% estimate of daily and 17% of occasional workplace bullying in Ireland (O'Moore & Lynch, 2007). A later study by Jennifer, Cowie and Ananiadou (2003) reduced the initial estimate to 21% of employee bullying, although in addition to UK employees the study involved workers from large organizations in Spain and Portugal. According to a different study, the prevalence of mobbing in Spain was 18.9% (Carretero, & Luciano, 2013), while for example in Austria it amounted to 7.8% (Niedl, 1996). Similar results were presented by the authors of a Czech research study by Cakirpaloglu et al. (2016), who reported 7.79% of employees with mobbing experience.

An analysis of research studies conducted in public administration and among civil servants again revealed very diverse results. Vartia (1996) pointed to a 10% prevalence of mobbing among local government workers in Finland. Čech (2011) refers to a German study conducted in 1989 (Mackensen von Asfeld, 2000) in which 3% of administrative staff reported experience with workplace bullying (sample of 1,989 respondents) and studies from the Netherlands (Hubert et al. (2001) reporting 4% victimization among administrative staff (sample of 427 persons) and 1% victimization among 3,011 tax office employees. In contrast to these conclusions, a study carried out among 248 officials in Turkey concluded that more than half of respondents (56.2%) had been exposed to bullying in the past year (Akar, Nilgün & Sarvan, 2011).

There are significant differences in the assessment of the prevalence of mobbing as a result of cultural aspects, different methodologies and specific criteria used in judging whether an employee has been exposed to mobbing.

Methods

The main aim of the research was to find out how the employees of the Tax Office of the Olomouc Region evaluate the relations and climate in the workplace and the level of experience with workplace bullying. The following research questions were proposed:
1. How do the employees of the Tax Office assess the climate in the workplace?
2. Which factors influence the quality of the climate of the working environment?
3. What is the experience of the employees with bullying in the workplace?

For further analysis determining the partial relationships between the variables, the following hypotheses were determined, which were formulated based on literature knowledge as well as the authors' experience, including knowledge of the environment where the research was carried out.

- H1. Managers evaluate workplace relations more positively than ordinary employees.
- H2. Employees with a university degree perceive the climate of the working environment more positively than employees with a high school education.
- H3. Men working at the Tax Office of the Olomouc Region have a greater negative experience with bullying in the workplace than women.

A questionnaire battery was created for the needs of the research, inspired by the Čech (2011) and Urbánek (2003). The questionnaire consisted of 23 closed questions, in addition to demographic items, and was focused on the climate assessment, experience with conflict, aggression and workplace bullying, as well as the area of improving working relationships between colleagues. After statistical verification of the reliability, the questionnaire was processed online, using the click4survey service.

The research was carried out in June 2020. The basic set consisted of 750 employees of the Tax Office of the Olomouc Region, 721 employees (civil servants) were contacted for the needs of the research, 305 completely completed questionnaires for the needs of the research were received, which is a 42% return. The sample consisted of 40.6% employees of the basic sample of all Tax Office employees, which can be considered a highly representative sample concerning the basic sample. The research sample represented 54 men (17.7%) and 251 women (82.3%), i.e. it is a markedly feminine environment.

The calculations were performed using the STATISTICA EN 13 program. In the first stage, the results of the research were subjected to a descriptive analysis. In the case of hypothesis verification the dependence of the pairs of categorical variables was tested using the chi-square test of independence. Absolute and relative frequencies are shown in the contingency table. In case the data did not meet the conditions of good chi-square approximation by distribution, low frequency categories were merged.

The comparison of the two groups of the quantitative variable (workplace climate score) was performed using the Mann-Whitney test (it was not possible to assume a normal distribution for the data due to skew). The mean and standard deviation were calculated for the compared groups, the ranking statistics (median, lower and upper quartile, minimum and maximum) were displayed using a categorized box graph.

Results

In the first phase of the research results analysis, we focused on describing the problem statement and answering the research questions. First, we focused on the climate assessment by the employees of the Tax Office, in which we monitored the material, spatial and social aspects of the climate.

In terms of basic conditions for work performance, we evaluated the material and spatial conditions at the workplace. The vast majority of the respondents are satisfied with the material security of the office, namely 91.1% of the respondents (31.1% very satisfied, 60% rather satisfied) as well the satisfaction with the spatial conditions where 79.3% of the respondents were satisfied (36.7% very satisfied, 42,6% rather satisfied). This can be considered as a basic prerequisite for effective professional performance. However, in addition to the mentioned components, the overall climate of the workplace fundamentally completes the social climate, i.e. relationships as well the social mood. Satisfaction with the relations at the Tax Office workplace can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Satisfaction with relationships in the workplace.

Value	Number of responses	Ratio in %
Very satisfied	122	40.0
Rather satisfied	158	51.8
Rather not satisfied	23	7.5
Not satisfied	2	0.7

Source: Authors´own

The following results point out that 91.8% of employees are satisfied with the social climate at the workplace, out of which 40% are fully satisfied and 51.8% are rather satisfied. These numbers can be considered as very pleasing, reflecting the positive mood of the institution, which is reflected in the overall professional and personal satisfaction and thus in the work performance.

Following the climate assessment, we focused on factors that respondents perceive as key to the work performance and job satisfaction, both positive (see Table 2) and negative (Table 3).

Table 2. Positive key factors to job performance and workplace satisfaction.

Value	Number of responses	Ratio in %
Workplace relationships	223	73.1
Flexible working time arrangements	214	70.1
Financial evaluation	133	43.6
Material and technical equipment	55	18.0
Working environment factors	51	16.7
Others	12	3.9

Source: Authors´own

Table 2 shows that 73.1% of the respondents identified workplace relationships as a key positive factor that affects job performance and job satisfaction. 70.1% of the respondents ci-ted flexible working hours as a positive factor influencing workplace performance and satisfaction. Significantly fewer respondents then identified financial aspects (44%), material equipment (18%) and factors such as noise, lighting, temperature, air (17%) and others (4%) as factors influencing work performance and satisfaction at the workplace. The results show how important is the quality of the social climate to the work performance and job satisfaction.

Table 3. Factors negatively affecting work performance and job satisfaction.

Value	Number of responses	Ratio in %
Workload	107	35.1
Workplace relationships	96	31.5
None	73	23.9
Working environment factors	62	20.3
Financial evaluation	50	16.4
Material and technical equipment	28	9.2
Driving distance to work	27	8.6

Source: Authors´own

Table 3 shows that the most negatively is the work performance affected by workload, particularly in 35.1% of respondents. Other negative factors that affect the respondents work performance and satisfaction are workplace relationships (31.5%), work environment, such as noise, lighting, temperature, air quality (20.3%). Less significant factors include financial aspects (16.4%), material and technical equipment (9.2%) and commuting (8.6).

In the next part of the research, we focused on the respondents' experience with aggression (Table 4), resp. bullying in the workplace (Table 5).

Table 4. Occurrence of aggression in the workplace by colleagues.

Value	Number of responses	Ratio in %
Yes, multiple times	25	8.1
Yes, but only once or twice	53	17.4
Probably not, but I am not sure	52	17.1
No	175	57.4

Source: Authors´own

On the item concerning the occurrence of aggression in the workplace, 57.4% of respondents expressed no occurrence of such behaviour. 8.1% of the respondents encountered aggression in the workplace by colleagues and even more than once. 17% of the respondents encountered aggression in the workplace by colleagues, but only once or twice. And 17% of respondents probably did not encountered any aggression or they're not sure. The results thus point to the experience with the risk factor of aggression in the environment of the FI, more than a quarter of respondents. Aggression cannot be detracted because it can be developer into workplace bullying.

The most common forms of aggression would be (see Table 5):

Table 5. The most common manifestations of aggression.

Value	Number of responses	Ratio in %
Intrigue, slander	70	89.7
Malicious conduct	35	46.0
Psychoteror, social isolation	16	20.5
Shouting, humiliation	15	19.2
Another form	13	16.7
Constant criticism of my work	9	11.5
Physical assault	0	0

Source: Authors´own

The obtained answers show that the largest share of the offered manifestations of aggression, which the employees encountered, are mostly psychological manifestations of aggression, especially slander and intrigue, as well as malicious behaviour and psychoteror. It is gratifying that none of the respondents encountered physical assault as a manifestation of aggression by their colleagues. This suggests that although manifestations of aggression appear in the environment of the FI, it is a relatively cultivated environment with good relationships.

Following the experience of aggression, respondents were asked if they felt as victims of bullying in the workplace (Table 6).

Table 6. Experience with bullying in the workplace.

Value	Number of responses	Ratio in %
Yes, multiple times	13	4.3
Yes, but only once or twice	18	5.9
Probably not, but I am not sure	34	11.1
No	240	78.7

Source: Authors´own

The occurrence of bullying in the workplace is very undesirable phenomenon, so it is a very positive finding that 78.7% of respondents have never felt as a victim of bullying in the workplace. 10.2% of respondents stated that they felt victimized by bullying, and 4.3% of respondents more than once. These are not negligible numbers, but in the overall context they do not appear to be alarming and the environment of the Tax Office appears to be a relatively cultured workplace. It is interesting that the aggressor was in 65% of the cases superior employee, and to a lesser extent the attacks were performed by the colleagues (35%).

Now we would pay attention to the verification of the hypotheses. The calculations were performed using the STATISTICA EN 13 program. The significance level for the decision on the null hypothesis was 5%.

    H1. Managers evaluate relations at the workplace of the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region more positively than ordinary employees.

Table 7. Climate assessment from the perspective of managers and ordinary workers.

Chi-square test p-value: 0.236		Evaluation of relationships in the workplace								Total
		Satisfied		Rather satisfied		Rather not satisfied		Not satisfied		
		N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Type of job position	Manager	21	37	34	60	1	2	1	2	57
	Ordinary employee	101	41	124	50	22	9	1	0	248
	Total	122		158		23		2		305

Source: Authors´own

The p-value of the chi-square test of independence in the contingency table was with respect to 3 decimal places 0.236, i.e. higher than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. At the significance level of 0.05, the dependence of the evaluation of workplace relationships on the type of job position was not proven.

(Note: For the purposes of calculating the p-value of the chi-square test, the rather dissatisfied variants were merged.)

> H2. Workers with a university degree perceive the climate of the work environment more positively than workers with a high school education

The work climate score was calculated based on 3 questions: AD, AE, AF. The codes were assigned to the individual response variants in descending order from satisfied (4) to dissatisfied (1). The codes of 3 questions were then summed for each respondent and the resulting score of the respondent could then take values from 3 to 12, where 12 meant the maximum satisfaction and 3 maximum dissatisfaction with the climate of the working environment.

Table 8. Mann-Whitney test: p-value and numerical characteristics.

Group	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Average	Standard deviation	p-value
University degree	9	10	11	9.6	1.6	0.620 (H$_0$ rejected)
High school	9	10	11	9.7	1.5	

Source: Authors´own

The P-value of the Mann-Whitney test came out with respect to 3 decimal places 0.620, i.e. higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis was not rejected. At a significance level of 0.05, no difference was found in the workplace climate assessment score for employees with higher and secondary education. The ranking statistics were displayed using a categorized box graph.

(Note: The first group merged university and higher vocational education, and the second group included secondary school and education with a high school diploma.)

> H3. Men at the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region have a greater negative experience with bullying in the workplace than women.

Table 9. Experience with bullying men – women.

Chi-square test p-value: 0.099		Personal experience with bullying						Total
		Yes		Not sure		No		
		N	%	n	%	n	%	
Gender	Woman	28	11	24	10	199	79	251
	Man	3	6	10	19	41	76	54
	Total	31		34		240		305

Source: Authors´own

The P-value of the chi-square test of independence in the contingency table was with respect to 3 decimal places 0.099, i.e. higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis was not rejected. At the significance level of 0.05, the dependence of the experience of bullying on gender was not proven.

Discussion

The focus of the presented study was the climate assessment at the workplace of the Tax Office of the Olomouc Region as a representative of a public administration institution. We focused on the climate assessment from material and spatial equipment point of view - where the respondents state a high level of satisfaction of 91.1%, resp. 79.3% (satisfied or rather satisfied). This can be seen as an important starting point for shaping the social climate. The overall climate assessment also supports the assessment of workplace relationships, with 91.8% of employees being satisfied, of which 40% are fully satisfied and 51.8% are rather satisfied. The positive perception of the social climate of the Tax Office workplace is clearly reflected in the functioning of the institution as a whole and the work performance of individual employees.

In terms of factors that significantly affect the workplace climate setting, respondents often identified workplace relationships, flexible working hours and financial evaluation as key positive factors influencing workplace performance and satisfaction. Material and technical equipment, factors such as noise, lighting, temperature and air quality and others were mentioned less. The most negatively influencing factor of work performance was the workload, relationships at the workplace, followed by the working environment such as noise, lighting, temperature and air quality, financial evaluation, material and technical equipment and finally the commuting distance.

When evaluating the occurrence of aggression in the workplace as a prelude to bullying among colleagues, 57.4% of respondents did not notice any manifestation of aggression towards their person. Nevertheless, 25.5% of employees have experienced aggressive behaviour by colleagues, of which 8.1% repeatedly. At this stage, it is very important how the overall climate of the workplace is set and whether the manifestations of aggression can be perceived more as a one-off matter or it can be a precursor to mobbing. The most common are psychological manifestations of aggression, especially slander and intrigue, as well as malicious behaviour and psychoteror. None of the respondents encountered a physical attack by colleagues, which suggests that the Tax Office can be seen as a relatively cultured environment with advanced relationships.

As far as experience with mobbing is concerned, 10.2% of the respondents reported that they felt victims of bullying, of whom 4.3% had multiple experience, which can be considered a more objective measure of whether this type of mobbing corresponded with Leymann's definition (1990), i.e. repeated behaviour for a minimum of six months at least once a week. On the contrary, Čech (2011) in his research among elementary school teachers concluded that 18.4% of teachers had experience with bullying throughout their teaching career, while 5.8% felt victims of long-term mobbing at the time of the research. In addition, a research study by Cakirpaloglu et al. (2016) aimed at different professions reported 7.78% experience in the population of the Czech Republic. In this context, the results concerning the Tax Office are not alarming. In an international context, it is very complicated to compare the data concerning different methodologies and cultural contexts. The results of a research study among tax office staff in the Netherlands (Hubert et al. 2001) with a prevalence of 1% and research in Turkey (Akar, Nilgün & Sarvan, 2011) which suggested 56.2% of victimized administrative staff are in strong contrast with the results of the present study as well as other studies.

If we focus on the verification of hypotheses, the first established hypothesis, which was "Managers evaluate relations at the workplace of the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region more positively than ordinary employees" was not confirmed. The P-value of the chi-square test of independence came out with respect to 0.236, i.e. at the significance level of 0.05, the dependence of the evaluation of relationships at the workplace on the type of job position was not proven. From the above mentioned follows that managers do not evaluate relationships in the workplace more positively than ordinary workers.

Concerning second hypothesis "Workers with a university degree perceive the climate of the work environment more positively than workers with a high school education", the P-value of the Mann-Whitney test was found to be 0.620, i.e. at a significance level of 0.05, no difference was found in the workplace climate assessment score for workers with respect to education. This hypothesis was also not confirmed, so we can state that workers with a university degree do not perceive the climate of the working environment more positively than workers with a high school education.

The P-value of the chi-square test of independence in the contingency table for the third hypothesis, entitled "Men at the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region, have a greater negative experience with bullying in the workplace than women" was 0.099, i.e. at a significance level of 0.05, the dependence of the experience of bullying on gender was not proven. Based on the non-confirmation of the third hypothesis, it can be stated that men working at the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region do not have more negative experiences of bullying than women.

Conclusion

The climate in the workplace can be considered a key aspect of the atmosphere in the workplace, of the professional performance of employees and of the functioning of the whole workplace in terms of its social mission. Its setting is determined by the company's management, but also by its regular employees, who are identified with the company's philosophy and are interested in a positive climate setting. Conflicts and manifestations of aggression can disrupt the climate. That is why it is necessary to be interested in resolving them and not letting them grow into mobbing, which can significantly jeopardize the setting and functioning of the institution. It is reflected then not only in the quality of relationships and work performance, but also affects the personality of the bullied.

The results of the presented research show that the Tax Office for the Olomouc Region, where the research was conducted, appears as a cultivated workplace with good management. It is demonstrated by a positive climate assessment by employees, which will be reflected in their performance. Due to the higher concentration of people, a certain degree of experience with aggression and bullying was recorded by superiors and colleagues. However, is not fundamentally mirrored in the overall climate setting and mission of this public administration institution

Acknowledgement

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