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## NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF MOBBING AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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*The article is devoted to the problem of negative consequences of mobbing among primary school teachers. Based on the analysis of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical literature, the state of problems is revealed. The task of this article is to analyze the problem in domestic and foreign pedagogical science and practice, to reveal the peculiarities of mobbing, the specifics of its manifestation and consequences in general educational institutions among primary school teachers.*

*The article analyzes mobbing as a social problem. A terminological study of various manifestations of behavior, related to putting pressure on the employee and humiliating his/her dignity, was carried out. The essence of mobbing, its structure is revealed. The forms of mobbing among primary school teachers are characterized. The consequences of mobbing for an individual, school team and society as a whole are systematized. Directions for further research on the problem of mobbing are outlined. The analysis of international and domestic experience shows that the problems of mobbing are extremely difficult to overcome. Mobbing in many countries is perceived as a serious problem that needs to be fought. Mobbing leads to serious psychological and psychosomatic diseases that make a person powerless and destroy his/her self-esteem. Mobbing has a negative impact not only on the victim, but also on his/her immediate environment - family, friends. Teacher mobbing also has a detrimental effect on students. In Ukraine, there is no specially created legal mechanism for combating bullying at the workplace of employees, but a draft law is being developed, which includes an explanation of the term and a list of the main fines for such actions.*

*The practical significance of the article is that its materials can be used in the organization of the educational process of general education institutions and primary school teacher training*

**Keywords:** *mobbing, gaslighting, bullying, pressure, teacher, environment, terror, consequences, methods, foreign experience*

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### 1. Introduction

The teaching profession is among the TOP-3 professions, in which workplace bullying occurs most often. For example, in Poland every tenth teacher is a victim of mobbing, in the USA – every third. Usually targeted are newcomers or those who stand out for their opinions, values, and work methods. The initiator of mobbing can be both the teaching staff and the school director - the latter option is the most common [1].

The study of mobbing as a complex social phenomenon among primary school teachers is an extremely urgent problem. This is one of the professions, in which it is found most often. Mobbing leads to serious psychological and psychosomatic diseases that make a person powerless and destroy his/her self-esteem.

Mobbing forces you to work under stress, which creates a lot of personal problems, increases staff turnover, poisons the psychological climate, and worsens work results. In Ukraine, there is no specially created legal mechanism for combating bullying at the workplace of employees. Heads of institutions need to pay more attention to the prevention of this social and psy-

chological phenomenon. Special measures should be taken in order to improve the legislation and the atmosphere in the work team.

### 2. Literary review

For the first time, the trend of psychological oppression at workplaces was investigated in the early 80s of the last century in Sweden by a psychologist and medical scientist, Dr. Heinz Leymann. It was he who proposed the term mobbing. He identified 45 variations of behavior typical for mobbing: concealment of necessary information, social isolation, slander, continuous criticism, spreading unfounded rumors, ridicule, shouting, etc. [2].

The problem of mobbing in labor (service-labor) relations for several decades has been the subject of research by Western experts [3, 4], etc.

To study the theoretical aspects of the concept of mobbing, it is worth referring to the teachings [5, 6].

A significant contribution to the study of the essence, features, causes, and consequences of mobbing in labor groups was made by Ukrainian scientists [7, 8].

The main mechanisms, reasons for the development of mobbing and bullying in the school environment and outside it, typological personal and social characteristics of bullies and their victims have been substantiated. It is focused on positive international and Ukrainian experience in the development of prevention methods. The problem of the adequacy of the terminology to define the phenomenon of bullying has been updated in the study [9].

Analyzing each concept, you can choose rational ideas that will help to fully study the phenomenon of mobbing.

### 3. Research aim and tasks

The aim of our article is to investigate the negative consequences of mobbing among primary school teachers.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks were set:

1. To analyze the problem in domestic and foreign pedagogical science and practice.
2. To reveal the peculiarities of mobbing, the specifics of its manifestation and its consequences in educational institutions among primary school teachers.
3. To characterize the main areas of psychological and pedagogical assistance to teachers who suffer from mobbing.

### 4. Materials and methods

To determine the essence of the problem and directions for its solution, the following methods were used: analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization of philosophical, psychological-pedagogical and sociological theoretical sources; studying documents about education; study and generalization of the experience of psychological and pedagogical prevention regarding the occurrence of mobbing in schools among primary school teachers.

### 5. Research results and discussion

Unfortunately, mobbing exists at school among teachers and administration. The first step in preventing mobbing at school is to understand mobbing as an insidious manifestation of emotional abuse, which leads to aggressive behavior of the entire team towards a certain person. The study of the negative consequences of mobbing among primary school teachers in the pedagogical team is of particular scientific interest and requires an understanding of the phenomenon itself in its essential characteristics.

Mobbing – (from the English mob – crowd) is a form of discrimination that manifests itself as psychological violence and aggressive behavior on the part of the collective towards an individual.

Mobbing is often confused with impoliteness, but there is a significant difference between these phenomena. It consists in the fact that impoliteness is a one-time manifestation of disrespectful behavior with the aim of insulting, ridiculing another person, while mobbing is a psychological attack, hostility, unethical, systematic, harmful behavior and communication with another person. Mobbing can be committed both by the administration and by employees and colleagues in relation to a certain person [10]. The study shows that the universal

nature of mobbing can be seen: bullying can be unconscious, conscious, controlled. The most aggressive is considered to be controlled mobbing, in which aggressive actions come from a group of attackers in order to fulfill the unspoken instructions of the administration of the educational institution, or directly from officials, representing the interests of the employer. All this requires the maximum tension of adaptation potential from the teaching staff.

In connection with the requirements for educational activity, introduced in 2020, the professional standard of a teacher of primary classes of a general secondary education institution, a teacher of a general secondary education institution and a teacher of primary education (with a junior specialist diploma) was updated [11].

The teacher's professional standard embodies an approach to defining the list and description of general and professional competencies of a specialist. The list of professional competencies includes, in addition to those related to knowledge of the subject and teaching methods, such competencies that ensure effective interpersonal interaction and cooperation of the teacher with all participants in the educational process, prevention and resolution of conflicts, tolerant communication, namely: psychological; emotional and ethical; pedagogical partnership; reflective. All these competencies can be integrated into the structure of the socio-psychological competence of the teacher, which is interpreted by scientists as the individual's awareness and ability to effectively interact with the surrounding human community in the system of interpersonal relations [12].

Ensuring maximum social and psychological comfort at the workplace is unacceptable in the case of so-called mobbing – psychological terror against individual employees or their groups by both the employer and co-workers.

It seems surprising that some of the teachers, representatives of this humane profession, will unite for the sake of such villainy? But in life, everything looks different. Bullies often consider themselves victims, the target of bullying is a person who undermines the reputation of the school or destroys the team, and their methods are harmless (for example, mocking is just humor, isolation is the person's own fault for not communicating with them, etc.).

Persecution can be done in different ways – someone shames a colleague on social networks, someone sends anonymous messages to higher authorities. According to studies [7], the most common methods of bullying are: gossip, ignoring, silencing important business information. This has one thing in common – the victim is being pursued by a group of people.

According to statistics, every tenth teacher in Western Europe and every fourth teacher in Eastern Europe and the USA faced teasing (scientifically – mobbing) at least once in their life. The number of its victims increases every year. In Scandinavia, the term mobbing is commonly used to describe situations where an employee, supervisor or manager is systematically and repeatedly mistreated and victimized by colleagues, subordinates or superiors [3]. American studies show that principals often pick on and criticize the most competent

teachers because they see them as rivals. Also, students' and parents' favorites often become victims of mobbing by the administration. The problem went beyond the boundaries of interpersonal level and local character and acquired signs of globality and significant social resonance. The scale of prevalence and threats associated with the health consequences of mobbing victims. An employee or group of employees experiences bullying on a daily or periodic basis. Most often, these actions are hidden, so that the victim finds him/herself in isolation, feels discomfort and falls into depression. As a result, a person either gets sick or leaves work at his/her own will. It is worth knowing about teachers' verbal aggression and aggression management skills [1]. It is expressed in verbal form. Such a reaction is usually manifested in shouting, insults, humiliation. But there is also another kind - cries or screams, when there are no words at all, but only sound.

As shown by studies [2], victims of mobbing are more often victims of racial, ethnic, religious minorities, persons with physical and psychological abnormalities. Finnish sociologists Naima Akhtar Malika and Kaj Björkqvist note: "Some level of work stress is inevitable in any profession, but experiencing stress over a long period of time can be very harmful to health, as it can cause aggression, job dissatisfaction, emotional burnout, absenteeism, anxiety, fatigue, substance abuse, and poor performance" [2]. In this case, during mobbing, a person needs to overcome two serious barriers on his/her way in the form of confrontational tension and fear. One of the easiest ways to overcome barriers is the so-called asymmetric violence, when the perpetrator feels superior to the victim. This is a classic situation of mobbing, because a large part of the mobbers would never dare to behave in this way one-on-one with the victim.

Mobbing is always accompanied by signs of social conflict and, what is especially important, aggressive behavior of one of the parties. This social phenomenon does not belong to the category of separate, random actions, directed against one employee or a group of employees. Mobbing also thrives because it is ignored. In addition, victims of psychological mistreatment are often unable to defend themselves. Mobbing is a long and purposeful process.

In most cases, bullying begins with the submission of the director or his/her deputy, because it is they who can call "undesirables" or, on the contrary, excessively single out someone. In schools, a lot of good things are concentrated in the hands of the director: bonuses, allowances, extra payments, rates, equipment for NUS, recruitment of students to the first grade, distribution of students and even whether the schedule will be convenient for the teacher. Of course, the teachers, frightened by the threat of unemployment, vote for the director's ugly proposal, bowing their heads. It is not surprising, that there are teams with a culture of "boss worship", when only compliments are given to the director, and colleagues are divided into "loyal people" and the rest. "Close ones" seek all kinds of favors for their flattery at the expense of others, and even disgrace them in the eyes of the administration. But why should a teacher also fight for his/her educational space, against bullying and mobbing? It is certainly necessary to change

the approach to the composition of the board of directors. You have to be a very good manager to understand the situation. Usually the leadership is on the side of the majority. The arithmetic is simple: it is easier to lose a person than a team. However, this is short-sighted: this way you can undermine the reputation of the school. The majority of court cases, complaints, and negative reviews are the case of former victims of mobbing [14].

Very often there are situations when parents come to the director with a complaint, then he/she takes the side of the parents without even understanding. It can also be a purposeful management strategy to force the employee to resign of his/her own free will. After all, if the company dismisses for economic reasons, it is obliged to pay severance pay, and if the employee leaves at his/her own will, then severance pay is not paid.

According to our research, the devaluation of the elementary school teacher is manifested: (because of envy that the students love the first female teacher) by teachers who start teaching in the fifth grade. "Subject teachers" do not hesitate to humiliate the teacher in the presence of students, even give a nickname, and in the presence of parents – "Didn't teach!". Sometimes their colleagues leave the open lesson with their heads bowed and without saying "Thank you for attending the lesson!", because they need to show off in front of the head teacher. "Colleagues" can pursue various goals, for example, to increase their authority, get rid of a competitor, achieve some privileges, etc.

Mobbing in the system of social and labor relations has either a vertical or a horizontal orientation. Horizontal mobbing is moral harassment at the level of one professional group or one structural unit. Collaborators of the structural division act as subjects of conflict interaction. Moral persecution develops according to one of the schemes: "collaborator – collaborator", "group of collaborators – collaborator". Vertical mobbing is moral harassment along the personnel management vertical. As a rule, the source is the direct supervisor, the employer [11].

It should be taken into account, that mobbing can be conscious (intentional) and unconscious (spontaneous). Conscious mobbing is purposeful actions that have a specific, clearly formulated goal: to create conditions for a person to resign from his/her position. In this case, it is most often about self-serving motives: to take someone's position, to lead someone from "your own" to it, to gain favor in front of the superiors. Unconscious mobbing – actions, performed by a person without realizing that he/she is engaged in bullying. It's just that one of his/her colleagues causes his/her constant irritation, which accumulates and just bursts out. Chronic mobbing, or self-regenerating – actions, performed by a "collective", when, after pushing out one colleague and a little bored, it takes on a new victim [15].

Therefore, in some European countries, for example, in Sweden, Germany, laws on moral harassment in the workplace have already been adopted to protect victims of mobbing. Other countries are developing similar draft laws.

Of particular interest is the labor legislation of France. In connection with the adoption in 2002 of the special Law on the Protection of Employees from Moral Harassment at the Workplace, appropriate additions were

made to the Labor Code on ways to protect the right to dignity of the employee during work.

The employer should pay more attention to the prevention of this social and psychological phenomenon. For this purpose, the issue of moral harassment should be reflected in the rules of internal procedure.

The phenomenon of mobbing in relations between employees for a long time remained mainly the subject of research by specialists in the field of practical psychology (labor psychology) or personnel management. Now, objectively, there is an urgent need for a practical solution to the problem of mobbing, which involves a systematic scientific approach. The analysis of this phenomenon from a moral (emotional) point of view should be combined with the definition of legal means and mechanisms for the impossibility (eradication) of mobbing [1].

Obviously, such a phenomenon as mobbing cannot be ignored, it is better to prevent it in advance than to actively fight it later. Among the main means of combating mobbing and psychological and pedagogical assistance to teachers, the following can be distinguished:

- formation of an effective organizational culture;
- the manager should not give advantages in an open form to any of his/her subordinates;
- maintaining a favorable social and psychological climate in the team;
- establishment of feedback "subordinates - manager";
- formation of a transparent mechanism for making managerial decisions;
- development of job instructions with a clear formation of official duties and separation of powers of employees;
- permanent diagnosis of the presence of mobbing and its real and potential victims;
- a tough position of the management regarding gossipers and instigators of conflicts, etc. [1].

The main component of psychological mobbing is gaslighting. This is the most insidious method of manipulation, aimed at distorting and undermining the sense of reality, the ability to trust oneself. As a result, the victim must begin to doubt him/herself, the legitimacy of his/her complaints about bad treatment. At first, he/she automatically sides with the aggressor in order to overcome cognitive dissonance. Until, finally, he/she does not understand the action of this mechanism.

It seems that the efforts of the Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to protect the dignity of the employee, while working in situations where the use of other methods of protecting the labor rights of employees for one reason or another do not give the desired results in practice, may be effective at the moment.

However, the importance of the fight against mobbing is evidenced by the fact that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has registered a draft law on the introduction of amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine on combating mobbing, which provide for the punishment of mobbing initiators.

Since January 2019, the anti-bullying law has already entered into force in Ukraine. The President of Ukraine signed a bill that defines the concept of bullying and provides for administrative responsibility for it. In

addition, there is an educational ombudsman institute in Ukraine that protects the rights of pupils, students, educators and scientists.

Therefore, all participants of the educational process should always remember that the Constitution of Ukraine defines the main value of human honor and dignity. [16].

Mobbing, unlike other forms of violent (beating, pushing, keeping in a certain place, etc.) or aggressive (swearing, nickname-calling, mockery, boycott) behavior in educational institutions, is the most rude and the most dangerous in terms of its consequences, primarily for the victim [17]. The analysis of international and Ukrainian experience shows that the problems of mobbing and bullying are extremely difficult to overcome. They gain publicity only in extreme manifestations, in others they are quite hidden, and usually do not go beyond the boundaries of a specific social group. In order to resist the spread of mobbing in educational institutions, it is necessary to use the developed methods of combating this problem in different countries and implement them during preventive measures for the formation of a safe educational space. The study of mobbing is expedient on the examples of educational institutions and pedagogical teams, as they are one of the forms of social organization, but they have a number of specific features that affect not only the nature of relationships, but also the forms of manifestation of mobbing, as well as the education of the younger generation. As a result of the conducted research, we came to the conclusion that mobbing among primary school teachers in educational institutions exists. In any case, mobbing in teaching teams leads to loss of work capacity, stress. Therefore, it is necessary to detect mobbing in the early stages in order to prevent its further development.

**Limitations of the study.** Research on the negative consequences of mobbing among primary school teachers in educational institutions is the main limitation. We believe that the addition of tools, the perspective of interpersonal relations regulation can help to understand how and why people try to negatively influence others and how it can be countered.

**Prospects for further research.** We see the prospects of scientific research in the following studies of the causes of mobbing among primary school teachers and the levels of ability to prevent its negative consequences. Search for effective forms of work with victims of bullying, subjects of mobbing, employers, formation of a tolerant corporate culture.

## 5. Conclusions

1. Through theoretical analysis, the main trends and scientific approaches to the negative consequences of mobbing among primary school teachers in educational institutions were investigated. The results of the study give grounds for the conclusion that mobbing is one of the types of bullying, which manifests itself in psychological or physical, material pressure from the administration or colleagues.

2. The study confirmed the presence of elements of mobbing, the specifics of its manifestation and its consequences in educational institutions among primary school teachers.

The problem of mobbing among primary school teachers has not been fully investigated. In Ukraine, there is no specially created legal mechanism for combating bullying at the workplace of employees, but a draft law is being developed, which includes an explanation of the term and a list of the main fines for such actions. Special measures should be taken in order to improve the legislation and the atmosphere in the work team.

To eliminate this destructive phenomenon, the entire arsenal of public administration methods should be used and the best foreign experience should be borrowed [18].

3. The main areas of psychological-pedagogical assistance to teachers who suffer from mobbing are characterized. Both teachers and the administration of general educational institutions should be interested in creating mechanisms to combat discrimination and mobbing in the workplace.

A thorough study of the structure and functioning of mobbing in the modern educational environ-

ment of primary school teachers requires further investigations.

The practical significance of the article is that its materials can be used (both theoretical and practical) by teachers and students during teaching and preparation for seminar classes in the disciplines "Psychology", "Psychology of interpersonal communication", in the organization of the educational process of general secondary schools education and training of primary school teachers.

#### Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in relation to this study, including financial, personal, authorship, or any other, that could affect the study and its results, presented in this article.

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