

BULLYING AT WORK: DO INDUSTRIES DIFFER IN THE ESTONIAN CASE?¹

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Abstract

The bullying at work has not so far analyzed in Estonia – its dispersal, causes and impact have not studied, while in the countries with long democratic traditions it has been the actual problem of work context for two decades. The current study examines the prevalence of workplace bullying in Estonian organizations and the extent of the problem by industries because bullying may put impact on the employees' efficiency. The sample consists of 1941 respondents which covers 59 organizations across Estonia and represents in all over 30 000 employee and the unemployed. The results reveal that bullying poses a serious problem in Estonia. According to Leymann's criteria (1996) at least one negative act per week with a duration of at least 6 months, has been reported by 23,44% of respondents. Although, it came out that bullying is not sector-specific problem in Estonia, several and different industries are vulnerable from bullying.

Keywords: bullying at work, differences in industries, sector-specific features

JEL Classification: M54, P30, P36

Introduction

Bullying presents a serious problem in Europe: hostile work environments, unfriendly communication, persistent criticism and personal abuse cause substantial damage to workers, organizations and society as a whole (Hoel, Einarsen, Cooper, 2003; Leymann, 1990). The perspective on bullying at work was developed in Sweden, Finland and Norway during the late 1980s and early 1990s due to national work environment legislation in those countries supporting the rights of all workers to remain both physically and mentally healthy at work (Leymann, 1996). Unfortunately, the studies indicate that a lot of workers still have to suffer from psychological bullying at work and corresponding negative behaviour in their daily work (Di Martino, 2002; Hoel, Cooper, Faragher, 2001; Salin, 2003).

Workplace bullying induces considerable economic loss or costs to society. For example costs to health care and medical treatment, premature retirement, loss of human resources in a society as a whole, quality of services and products which is related to lower productivity and motivation among workers (Leymann, 1996; Hoel, Cooper, 2001). This refers to the impact of a loss of productivity on the economy, competitiveness and the consequences on Gross Domestic Product (Giga, Hoel,

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Lewis, 2008). Thus, it is a matter of utmost importance to study the factors causing psychological bullying at work and options for its prevention. It is also important to mention that if we know whether employees of from some sectors are more threaten than others, the mechanisms of prevention can be better targeted and thus more efficient. Namely, communication about bullying may help both employees and managers for avoiding workplace bulling.

The present research is the first large scale survey of studying bullying in Estonia. There are not special law of bullying in Estonia or employment law that states prevention and intervention responsibilities. The content of bullying is unclear as yet and there have no societal debates about bullying in Estonia. Therefore it is important to focus on the problem what could exist but we have ignored it. Before the present survey was tested the applicability of the internationally recognized research instrument, the Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised (NAQ-R) (Tambur, Vadi, 2009). The results of the pilot study confirm that the instrument is appropriate for using in bullying researches in Estonia. The aim of the present research is to find out how widespread bullying is and to propose some implications for policy recommendations.

The findings of previous studies reveal variations of bullying between sectors. The higher risk of being bullied is reported for the social and health, public administration and education sectors which all belong to public sector (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, Vartia, 2003). The prevalence of bullying differs across sectors but several studies reveal that unclear roles, stress from communication, and rapid changes in organizations may lead to the feeling of being victim (Lewis, Gunn, 2007). The object of the present research is to find out the bullying impact along industries in Estonia. For carrying out the further research, necessary to identify before which sectors are most damaged and what kind of problems mainly occur.

There are several reasons for investigating bullying in Estonia. First, bullying at work has not so far been dealt with in Estonia – its dispersal, causes and impact have not been studied. Likewise there is no special law concerning bullying or harassment in Estonia. The second reason is related to economical context: bullying has beside to person considerable harmful impact also to organization and to whole society. Estonian organizations have passed through very fast changes during last decades: first restructuring and assimilation new economic model, afterward coping with economic recession. Third, a number of economic costs associated with workplace bullying because of health problems. Several studies (Leymann, 1990; Rayner, 1999) suggest considerable costs of sick leave, absence from the work and leave the job as a result of the bullying acts. Traumatized by their experience of being bullied, the victims are often unable to work again. In these circumstances the economic suffering is not only confined to the victim but also flows to the victim's family (Sheehan, Barker, Rayner, 1999). Therefore, workplace bullying and negative acts at work represent an interesting topic for exploring whether bullying has injured organizations and industries and what kind of industries particularly.

The aim of the current paper is to supply the analysis of first bullying research about Estonia along industries. Whereas the bullying causes expansive economic costs, the aim also of the current paper is to offer economic policy recommendations for preventing bullying in Estonia.

The paper is organized as follows. The theoretical framework presents nature and causes of bullying and measurement tools for bullying research. The propositions for the present study are based on the previous investigations presented also in the theoretical framework. In the method section present the sample and instrument of current study. The findings of the research are explicitly presented in the section of results and are analyzed in the section of discussion.

The theoretical framework for bullying and the measurement tool

What is bullying at work

Bullying is a serious problem in Europe. According to recent research on work conditions in Europe, 1 worker out of 20 (5%) was subjected to bullying in 2005 (Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, 2007). Bullying is defined as hostile and unethical communication that is directed in a systematic way by one or more persons, mainly towards one targeted individual who, due to bullying, is pushed into a helpless and defenceless position (Leymann, 1996). One-off instances such as conflicts between two equal parties, which are solved between the participants, are not considered bullying. Psychological bullying at work is defined as acts that occur at least once a week and over a long period – approximately six months. Hence, bullying at work refers to repeated and enduring negative acts (Einarsen, 2000).

Bullying actions are divided into two main groups: those related to personal behaviour and those related to work-related behaviour. Work-related behaviours are giving unachievable tasks, impossible deadlines, unmanageable workloads, meaningless tasks, withholding information deliberately or supplying unclear information, threats about job security, scapegoating, etc. Personal behaviours are ignoring, excluding, public humiliation, insulting, spreading rumours or gossip, yelling, intruding on privacy, etc. (Beswick, Gore, Palferman, 2006). The definition of bullying does not comprise all potential acts, but it always involves behaviour or an attitude that causes the victim emotional harm and affects his or her mental and physical health.

The differences in the instances of bullying in different countries are remarkable – being very high in Finland and Holland (17% and 12% respectively), and the lowest in Italy and Bulgaria (2%) (Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, 2007). The differences are not so much related to different actual situations in these countries, but rather the awareness of bullying; cultural differences and traditions also influence the outcome. Bullying varies from sector to sector: it is lowest in agriculture and the construction industry, and highest in education, health care and the public sector. There are more women than men suffering from bullying (6% and 4% respectively), and the largest risk group is women under 30 years of age (8%) (Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, 2007). In terms of its spread, another

important circumstance is that while bullying is aimed at an individual worker (the victim), his or her colleagues are also forced to witness the act, and therefore, also suffer. Due to bullying, the work climate in the organization deteriorates, and the negative impact it causes partly affects the victim's colleagues. Thus, the problem is significantly more extensive than indicated in surveys carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

The negative influence of bullying on the individual mostly appears in the form of physical and mental health disorders (e.g. stress, depression, low self-esteem, self accusation, phobias, sleeping disorders, problems with digestive and bone and muscle systems), loss of social relationships, job or income. Bullying has a negative effect on the organization's performance and efficiency mostly for the following reasons: an increase in instances of sick leave and absenteeism with no valid reason, decreased turnover and returns, lower productivity and motivation, professional dissatisfaction, less drive and effort and a negative impact on the organization's reputation (Hoel, Einarsen & Cooper, 2003; Martino, 2002). The whole society is also negatively affected by bullying: increased cost of health care (incapacity for work, unemployment benefits), medical treatment expenses, possible loss of able workers and premature retirement. Bullying presents a serious problem in the work environment in Europe; it has caused substantial damage to workers, organizations and society as a whole.

Disposition for bullying

Bullying results from various reasons and here we open some of these. First of all, the researchers dealing with bullying strongly agree upon: bullying can arise and spread only in an organization where it is tolerated. Leymann (1992) and Einarsen, Raknes and Matthiesen (1994) have found that conflicts may develop into psychological violence if an appropriate strategy of intervening or conflict management is not applied. Research also confirms that 95% of the reasons for the spread of bullying come down to the organization tolerating bullying and failing to intervene: the bullies are not stopped and the victims are afraid to report harassment, or submit a complaint (Rayner, 1998).

Second, bullying is likely to prevail in stressful working environments and situations where the immediate supervisor avoids intervening in and managing such stressful situations (Hauge, Skogstad, Einarsen, 2007). The organization and its management are responsible for intervening in cases of interpersonal conflict and bullying caused by factors at individual, organizational and societal levels (Hoel and Cooper, 2001; Zapf, 1999). Therefore, we can propose that especially in the stressful working setting the managers' awareness about and ability to react may help to avoid bullying or contrary, leads to the bullying.

Third, the large scale of bullying risk factors lies in the organization's work environment and special features of workflow. According to Leymann (1996) the factors that most likely cause psychological bullying at work are related to work administration in the organization where the roles and commands are unclear. In

addition, another reason may be poor conflict management. The correlation between work environment and bullying is demonstrated in an extensive study carried out in Norway where role conflict, interpersonal conflicts and tyrannical and *laissez-faire* leadership behaviour were found to be strongly related to bullying (Hauge, Skogstad, Einarsen, 2007). The risk factors for bullying at work refer to the work environment and the organizational climate: the poor flow of information, an authoritative way of settling differences of opinion and poor opportunities for influencing matters concerning and affecting oneself (Vartia, 1996).

Fourth, organizational size and sector of operation are related to bullying behaviour according to the previous research. Results reveal that bureaucracy and the difficulties in laying off employees with permanent status may increase the value of using bullying in public sector as a micro-political strategy for circumventing rules, eliminating unwanted persons or improving one's own position (Salin, 2001). At the same time studies bring out empirical evidences that the victims of bullying had jobs with good or average job complexity and task control, but they had less control over time. That mean the bullying prevalence is higher in public administration, health services, schools and offices in general and less a problem of industrial workers whose jobs are typically characterized by low complexity and control (Zapf, 1996).

Hence, there are sufficient arguments supporting the causes are related with organizational size and work sector. Bureaucratic organizations, role conflicts, poor information flow with autocratic leadership, little control over time, ambiguity in job descriptions are at the same time risk factors of bullying behaviours and characterize of public sector organizations. However, the work sector and organizational size impact to bullying is not completely clear yet, the results of other studies reveal that bullying prevalence is higher in private sector (Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996) and in small and medium organizations (Hoel and Cooper, 2000).

Fifth, the higher cooperation requirements and excessive workload are risk factors of bullying behaviours. Co-operation offers more possibilities for unresolved conflicts as basis for bullying behaviour to emerge (Zapf, 1996) and the collective bonus system may reinforce some workers' concern to control their colleagues (Collinson, 1988). In addition excessive workload may induce work stress and the experience of great work strain is found to have negative impact on person's relationships with colleagues (French & Caplan, 1972; Marcelissen, Winnbust, Buunk & de Wolff, 1988). According the theory of social interaction (Felson, 1992, Felson and Tedeschi, 1993) the negative events affect people's behaviour and indirectly cause aggressive behaviour in an organization. For example, a miserable or worried worker may not meet expectations, annoys others, behaves less professionally or even ignores social norms (Felson, 1992), and this way they may cause aggressive behaviour in the people they interact with. Therefore, the workplace bullying might be higher in industries where employees forced to do team-work and collaborate because of their job content.

Summarizing the primary antecedents of bullying, the following propositions were set up:

Proposition 1: organizational factors have influence on existence of bullying

Proposition 2: the prevalence of bullying is higher in public sector

Proposition 3: the prevalence of bullying is higher among bigger organizations

Proposition 4: the prevalence of bullying among private sector is higher in sales and service organizations due to higher co-operation requirements.

The mentioned propositions were considered in the present study.

Measuring bullying at work

The research on bullying has mostly used quantitative research methods and various questionnaires. The most frequently used instruments are the *Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terrorization* (Leymann, 1990), *Negative Act Questionnaire* (Einarsen and Raknes 1997) and *Work Harassment Scale* (Björkqvist, Österman 1992). Questionnaires make it possible to obtain data on the dispersal, reasons and duration of work-related bullying, and also differentiate the occurrence of bullying in terms of gender, age, education level, field of activity and other parameters. Questionnaires can also be used with other questionnaires if we are looking for correlations between bullying and organizational culture or resilience to stress. The advantages of the questionnaire method are that the researcher can collect large amounts of data in a relatively short space of time; also, the anonymity of the participants can be assured. It is easy to carry out statistical analysis of a range of factors (Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, Pereira, 2002). However, there are also disadvantages of questionnaires. If no definition is given and the questionnaire relies exclusively on the occurrence of negative or aggressive acts, it may not be clear that the imbalance of power criterion is satisfied. Also, there may be difficulties in relying on memory for defined periods such as 6 months or a year, and the questionnaire format makes it difficult to gain detailed information regarding the processes and dynamics of bully or victim situations. It is inflexible in its structure and thus non-responsive to the rich details of particular instances and to the potential for uncovering radically new findings (Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith, Pereira 2002). Thus, a questionnaire allows us to collect a large amount of data, to make general conclusions and find correlations with other variables, but we have to keep in mind that the results obtained do not allow deep insights into the problem, as they do not reflect the bullying process in detail.

The Danish researcher Eva Mikkelsen and Norwegian researcher Stale Einarsen suggest on the basis of their extensive research of bullying in Danish work-life that researchers should use a combination of self-reported exposure to bullying and exposure to negative acts to provide information on both self-reported victimization from bullying as well as exposure to specific bullying behaviours (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2001). A subjective evaluation of bullying at work and evaluation of the occurrence of various negative acts may yield different results. If a questionnaire comprises both subjective self-reporting of bullying at work and responses about occurrences of negative acts, it is possible to get a more comprehensive overview of

the problem. In a subjective self-report, a respondent may take into account different negative acts that have occurred just once. However, only situations where a specific act is repeated regularly are regarded, and cases where the target is subjected to different acts are left out (Salin, 2001). Thus, it is important that a questionnaire should comprise questions about negative acts without using the term *bullying*. As a result, it is possible to measure the frequency of the behaviour in question. The respondent's self-reported exposure to bullying can be identified on the basis of a subjective evaluation of bullying at work.

An internationally standardized questionnaire for studying bullying that includes both a list of negative acts and a chance to give a subjective self-report is the Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised (NAQ-R). The NAQ is a research inventory developed for measuring perceived exposure to bullying and victimisation at work (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997). The questionnaire, which is based on studies of literature and accounts given by victims of long-lasting harassment, consists of 22 items, each written in behavioural terms with no reference to the term *harassment* or *bullying*. The NAQ measures both exposure to specific bullying behaviour as well as feelings of victimisation, the scale measures how often the respondent has been subjected to a range of negative acts and potentially harassing behaviours during the last six months. In its original Norwegian version, the NAQ consisted of 21 items. In a revised English version it consists of 29 items describing different kinds of behaviour, which may be perceived as bullying if they occur on a regular basis (Einarsen, Hoel, 2001). Based on the original Norwegian version and the English version of the NAQ, a revised version of the NAQ was developed. This new version called NAQ-R was then used in a representative survey of 4 996 UK employees recruited from 70 UK organizations representing 1 million employees (Einarsen, Hoel, 2001). Hence, NAQ-R is an eligible scale for measuring direct and indirect bullying and consists of personal-related bullying, work-related bullying and physical intimidation actions.

In conclusion, the NAQ-R is a valid and reliable measure of exposure to workplace bullying. So far no standard measure of workplace bullying exists in this field; therefore, this instrument permits better comparisons of survey results from different national cultures and organizational settings (Einarsen, Hoel, 2001).

Method

Sample

The survey was carried out from January to October 2010. The total number of valid questionnaires that were returned was 1941. The sample covers 59 organizations across Estonia which represents in all over 30 000 employee. Also includes the sample 73 unemployed who are not related any organization. The respondent's current areas of work divide as follows: 17,2% retailing, 13,5% energy/power industry, 13,3% manufacturing and other industry, 10,3% government department, 9,7% education, 9,6% information technology and telecommunication, 4,4% travel and hotel industry, 3,8% unemployed, 3,2% transport and 15% other. The sample consists of 62% women and 38% men. The mean age is 36,17 years, with ages

ranging from 18 to 77. The type of organization where the respondents are working was noted by 57,7% as private sector, by 36,5% as public sector and by 5,8% as neither. A total of 72,8% respondents were in worker position and 83,8% employment status was full-time. 92,9% of respondents are not union representatives in their workplace.

Instruments

In the present research we used the Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised (NAQ-R) method to measure bullying. The NAQ consists of two parts. First, the respondents were asked via 22 items how often they had been exposed to particular negative behaviour in the workplace during the last 6 months. Response categories were: never, now and then, monthly, weekly and daily. Second, the respondents were asked how often they had been bullied during the previous 6 months. The response categories were: no, yes but only rarely, yes, now and then, yes several times per week and yes almost daily. When answering that question, the respondents were asked to take into account the following definition of bullying: *A situation where one or several individuals persistently over a period of time perceived themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one or several persons, in a situation where the target of the bullying has difficulty in defending him/herself against these actions. A one-off incident is not bullying.* Bullying was measured on the basis of the definition as the respondent's own perception and subjective feeling.

The following socio-demographic information was also gathered about the respondent: age, gender, marital status, education, current area of work, current employment status, type of organization, number of employees, at which level in the organization the respondent works and if he or she is a trade union member. The responses were given in the form of multiple choices.

In the research we used the English version of the NAQ-R questionnaire translated into Estonian and Russian, the content and meaning of the questions were not changed. Before the present research we tested the instrument with pilot study (Tambur, Vadi, 2009) and the results confirmed that the negative acts presented in NAQ-R method are understandable to respondents and therefore it was reasonable to continue using the measurement tool in Estonia.

Results

The aim of the research was to obtain the first representative results on bullying in Estonia in order to measure the dispersal, frequency and intensity of bullying by industries and sectors. According to the structure of the NAQ, the results are given in two parts. First, the prevalence of bullying is evaluated according to 22 negative acts. According to Leymann criteria (1996) at least one negative act per week with a duration of at least 6 months, was reported by 23,44% of the respondents. Considering the criteria recommended Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2001), two negative acts weekly during last 6 month, was declared 10,46% of respondents.

Secondly, the self-reported exposure to bullying was measured. Respondents were given the definition of bullying and they were asked whether they had experienced any bullying. Only 0,87% of the respondents defined themselves as victims of bullying that had a frequency of several times per week or daily and 8% of the respondents labelled themselves as occasionally bullied.

The most high prevalence of bullying occur in travel and hotel industry (36%) and catering (33,3%), after that energy industry (32%) and other industries (31,9%). Also very high prevalence of bullying reveals in government agency and voluntary organizations (31%). The bullied victims work more in public (24,6%) sector than in private sector (22,6%).

Table 1 summarises organizational indicators of bullying prevalence by industries, organization form and number of employees and Table 2 represents percentage of endorsed items of Negative Acts Questionnaire.

The negative acts which most of the respondents experienced at least once a week, were the following:

1. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload (8,4%);
2. Someone withholding information which affects your performance (7,4%);
3. Excessive monitoring of your work (5,8%);
4. Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines (4,5%).

The 22 acts presented for evaluation can be divided into two groups: acts related to work or performing work tasks (8 acts) and acts related to the personality of the respondent (14 acts). It turned out that the four acts that the largest number of respondents reported to have occurred “daily” and “weekly” all belong to the first group, i.e. questions about work or about performing a work task.

Discussion

The aim of the paper was to find out how bullying manifests itself in Estonia, which industries hide the problem and how serious it is. According to Leymann's criterion, bullying at work is defined as incidents with an occurrence of once a week or more over the past six months (Leymann, 1996). The results of the research indicate clearly that bullying represents very serious problem in Estonia. At least one of the negative acts presented in the questionnaire was reported to have happened at least weekly by 23.4% of the respondents. The research proved that the negative acts that the largest number of respondents reported to have experienced weekly or frequently were all related to work or performing work tasks. Compared to other research, we find very similar results (Salin, 2003; Hoel, Cooper, 2000) for the most frequent reports of respondents' experience of work-related negative acts.

Table 1. Organizational indicators of workplace bullying prevalence

Negative acts	TOTAL Number of victims (number of respondents) / % of victims from area of work/ % of victims from total sample	With- holding infor- mation (%)	Exces- sive monito- ring (%)	Unrea- sonable targets or dead- lines (%)	Unma- nage- able worklo- ad (%)
Area of work:					
Health care	7(53) / 13,2/ 0,36	1,9	3,8	1,9	9,4
Education	30(189) / 15,8/ 1,5	5,3	0	2,1	5,8
Government Agency	62(200) / 31,0/3,2	12,5	10,00	5,0	14,0
Local Authority	2(25) / 8,0/0,1	0	0	0	0
Pharmaceutical industry	6(25) / 24,0/0,3	4,0	4,0	0	12,0
Energy/power industry	84(262)/ 32,0/4,33	11,8	2,7	5,3	13,7
Other industry	31(97) / 31,9/1,6	16,5	1,0	5,1	9,3
Transport	13(63) / 20,6/0,67	8,1	3,2	1,6	1,6
Post/telecommuni- cations	19(86) / 23/0,98	3,5	12,8	4,7	4,6
Manufacturing	15(162)/ 9,26/0,77	1,9	3,1	0	0,6
Owner/Manager	2(3)/ 66,6/0,1	33,3	0	0	0
Retailing	75(334)/22,45/3,86	4,5	7,8	1,8	9,6
IT/Data	19(101)/18,81/0,98	9,0	3,0	3,0	6,0
Travel/Hotel industry	31(86)/36,0/1,6	5,8	8,2	5,8	8,1
Voluntary organizations	9(29)/31,0/0,46	25	10,3	6,8	13,7
Unemployed	18(73)/24,65/0,93	8,2	10,9	1,4	8,2
Other	10(48)/20,83/0,05	4,2	6,3	0	6,3
Real estate	1(25)/4,0/0,05	0	0	0	0
Banking	11(50)/22,0/0,57	2	4,0	6	12
Catering	10(30)/33,33/0,51	10	13,3	0	3,3
Organisation form:					
Private	242(1070)/22,6/12,47	6,5	5,6	2,5	7,8
Public	166(676)/24,56/8,55	8,1	5,6	3,2	9,2
Other	26(108)/24,07/1,34	9,3	4,7	1,9	9,3
Number of employees:					
Less than 25	27(108)/25,0/1,39	9,2	5,6	1,8	5,6
Between 26-100	125(669)/18,68/6,44	5,6	3,5	2,1	6,5
Between 101-500	181(625)/28,96/9,32	10,2	7,9	3,5	10,4
Between 501-1000	28(135)/20,74/1,44	4,4	6,7	1,5	6,6
More than 1000	75(324)/23,15/3,86	6,2	4,7	3,5	9,9

Table 2. Percentage of endorsed items on the NAQ-R by respondents (N=1941)

<i>How often have you been subjected to the following negative acts at work during the six month?</i>	<i>Now and then</i>				
	<i>Never (%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Monthly (%)</i>	<i>Weekly (%)</i>	<i>Daily (%)</i>
1. Someone withholding information which affects your performance	41,9	43,1	7,6	4,4	3,0
2. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	79,0	17,6	1,9	1,1	0,5
3. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	55,7	34,2	5,6	2,5	2,0
4. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	65,9	27,5	4,3	1,8	0,6
5. Spreading of gossip and rumours about you	68,7	26,5	2,3	1,3	1,2
6. Being ignored or excluded	68,1	27,6	2,7	1,1	0,5
7. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person (i.e. habits and background), your attitudes or private life	78,0	18,0	2,1	0,8	0,6
8. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger (or rage)	63,5	30,7	3,4	1,8	0,7
9. Intimidating behaviour such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking/barring the way	90,0	8,2	1,0	0,4	0,4
10. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	87,0	11,2	1,1	0,3	0,4
11. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	59,6	34,0	4,4	1,4	0,12
12. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	68,4	26,8	2,8	1,2	0,7
13. Persistent criticism of your work and effort	69,7	25,8	2,6	1,2	0,7
14. Having your opinions and views ignored	45,6	46,3	5,6	1,4	1,0
15. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get on with	82,8	14,5	2,0	0,5	0,3
16. Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	59,0	33,9	4,4	1,8	0,9
17. Having allegations made against you	77,9	19,5	1,8	0,6	0,2
18. Excessive monitoring of your work	56,8	32,2	5,2	1,9	3,9
19. Pressure not to claim something which by right you are entitled to (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses)	81,3	15,9	1,8	0,4	0,6
20. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	77,3	19,4	2,0	0,8	0,5
21. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload	45,6	39,4	6,6	4,2	4,2
22. Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	96,8	2,6	0,5	0	0,5

In present study, majority of negative acts which the victims have experienced were all related organizational features: unmanageable workload, excessive monitoring, the poor flow of information, incorrect tasks. A high degree of ambiguity or incompatible demands and expectations around roles, tasks and responsibilities may have created a high degree of frustration and conflicts within the work group (Einarse, Raknes & Matthiesen, 1994). Hence, the bullying tends to be connected directly with organizational factors which have an effect to economic activities.

Self-reported exposure to bullying revealed different results. The responses indicate that a large number of respondents have experienced negative acts at work at least once a week and even once a day. On the other hand, the respondents did not admit to a daily or weekly bullying experience if they were given the term bullying and its definition. For comparison, we can look at results from research that used similar methods for measuring bullying. Research carried out in the UK demonstrated that when adding together all those who labelled their experience as bullying independently of the frequency of their exposure, 10.6% of respondents reported having been bullied during the last 6 months. At the same time, a total of 9.2% were "occasionally bullied" and 1.4% "regularly bullied" (Hoel, Cooper, Faragher, 2001). Research shows that the results also vary significantly depending on the method of measurement and the self-reported exposure to bullying is noticeably lower.

The study reveals that victims of bullying work almost equally in private and public sector in Estonia. Nevertheless, the prevalence of bullying is a little higher in public sector. Researchers have reported different results about prevalence of bullying in public and private sector (Salin, 2003, Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996). The public sector is more bureaucratic and employees have less control over time (government agencies), at the same time employees in private sector have higher cooperation requirements (sales organizations). Thus, there could be different reasons in public and private sector for high prevalence of bullying.

One implication of present study is that prevalence of bullying is most high in organizations with 101-500 of employees. Most frequently appearing negative acts in present organizations are unmanageable workload and withholding information, which are related to organizational environment and structure. At the same time the bullying is quite serious problem in small organizations too, less than 25 of employees. Surprisingly for smaller organizations the most acute problem is poor information flow. Thus, insufficient job management may induce negative behavior between employees similarly in smaller and bigger organizations. The results do not affirm entirely the proposition the prevalence of bullying is higher in bigger organizations.

Among private sector bullying is most serious problem in service sector: travel, hotel industry and catering. In sales organizations the bullying prevalence is lower, but it is a problem for these organizations too. By study of H. Leymann bullying is frequent among employees who did graphical work, hotel and restaurant workers (Zapf, Einarsen, Hoel, Vartia, 2003). Some causes of bullying argued previously refer to the poor flow of information and autocratic or tyrannical leadership. The

results confirm that organizational environment is hostile and unfriendly in present sectors. Previous studies have found that there is a need to challenge the attitude in restaurant sector that aggression and bullying is a natural and even necessary part of the work environment (Mathiesen, G. M., Einarsen, S., Mykletun, R., 2008).

The prevalence of bullying is very high in energy industry and other industries too: poor information flow and unmanageable workload are most serious problems. That indicate from organizational structure and division of work may derive problems between employees. The results of present study show clearly, that bullying is not only a problem among office workers. Table 3 summarizes the presumptions and results of the study.

Table 3. The validity of the propositions

Propositions	Validity
Organizational factors have influence on existence of bullying	Completely valid: negative acts that the largest number of respondents reported to have experienced regularly were all related to organizational factors
The prevalence of bullying is higher in public sector	Partially valid: the bullying is higher in public sector, but not substantially
The prevalence of bullying is higher among bigger organizations	Not valid: the prevalence of bullying does not depend on the size of organization
The prevalence of bullying among private sector is higher in sales and service organizations	Completely valid: among private sector bullying is most serious problem in service sector

The high prevalence of bullying in different industries has a substantial influence on customer outcomes: services and products. This may be particular evident within service-led organisations where bullying could take place in front of public view or have an immediate impact on the quality of service received, but is equally damaging in for example manufacturing settings where an established brand image may very easily be compromised by the production of faulty goods (Giga, Hoel, Lewis, 2008). Most damaged are the services in travel and hotel industry and catering in Estonia consequently to workplace bullying.

In conclusion, prevalence of bullying is very high in Estonia and appears both in public and private sector. In spite of fact that bullying is higher in service sector, it is not only sector-specific problem, because numerous victims of bullying are working in energy industry, government agencies and even voluntary organizations. Bullying exists in very different industries.

The results of our study support some policy recommendations to prevent and for managing the workplace bullying in Estonia. Improving the legislation to enhance the juridical responsibility of perpetrator and guarantee the protection for victims and thereby diminish costs of bullying. Nation-wide communication campaign about workplace bullying: communication concerning the nature of bullying, it's

prevention and intervention could help recognize negative behaviours and preclude them. Proper training for personnel managers are needed for positive changes in organization level and prevent negative behaviour between employees. We need to continue research on the effects and costs of bullying in Estonia and develop national long-term prevention policy.

Conclusions

The present study of bullying reveals that bullying presents a serious problem in Estonia. The results reveal the strong dominance of work-related harassment over personality-related harassment. Findings of the study indicate that the organisational factors have considerable influence on existence of bullying.

The research clearly presents the occurrence of bullying weekly, but does not reveal the same frequency of occurrences of the problem by the self-labelling of respondents. The results of the study confirm the results of earlier research carried out in other countries: a subjective evaluation of workplace bullying and evaluation of occurrence of various negative acts yielded different results.

Bullying is most serious problem in service sector: travel, hotel industry and catering. Bullying prevalence is very high in energy industry and other industries, also in government agencies. The study reveals that victims of bullying work almost equally in private and public sector. Bullying is not sector-specific problem in Estonia, several and different industries are vulnerable from bullying.

For studying workplace bullying in Estonia it is important to consider that bullying as a term is yet unknown to respondents in Estonia – they are dealing with the definition of bullying for the first time and do not have any prior information about it.

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