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CONTROLLING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Abstract: *Controlling workplace violence is often focused on the violence that comes from outside the organization. However, recent data show an alarming increase in violence, as well as physical and various forms of psychological violence that is happening just in the workplace within the organization itself. Considering the fact that the consequences of any form of workplace violence are various and very serious, as well as the fact that human capital is crucial for any organization, its prevention and control have an extremely important role. The focus of this paper is placed on the causes of workplace violence arising from the organization itself, and especially from the dominant organizational culture, and in this regard, on establishing their successful control. Changing organizational culture, given that it is a source located within the organization, represents the best means of establishing control of this phenomenon. Also, the resources, as well as the influence, that are at disposal to managers, whose role in creation of organizational culture and controlling of various aspects of safety is crucial, definitely should not be ignored. The aim of the paper is to contribute to the establishment of successful workplace violence control, as one of safety aspects, as well as increasing the awareness of this.*

Key words: control, prevention, workplace violence

INTRODUCTION

There are many data lately, that are warning about alarming rise of violence, physical and different types of psychological violence, that are happening in the workplace, inside the organization itself. Workplace violence consequences of any violence type are multiple and very serious and human capital represents the key significance of any organization, so it is important to understand that prevention as well as violence control have extremely important role. This paper comprises wider aspect of the workplace violence, comprehending the violence, as all kinds of mutually unwanted behaviour (Parker & Griffin, 2002), no matter if there is a physical, psychological, workplace mobbing or sexual harassment in place. The main focus of this paper is placed on causes of workplaces violence that are coming out from the organization itself, especially from the dominant organizational culture, as well as its successful control implementation. The change in organizational culture, considering the fact that it is a source that is inside the organization itself, represents the most economical tool for control implementation and prevention of this phenomenon. Also, one should not ignore both the management tools whose role in creating of organizational culture is significant, and whose duty is managing different aspects of workplace security as well.

Subject and purpose of paper

The data that are showing the percentage of employees that are exposed to workplace violence, both in the United States of America (86% according to the data from The Workplace Bullying Institute), and in European Union o are extremely upsetting. Namely, it is broadly existing problem [49] that deserves devotion of serious attention. Also, the damaging consequences on employee's health and on the organization itself are very severe. Since the organizational culture includes value, believes and custom system inside some organization, and this system are interacting with formal structures producing behaviours norms[59], there are many researches conducted that are implicating relationship between organizational culture and frequency and severity of workplace mobbing phenomena [18], [9], [51], [62].

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate relationship between organizational culture and workplace violence as a potential tool for implementation of better control and prevention of workplace violence phenomena, as well as giving a contribution to the higher awareness of this problem.

Hypothesis

Aiming to define the basic problems inside researching topic, there are following hypothesis set:

H1 There is connection between organizational culture and employee's exposure to the workplace violence in direction that positive organizational culture influence to lower employee exposure to the workplace violence.

H2 Positive changes in organizational culture influence to lower frequency of workplace violence happening.

In accordance with the need of proof or disproof of settled hypotheses and additional argumentation of justification for their determination, there are statistical overviews shown, and some of them are due to their complexity further analyzed with graphs, in order to achieve more vividly display of certain parameters influence as well as more comparable and understandable for interpretation.

Methods

In order to achieve the objectives of the paper and prove hypotheses secondary researches were conducted through data collection available in a variety of professional books, papers, official documents, as well as online databases. Also, the following methods were used: method of abstraction, description, comparison,

classification, as well as method of analysis and synthesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizational culture as a generator of positive and negative behaviour in the organization

There are many definition of organizational culture that can be found in different literature and one can say that there is no unique, generally accepted definition that can cover all aspects of this complex subject. Through the chronological overview of organizational culture definitions it is possible to gain insight on the development of the theory, which was adapting itself to the changes in the business environment (Table 1).

Table1. *The chronological overview of organizational culture definitions, [1], [4], [25], [26], [29], [45], [48], [52], [58], [61],[67], [68], [65]*

Year, authors	Definition
Harris, Moran, 1981; 103-104;	"Organisational culture includes a system of ideas and concepts, customs, tradition, procedures and habits for functioning in a specific macro culture."
Smircich, 1983; 339	"Organizational culture is social or normative glue that holds an organization together ... expresses the values or social ideas and the beliefs that organizational members come to share."
Handy, 1986; 187	"Organisational culture is a series of values, standards and beliefs."
Scholz, 1987; 80	"Organisational culture is implicit, invisible, intrinsic and informal awareness of the organisation which directs behaviour of individuals and which results from their behaviour."
Walters et. al., 1989; 34	"Organizational culture includes decision-making and problem-solving processes of the organization. It affects the objectives, financial resources and other actions. It is the source of motivation, satisfaction and dissatisfaction."
Petz, Šulak, 1991; 97	"Culture of the organization is the rules of behaviour, beliefs and values that apply in an organization."
Bahtijarević-Šiber et. al., 1991; 202	"Culture is, when speaking about organizations, a relatively permanent and specific system of behaviour forms, values, beliefs, norms and customs that determines organizational behaviour, thinking and directs all activities of its individuals and groups."
Kavčič, 1992; 78	"Organisational culture is a harmony of common knowledge and common cognitions of the organization members who remain at the level of practical knowledge and control behaviour of the members of the organization."
Vila, 1992; 527	"Organizational culture is a set of basic assumptions and beliefs embraced by members of an organization, i.e. organizational culture are the model of the basic assumptions that a certain group of people invented, discovered and developed in the process of learning how to resolve their problems of adaptation to the environment and internal integration."
Wehrich, Koontz, 1994; 334	"The culture is, when it comes to organizations, the general pattern of behaviour, shared beliefs and values of their members. It can be inferred from what people say, do and think within the organizational environment. It involves learning and transmitting knowledge, beliefs and behaviour patterns during a period, which means that the organizational culture is quite stable and does not change quickly. It often sets the tone and establishes the company's implied rules of people's behaviour."
Poslovni rječnik, 1995; 392	"Organizational culture is relatively enduring and specific system of basic values, beliefs, norms and customs that determines organizational behaviour and directs the activities of its individuals and groups."
Robbinson, 1996; 256	"The culture is the social glue that holds the organization together by providing appropriate standards for what employees would need to say or do. Finally, culture serves as a mechanism for indicating the direction and control that leads and shapes the attitudes and behaviour of employees."
Alvesson, 2002:54	"At the same time, organizational culture direct the behaviour of employees in the company, which, by adopting the certain system of values, accepting the default behaviour norms, respecting relevant customs and traditions contribute to the formation of organizational climate companies, as well as implementation strategies and achieving organizational goals."

What is read out from the most of listed definition is the influence of organizational culture on shaping the behaviour of individuals, which of course can be positive as well as negative. Some of the functions of organizational culture [39] are:

- Setting goals and values by which the organization is managed and who will serve as a measure for evaluating its performance,
- Setting provisions of appropriate relationships between individuals and organizations, in particular the establishment of "psychological contract" that defines reasonable expectations of each employee and vice versa,
- Identification of behaviour control in a company with an indication of which types of controls considered legal and which are not,
- Presentation of the quality and characteristics of the organization members to be evaluated or to punish, indicating the form of praise or punishment that can be expected,
- Showing to the members how they relate to each other: competitive or cooperative, fair, or disbelieving, closely or with a distance and establishing an appropriate mechanism for overcoming the threats that comes from the surrounding area.

It is evident, from a above stated, that the organizational culture contains a great power that managers should not underestimate, but by correcting some of its elements, affect to the positive outcomes of the company and its employees.

Figure 1. Functions of organizational culture [61]

Also, it should be noted that organizational theories, in addition to organizational climate, increasingly are referring to an organizational culture as one of the main topics of organizational theory, given that the organizational culture is "one of the strongest and most stable forces operating in organizations" [57]. As noted, organizational culture definitions are numerous, but they all agree in important determinants, and are pointing out that organizational culture is a system of ideas, behaviour models, customs, traditions symbols,

procedures and habits that ensure effective operation and the realization of collective and individual goals of all members of the organizational system. It is implicit, invisible, internal or intrinsic consciousness and conscience of every organizational system, which directs, shapes and defines the behaviour of individuals in their relations to the immediate and wider environment [66]. Given that organizational culture consists of shared beliefs, values and norms that influence the activities of the organization and the individual behaviour [56], it is reasonable to look at the very organizational culture and the causes of undesired behaviour, when such behaviours occur (Figure 1). In fact, the violence cannot happen unless there is a culture that allows it and possibly support [13]. Researches that explore the link between organizational culture and the workplace, violence, consider that if there is no reaction to the negative mutual events, there is implicitly considered that such behaviours are acceptable and permissible [18], [9]. Negative behaviours, for which individuals are not called for responsibility, become acceptable and "normal" within a particular organizational culture [51], [62].

Some organizational theories ("Micro-institutional" [72], [6] and "Structurational theory" [23] are stating that there is a recursive relationship between culture and behaviour in the sense that institutions are those that direct their activities, including those activities related to the organizational culture, and in time, activities itself are beginning to be seen as part of the organizational culture. So, healthy organizational culture will be based on firm and general acceptable values and thus values will represent a strong backbone of success and stability, while the organizational system in which governs negative, ethically and sociologically unacceptable relations, will contribute to the exposure to the dangers of decay [44].

Figure 2. Organizational culture's components [66]

A positive example of a large company (INTEL) that actively fosters an organizational culture, which posted on its website the set of values that, must be respected by all employees:

- Mutual trust and respect among workers,
- Openness and directness in communication,
- Performing tasks in collaboration with the teams,
- Setting challenging goals,

- Supported risk-taking
- Taking responsibility for the results achieved and
- Continuous learning and feeling of the pride in their work environment.

A personal value expressed in employees believes and opinions are influencing all management aspects and are defining the essence of what differentiate one organization from the other [73].

When it comes to workplace violence, one should keep in mind, that it can be physical and psychological violence. Workplace violence is a phenomenon that affects every country, every workplace and every professional group in such way that it can be considered epidemic [70].

Generally speaking, there are a few types of workplace violence: violence related to the work assignments, social isolation, private life attacks, verbal threats and insults in front of other people and physical violence [71]. The workplace violence definition and terminology differs from one author to the other (for example: [7], [14], [31], [38], [40], [42]) who are putting a different focus, starting from violence and aggression that are motivated from an organizational sources and authors who differentiate violence from aggression itself.

This paper comprises wider aspect of the workplace violence, comprehending the violence, as all kinds of mutually unwanted behaviour [43], no matter if there is a physical, psychological, workplace mobbing or sexual harassment in place. Namely, there is a literature that deals with workplace violence that comprehends an aggression only (example [30]), excluding all other violence behaviours in the workplace. On the other hand, there is a literature (example [3] or [34]) which when dealing with workplace violence, uses the term "sexual harassment" and therefore is including sexual assaults as well. That is extremely important since these assaults are affecting significant number of employees and organizational culture that tolerates sexual discrimination influences to the perception of sexual humour as an accepted one by company [9].

Similarly, an organizational cultures that accidentally reward aggressive behaviours, actually encourages the future aggression as well [42]. Support to these statements can be found in The Social Information Processing Theory [55] and Social Learning Theory [5]), both stating that people use behaviour that are seeing in their environment as a key for their own behaviour pattern. Consequently, organizational members are accepting organizational norms and values by watching other organizational member's behaviour [2]. There should not be ignored the fact that even behaviour that includes slighter disrespect of civility norms can lead to the significant consequences on memory deterioration, verbal assignments' execution and creating of ideas [47] and also can lead to greater absenteeism and lower working efficiency [60]. Recent researches are confirming that violation of

equality, respect, security and civility norms are reducing organizations productivity as well as employees well being [35] [16].

It should also be mentioned that during the last ten years European Union has conducted a several measures that are showing the awareness increase when it comes to workplace violence. So, Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work [21], that was published by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP i ETUC, on 26.04. 2007., clearly condemn all types of abuse and violence and at the same time makes reference to national laws and European Union's directives that are brought out in previous years (The Directive 2000/43/EC about implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, dated 29.6.2000.; The Directive 2000/78/EC about establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, dated 27. 11.2000.; The Directive 2002/73/EC about on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, The Directive 89/391/EC about improvements in the safety and health of workers at work).

Existing researches related to the workplace violence

Research results that are systematically conducting in European Union, aimed to the awareness increase and workplace physical violence, mobbing and sexual harassment prevention are showing higher frequency of these problems [19].

Therefore, this problem has been put in the focus of European Union country members, which in their documents, are openly inviting to respect of other persons dignity at all workplace levels. There is a very widely spread phenomenon with multiply damaging consequences that should not be ignored, especially in tourism sector, whose contribution to Republic of Croatia's GDP is very significant. Researches are also showing that exposure to workplace violence has influence to an employee's moral as well as to the company's financial indicators. Other authors [17] think that workplace mobbing should be explored in a systematic and detailed way since all organizations have duty to protect their employees in their workplaces. Also, workplace mobbing and violence are negatively influencing on companies profitability and company ought to solve of these crucial problem in order to accomplish their defined goals [30].

There is an example, in research that has been conducted in Denmark [19], that showed that there is 10,8% of employees that are exposed to the workplace mobbing and violence. These results contains disturbing fact that such a big number of employees that are exposed to the workplace mobbing and violence, are in fact exposed to the factors that are proved to increase stress, have damaging influence to

the health and are reducing productivity. The data from the study conducted in 2008. in USA [20] are showed that 75% of questioned employees, during their working career, have witnessed bad behaviours towards their colleagues, 47% of them were workplace mobbing victims themselves, at some point of their career, and 27% have stated that they were workplace mobbing victims during the last year. Results from the research conducted in 2005. in EU countries [19] are also confirming bed trend (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Response distribution to the question: "Were you exposed to the physical violence in your workplace, during the last 12 months?" [19]

This research included Republic of Croatia as well, in which there is only 0.5% of questioned people responded confirmatively. However, answer to the question if they were discrimination victims at their workplaces, 6,1 % of them responded confirmatively, and that is close to the EU average. It is interesting that women are twice more endangered than men, which is not the case in European Union.

Figure 4. Response distribution to the question: "Were you exposed to threatening or humiliating behaviour in your workplace, during the last month?" [19]

On average, to the question "Were you exposed to threatening or humiliating behaviour in your workplace, during the last month?" in the European Union responded affirmatively 5% of respondents, while surprisingly, the leading countries are Scandinavia and the United Kingdom (over 7% of affirmative answers). In Croatia is again visible almost double exposure of women (7%) than men (3.8%).

By studying deviant behaviour [53] among colleagues in the workplace, it was concluded that the main dimensions on which they differ different forms of interpersonal deviant behaviour is actually severity or intensity of such behaviour. Namely, the least seriously deviant behaviour in the workplace was related to the rude behaviour and gossip, and the most serious behaviour included different intensity of pure physical violence, which led to the conclusion that both type of behaviours, serious and less serious, are actually just forms of mutual deviant behaviour variations of the same type of behaviour, not different types of behaviours.

Statistical data that are recording workplace violence accidents are worrisome. For example, data from 2007 are showing a 13% increase when looking at number of homicides in the workplace compared to the previous year, and it is a total of 610 murders in the United States [64]. Over 53% of employees said they had experienced some form of abuse in the workplace [50], and just in the United States there is a record of over fifty thousand cases of rape and sexual harassment in the workplace [33].

Statistical data from the year 2005 [15] showed that only 14% of large enterprises that are employing at least a thousand employees have no formal policy to regulate the issue of workplace violence and that 34% of them for a period of one year prior to the survey, reported the incident of violence workplace that occurred among employees. The fact is that the problems of workplace violence affect large numbers of workplaces, and the most of large companies have a formal policy that aims to reduce these problems, but still there is a lack of researches who are dealing with the actual effectiveness of these workplace violence interventions, as for example, application of zero workplace violence tolerance policy [32].

In such light, there are interesting data from previously mentioned research conducted in 2005 [15], which are showing that 70% of jobs in the United States have no formal program or policy that addresses the issues of workplace violence.

Companies that declared they have a program or policy related to the workplace violence, those that are privately owned, the most commonly reported violence among colleagues (82%), and then (71%) violence by clients (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The incidence of violent behaviour by types [15]

The term "criminal" in this context refers to the violence by persons who are not affiliated with the company or its employees and often the offense itself is connected with the violence.

It is interesting that in The Federal Bureau of Investigation report related to workplace violence prevention plans is highlighted that without an organizational culture that supports the reporting of workplace violence, no workplace violence prevention program will be effective [53].

In conclusion, many studies that have dealt with the issues of workplace violence and aggression prevention, agreed that organizational culture is an extremely important component in the process of reducing this problem ([12], [13], [30], [41], [69]).

The role of organizational culture in preventing workplace violence

Healthy working climate and healthy workplace environment are concepts that can be associated with a safe workplace, which should be sufficient motive for investing the effort to achieve this into the practice. In fact, the research [37] that deals with the issue of justice in the organization is claiming that under certain circumstances the perception of unfair treatment is associated with the conflict, employee theft [24] and aggression in the workplace [27], [8], [22]. Also, as aggression is commonly associated with the perception of deliberate provocation by others [36], [63] as well as a sense of exploitation [28], it would be useful to set up and implement policies that will ensure the minimum possibility of creating such a perception. The key components of any good prevention program should include fairness and respect for individuals. Researchers have demonstrated a correlation between the perception of unfair treatment and increased rates of theft [24] and negative reactions to information on demission [12]. Changing of organizational culture can affect the reduction of unproductive behaviour, which can be achieved by setting an example of positive behaviour by managers, treating employees with trust, respect and dignity, ensuring adequate compensation, a clear expression of policy which deals with unproductive behaviour, consistent punishment of unacceptable behaviour and reducing stress in the workplace [10].

CONCLUSION

Organizational culture represents a system of ideas, behaviour modes, customs, traditions symbols, procedures and habits that ensure effective operation and the realization of collective and individual goals of all members of the organizational system. Since the organizational culture and climate that it produces are influencing and forming the behaviour, policies regarding workplace violence should clearly define the terms describing desirable and undesirable behaviour in the workplace. Workplace violence affects an individual's ability to perform his work, negatively affects the morale

of employees as well as the financial performance of enterprises. On the other hand, an organizational culture could be a relatively affordable tool that managers should use in correcting certain elements to affect positive outcomes for the company and its employees. Studies have shown that violence cannot happen unless there is a culture that approves or endorses it. Researches that investigate the link between the organizational culture and the workplace violence, consider that if there is no respond to negative mutual events, it is implicitly considered that such behaviour is acceptable and permissible, and negative behaviours for which individuals are not called for responsibility, become acceptable and "normal" within a particular organizational culture. On the other hand, a healthy organizational culture will be based on firm and generally acceptable values and in such way will represent a strong support to the stability and success, which confirms that there is a relationship between organizational culture and exposure of employees to workplace violence in the direction that a positive organizational culture affects less exposure of employees to the workplace violence. By giving their own example of desirable behaviour by managers, treating employees with trust, respect and dignity, ensuring adequate compensation, clearly expressing disagreement with unproductive behaviour, consistently punishing unacceptable behaviour, and reducing stress in the workplace are a means with which an organizational culture can change in a positive direction and influence on reducing the incidence of workplace violence.

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KONTROLA NASILJA NA RADNOM MESTU

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Rezime: Kontrola nasilja na radnom mestu je često usmerena na nasilje koje se dešava izvan organizacije. Međutim, noviji podaci pokazuju alarmantno povećanje nasilja, kao i fizičke i različite oblike psihičkog nasilja koje se dešava upravo na radnom mestu unutar same organizacije. S obzirom na to da su posledice bilo kog oblika nasilja na radnom mestu različite i veoma ozbiljne, kao i činjenicu da je ljudski kapital od ključnog značaja za organizaciju, prevencija i kontrola nasilja imaju izuzetno važnu ulogu. Glavni cilj ovog rada je usmeren na uzroke nasilja na radnom mestu unutar same organizacije, a posebno sa stanovišta dominantne organizacione kulture, a u tom smislu, na uspostavljanju njihove uspešne kontrole. Promena organizacione kulture, ukoliko se uzme u obzir da se izvor nalazi unutar organizacije, je najbolje sredstvo uspostavljanja kontrole nad ovom situacijom. Takođe, ne treba zanemariti sredstva i uticaj koji imaju menadžeri, a čija je uloga u stvaranju organizacione kulture i kontrola različitih aspekata bezbednosti od ključnog značaja. Cilj rada je da doprinese uspostavljanju uspešne kontrole nasilja na radnom mestu, što je jedan od aspekata bezbednosti, kao i podizanje svesti o tom fenomenu.

Ključne reči: kontrola, prevencija, nasilje na radnom mestu.