

Investigating the phenomenon of mobbing philosophy essay



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The knowledge of psychology does not contain the reason of a mechanism that purposely brings pain to other people, with the satisfaction of the attacker. The determination of such an activity is large enough to form groups that will form in order to fight their chosen prey and eliminate it from the society in which it functions.

The effects of such acts are damaging not only for the psychological stability and health of a person, but also physical. Humiliating, making fun of, spreading rumors, blaming without any basis, intimidating, questioning the competence, calling names, limiting information resources, are typical techniques of mobbing behavior. The psychologically pressured people are unfit to undertake any forms of self defense. They have serious problems with normal communication in between other people; they close themselves, in the effect of misunderstanding by others - friends, family, or even psychologists. These people have low self confidence; they isolate themselves from the surrounding, become mistrustful and are afraid to form any interpersonal relations. They show symptoms of depression, and many somatic differences. In some cases psychotic disorders might appear. These people show no talent to do simple activities, and any enthusiasm in their profession. The consequences of this behavior are various; mainly such people get fired and in many drastic cases commit suicide.

The motivation of terror is the pathological trial to increase the sense of personal value of the oppressor. What happens is that the whole group realizes something is wrong with the prey. The prosecutor acting as a friend seemingly helps the victim. Mean-while this help turns into a tool of psychological aggression. Therefore this phenomenon is very puzzling to be

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discovered by watchers. However it often happens that people perceive the negative behavior leaving it to itself. In the 1980s Dr. Heinz Leymann used the term mobbing discovering these above mentioned mechanisms functioning in between workers.

It is unquestionable that the problem of mobbing should be undoubtedly considered as one of the topics in modern psychology. The question that arises is which psychological perspective will cover it best.

According to the clinical approach to the problem, the most essential aspect is the conflict of the individual. Therefore all actions will be turned towards the personality disorders, attitude and behavior of the victim caused by the act of aggression. The relationship between clinical psychology and psychology of work seems to be most useful. The association between clinical psychology and the psychology of work in the case of mobbing is that clinical psychology concentrates on the effects, whereas the psychology of work centers on the reasons of this phenomenon. According to the assumption of the work psychology, which states the increase of organizations effectiveness, forming right atmosphere in the co-working team, mobbing becomes a complication of the whole organization, not of an individual. We realize that the mobbing conflict can't be satisfied by one approach of psychology. Mobbing is taken from the English word "to mob". This word has been borrowed from the Latin "mobile vulgus" 'excitable crowd.' the phenomenon has been discovered in the behavior of little kids in their school and kindergarten groups. While Dr. Peter-Paul Heinemann was doing research on the problem of aggression among children, he discovered this interesting form of aggression.

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This type of behavior could be eliminated really fast in the enlightening process. Unfortunately this elimination does not succeed in all cases. The complex of mentioned mechanisms can make various forms. From physical aggression to serious threats. This phenomenon, therefore mobbing among children is referred to as bullying.

Konrad Lorenz was the first person to use the term mobbing in order to describe the behavior of animals, which gathered in a pack and presented aggressive behavior in order to scare away a stronger opponent.

Leymann started his research in Sweden moving it later on to Germany. He started with the research on the “ complex” people in their place of work. What he realized was that most of them were totally different in the past. The fact that these people were complex was not because of their character change but structure and culture of work gave them such features. Once the person was identified as complex there was a reason to fire him in the foreseeable future. This is what Heinz Leymann calls mobbing. In the year 1984 he published his first report concerning these discoveries. Since that time Leymann published sixty articles and books. Thanks to this achievement several research of the mobbing aspect was made.

In the year 1976 in the USA a psychiatrist and an anthropologist dr. Carroll Brodsky wrote a book called “ The Harassed Worker” He uses the term harassment as a behavior which implies repeated and remaining trials of torturing, frustrating of a coworker or compel him to do certain actions. It’s a type of behavior which constantly provokes, puts pressure, threatens, embarrasses and forms a certain feeling of discomfort within the person.

Brodsky underlines the paralyzing influence of such a conduct towards psychic and physical health of workers as well as their effectiveness.

When Leymann defined the term mobbing in the place of work, for the first time in the year 1984 he wrote, that it is a psychological terror, “ mobbing in working life involves hostile and unethical communication which is directed in a systematic manner by one or more individuals, mainly toward one individual, who, due to mobbing, is pushed into a helpless and defenseless position and held there by means of continuing mobbing activities.

In 1998 the journalist Andrea Adams was the first person in Great Britain, who discovered the bullying phenomenon introducing a series of reports on the BBC screens. In the year 1992 she published a book called “ Bullying at work: how to control and overcome it. According to her bullying is “ constant finding of blame” and “ decreasing the values of an individual” often with the permission of the leaders of certain cooperation. In the year 1997 there has been formed a bank account called by her name, in order to support the people under pressure. Thanks to the financing of this case, several researches have been made on the case of bullying through the internet post in the place of employment. An explosion of shocking mail has been discovered. Many humiliating contents called “ flame mail” or “ electronic bullying”. In the time being Time Field published his book called the “ Bully in Sight”. It’s a very detailed guide how to recognize and deal with “ bullies” in the place of work. The author defines bullying as a constant attack on persons values and dignity of an individual. The hidden reason of such a behavior is the determination of domination, enslaving and elimination.

Field underlines, that the bully denies any responsibility for his behavior and any consequences of his attitude.

In Great Britain and some other Anglophone countries the term “ bullying” is used to determine what Leymann calls “ mobbing”. Therefore we can say that these terms are used alternatively.

In 1998 the International Labor Office (ILO) published a report “ crime at work” prepared by Duncan Chappel and Vittorio Di Marino. In these report the mobbing and bullying problem is used beside the murders and other common crimes.

Although Brodsky examined the phenomenon of persecution in the work place, mobbing wasn't recognized as a meaningful problem in the United States. The interest was constantly with the increase of articles and other publications concerning the topic. In the 1990 the magazine “ violence and Victims” published Heinz Leymann's article called “ Mobbing and Psychological terror at workplaces”. W 1991 “ Personal Journal” published an article of a clinical psychologist Brady Wilson specializing in the area of trauma in workplaces, which showed that the American business covers millions of dollars for the workers slandering. Dr. Harvey A. Hornstein - professor of social-organizational psychology from the university of Columbia wrote a book called “ Brutal Bosses and Their Prey”(1996) with the guidance of “ how to identify and overcoming the features of abuse in workplaces” the brutal syndrome understood by Hornstein can be identified with the term “ bully” of Field and Adams. Both terms mobbing and bullying consider also physical attack.

In the past few years many other north-American research institutions undertook the study of this phenomenon. The increasing number of reports about the abuse at workplaces, caused greater interest of the USA's media. The Problem found its place in the World Wide Web. All these initiatives formed to combat the "infected" institutions.

A very wide research has been made in the year 1990 in Sweden. It showed that almost 4% of workers experienced mobbing in their workplace.

Leymann estimate that 15% of suicides were impacted by the phenomenon of mobbing. The research shows that mobbing concerns mostly people at the age of 21-40, however the worst psychic damages are made at older age.

The problem of mobbing has been spread all over Europe and there are many acts made to decrease its scale. New law of work has been formed, defining the process of mobbing and regulating the law issues of the victims. Special phone lines, columns in the daily press have been formed to inform the victims where they should look for help. Even special therapeutic and rehabilitation clinics for the sufferers, have formed in Sweden.

Defining Mobbing

From the previous analysis we can easily conclude that mobbing for an individual is a wasting attack on ambition, appearing in aggressive and invasive behaviors depending on the stadium in which the person is.

Therefore mobbing is a process. It starts as a simple process of degradation fast reaching the point of degradation, from which there is low possibility to get back to the normal state of functioning. Leymann distinguished five main phases of mobbing.

Critical incidents or a conflict

Dynamics come into motion, with the mobbers committing aggressive acts against their targets.

Introduction of management which often misjudge the situation, instead of supporting the target of mobbers. Management begins to isolate and eliminate the target.

The target is being labeled as difficult, contentious or mentally ill. This situation reinforces the negativity of the situation in respect to the target.

The final phase is expulsion. The mobbers may eventually accomplish their purpose and force the victim out of the workplace.

Hence the starter of mobbing is the conflict. It would be wrong to estimate that every conflict that takes place in a corporation leads to the mobbing behavior. It is well known that all social interactions are endangered by conflicts which cannot be stopped. However these common conflicts do not form any harming factors for a corporation under the condition that they will be solved, good will and the determination to cooperate of the workers.

Therefore we can conclude that conflict itself does not form mobbing.

Nonetheless, conflict is the reason of its initiation. It often happens that the conflict points out the victim. The person simply exposes himself to the avalanche of mobbing behaviors. If the conflict is additionally strengthened with the atmosphere of corporation competition and the potential victim forms peril, than the probability that the problem will not be solved grows.

This behavior continues in the form of mobbing.

The “inaccurate” person is not always a superior. (Vertical mobbing), it could be a coworker (horizontal mobbing), or even a subordinate.

(Davenport, Schwartz, Elliot, 1999). Aggressive behaviors and psychological attacks begin to lighten the process of mobbing. The victim often tries to explain himself, often with no result, mainly because at this stage the behaviors have a character of passive aggression (Davenport, Schwartz, Elliot, 1999). This means that the attacks are confused with kindness and affection. The mobber declares that all conflicts are solved and everything has been explained. And under covered friendship attacks the more and more tired prey.

That is why the victim finds it difficult to blame the mobber. Instead the victim is being realized as an unpredictable, as his behavior (aggressive explosions, furious behavior or lack of concern) seems to be not accurate to the existing situation. He is being reckoned as mentally ill and the creator of conflicts. In the mean time psychic tortures raise and happen more often.

In the effect of clearly seen behavior of the mobbed person, the attacker easily finds a team of aggressors and soon the victim remains single in its companionship. Mobbing behaviors persist because they are being ignored, tolerated, or wrongly interpreted by the leading team. This behavior of the team is often unconscious and in some cases it is a set up strategy (Davenport, Schwartz, Elliot, 1999). If the team is still not included in the advanced mobbing cycle, the process of isolation and elimination begins.

The competence of the target is constantly being questioned; therefore the person is being recognized as untrustworthy. The prey starts to believe that his work is not worth anything, and his self confidence drastically decreases.

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This is when the escalation of the conflict begins – the spiral of mobbing (Davenport, Schwartz, Elliot, 1999). Somatic symptoms and decrease in concentration are the consequences. At this stage the victim undergoes special psychological research, which effects are usually negative stating the disability to work. Visible symptoms of psychic disorders and physical diseases are the consequence; therefore the organization has the basis to low judgment. This pessimistic and wrong judgment of specialists and management, deepen the whole negative cycle, which in effect leads to the elimination of the worker from his job or to force him to report a resignation. The exculsion from the organization is a traumatic experience after which the psychological and psychosomatic disorders remain or even intensify. What's more mobbing is often continued even after the elimination of the victim, in order not to damage the cycle. (Davenport, Schwartz, Elliot, 1999).

Stages of mobbing and its techniques.

It can be easily noticed that the consequences for the victim are terrific. However it all depends on the preys' personality, internal supplies, structure of the supporting web and to derive satisfaction from actions not concerning the job. Leymann divides the stages of mobbing by their degree of damage it makes with an individual, comparing them to the effects of physical burn. Leymann formed his differentiation basing on the interviews he made with the victims of such aggression. It determines the differences in the reactions of people on same experience, what means that for some it already is mobbing and for others it still doesn't have that meaning.

According to Leymann the first stage of mobbing exists when the victim can resist mobbing behavior, effectively escape using his own techniques, and <https://assignbuster.com/investigating-the-phenomenon-of-mobbing-philosophy-essay/>

after being defeated him easily finds a new workplace. At this stage the consequences are rather temporary and don't leave any permanent disabilities in the psyche of the individual.

However when the person is not able to resist the aggression that is being applied, and does not turn away from it, and doesn't even have the strength to overcome the mobbers' acts. The victim can't fight for his reputation, presenting his own arguments. This manner shows that the victim is in the second stage of mobbing. At this stage it takes long time for the person to be ready to find a new job and even when it happens the person does not fully engage himself to the work and does not trust his coworkers at least for the first couple of months. Here the consequences are much stronger and remain a larger mark in the psychic of the prey.

The third stage is the most effective. It is characterized by the fact that the individual is not able to undertake any work opportunities. His social relations are deeply disturbed in the work and even private society. Therefore in order for the person to get back to his primary stage of functioning he needs special psychological help, from a therapeutic. The effects of the rehabilitation depend on the individual and his closest relatives.

What touches the victim most is the frequency of tortures, their repetitiveness and constancy in time. This dependency is of course proportional. However this does not decrease the type of applied tortures. These are precisely chosen by the mobber, being a very characteristic way

of torturing. The differences in the types of tortures are configurations of separate, single techniques. Leymann classified these in five categories. **

Mobbing Conditions

It is hard to state; what is the factual reason of the mobbing spiral to form. Is it the conditions of environment, situation, does the victim provoke to be tortured, or are all these factors independent for the mobber to attack.

Leymann answered this question with five factors which have influence on the presence of mobbing. These elements form a certain system what means that they are not random. Therefore they interact forming the negative mechanism. It consists of: psychic and situation of the mobber, culture and organization structure, psychic and situation of the victim, the event which is the impulse (conflict) and external factors.

Unfortunately there haven't been made any empirical studies which prove that this certain configuration of the mobbers' features implicates the mobbing behaviors. However most probably all these behaviors are the need; of increasing the mobbers psychological state raising personal values and his self-confidence. The mobbers personality has been described as: over controlling, neurotic, cowardly and having the desire for power. Many behaviors may be the effect of envy, the reasons of that is constant lack of guidance and constant fear. There is also a probability that this behavior is caused by previous experience even from the mobbers childhood. Kids that were involved in bullying in their early years are more susceptible to form similar acts in the future. This does not mean that every child that had contact with this unpleasant phenomenon will be a prosecutor in his

workplace environment, however the probability grows. Just like bullying
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mobbing starts in the effect of unconscious measures. In the case of bullying it's enough to enlighten the children about the effects of their harming behavior, which will close the spiral. In the case of

Grownups the problem is more complex. A whole system of defense mechanisms begin to interact which make the change of behavior impossible. Seldom mobbing is not a completely conscious process of eliminating the dangerous individual. Therefore the measures and psychic of the mobber is the key to understand the existence of mobbing. Leymann retains that people mob in order to compensate their own deficit. Their fear of insecurity and own reputation pushes them to the humiliation of others. Heinz states that there are four main reasons because of which people are mobbers. The primary reason concerns the prosecutor, that the group can be effective only when the level of unification is high enough.

Mobbing becomes a tool that helps to force the individual to keep the norms of the group following one rule: " if he doesn't keep the rules, he must leave".

The second reason of activating the mobbing behavior is the need of stimulation. In a monotonous workplace environment, mobbers take pleasure from torment over somebody. To kill the slowly passing time they get excited over the " war" they just caused. In this case the goal of these people is not the elimination of the victim but the " good fun".

Another reason is the intention to manifest antipathy. The mobber takes delight in the fact that he dislikes somebody. In a spectacular way he

underlines the negative behavior, increasing it to the scale of the whole organization.

The fourth reason of using tortures is the prejudice of discrimination. By such acts the mobber makes the lack of acceptance bigger.

The culture and organization structure is the second condition which has impact on the phenomenon of mobbing. Studies have shown that no matter the diversification in the workplace mobbing behaviors can possibly occur anyways.

There is a certain complex of organization factors which contributes to the development of mobbing in the workplace teams. These are mainly the wrong management (excessive discipline, pressure on increasing productivity, limiting expenses on personal needs and many others.

The third significant consideration that impacts the behaviors of a mobber is the psychic and situation of the victim. Like in the case of prosecutors there is no empirical proof which would prove the characteristic configuration triggering the mobbing behavior. In fact the people taking part in Leymann's interviewed were different from each other. Moreover they showed many positive features such as: intelligence, competence, creativity, resourcefulness, talent and commitment. It turned out that the people who did not show any of the above mentioned features in their childhood are more susceptible to mobbing.

Misunderstanding or conflict is another important reason which evolves the mobbing behavior. The reason of the conflict has no important meaning as it

plays a role of a reproach to start of the process of mobbing. What's essential is that the reason of the conflict is not determined therefore it remains in suspension and escalates. This ambiguity causes the problem. The ignorance of the organization forms the atmosphere favorable for mobbing.

The last significant condition for the process of mobbing is the external factors concerning the norms and values of the whole country. Norms and values of the society, the economical structure and philosophy seriously influence on the culture of an organization. For example the conceiving success only in the economical perspective can negatively impact the behavior of workers.

Conclusion

In Poland mobbing is a pretty new phenomenon. There haven't been made any empirical studies from its range therefore the information's about the topic are pretty poor. It is simply hard to measure a certain behavior in a society that is unaware of their presence. It means that neither the workers nor their management do not know anything about this process. There was a survey made in order to check the people's awareness, the questions were pretty simple such as: what is mobbing? Out of one hundred surveyed only one new the term. For an organization mobbing is like a tumor - quickly spreads damaging in turn the functions of the corporation (Davenport, Schwartz, Elliot, 1999). Therefore the actions must be undertaken as fast as possible. The awareness of mobbing existence is the key to success, what is proved by research. An infected organization is difficult to cure.

Lack of awareness of such a behavior does not mean that the behavior will not take place in an organization. This means that mobbing can possibly take place in any culture. In the effect of high unemployment rate, tortured individuals are afraid to undertake any defense actions as they are afraid to lose their job, later on it is too hard for them to undertake these actions. It is important to add that mobbing is often confused with the common phenomenon of objectifying people in their workplace. Out of ten people that declare they are the mobbing victims not even two have anything to do with it. These aren't often psychic tortures but maximal behaviors using the workers in order to achieve financial profit. It is important to underline, that the mobbing mechanism does not take place only in workplace areas. It appears in families, informal groups and it properly develops in the conditions of large competition, for example in the artists' society.

It is universally known that the mobbing phenomenon isn't widely spread all over the world. Especially in the still developing countries, mostly in the least economically developed countries. The truth is that we are not aware of what happens around us. Like I mentioned before there haven't been made many research on this problem. Firstly because the victims do not know that the problem with which they are in touch is not recognized, they think the situation concerns only them individually therefore they don't admit it. Secondly the mobbed individuals are afraid to spread the fact over the borders of the workplace, in the fear of losing their job. In the present situation it is obligatory to inform and educate the society about the nature, importance and consequences of the problem.

Concluding we should answer the question: how does it happen that although the interest of democratic, social studies, humanitarian and many other institutions raised there still exists endanger of physical health, and the psychological state of an individual like the ones mentioned above? Answering this question it is crucial to consider the fact that both tendencies aren't neutral towards each other. Since ages main leaders achieved their aims using the argument of force. Since civilization, social relations and demand to achieve certain aims exist, there have been many methods of influence and peer pressure put into life. Since the law segment and human rights developed such simple acts of aggression do not play a major role. Human brain developed a better system that is more complex discrete and hard to undercover way of eliminating individuals, called mobbing. Therefore we cannot say that the phenomenon of mobbing did not exist in the human world. Generating appropriate methods of mobbing behavior and curing its effect is not possible without the help of specialists, clinical psychologists and work psychologists.