Organizational Culture and Social Responsibility as a Prerequisite for Human Factors Bullying: A Survey in SMEs Telecommunications Enterprises

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Abstract—The publication treats a current problem related to the organizational culture and social responsibility of small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises, as a prerequisite for the occurrence of human factors bullying in the workplace. It reflects a current issue and trend worldwide, according to which the lack of adequate mechanisms and social practices for managing and influencing people leads to problems in social relationships, reduces labor productivity, limits motivation and forms low results in the labor process. The research is aimed at establishing factors and indicators, as a prerequisite of human resources bullying as a result of inappropriate organizational culture and socially responsible behavior, as well as those that, according to the surveyed respondents, are important for preventing bullying in the workplace. The research was conducted on the territory of three large cities in the Republic of Bulgaria, and a quantitative approach was used in the development of an online survey, through which empirical data was generated in the business of small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises. Based on the results, an analysis of the impact of organizational culture and social responsibility was made, so as to establish the role and effect they have on the perception, behavior and performance of human resources in a work environment.

Index Terms—bullying, human factors, organizational culture, social responsibility, telecommunications enterprises.

I. INTRODUCTION

The demands of modern business require companies to rely not only on artificial intelligence, as a tool to increase the efficiency of activities and business processes, but also on the human factors, which still has a leading role in determining social and emotional relationships in the workplace. While the introduction of artificial intelligence requires algorithms and machine learning to program results that the company wants to achieve in a certain area of business activity, the work and behavior of the human factors is largely determined by what is the organizational culture and social responsibility in the respective businesses structures

Unlike artificial intelligence, which has been intensively introduced in recent years in corporate practice, i.e. a

machine that is programmed to generate and accumulate information through databases, to improve itself, to make decisions and perform actions in different situations and at any time, the work process is different for humans. As human consciousness and attitude still dominates much of the world's enterprises (by the way, the role of artificial intelligence is to support, not supplant, human functions in a work environment), people are accustomed to integrate and depend on the practices of the organizational culture and the social element in enterprises' understanding of business and human relationships.

Because the organizational culture and social components in an enterprise are a barometer of how work is done in terms of human resource motivation, their perception of work processes and habits, professional and informal relationships and influence the socio-emotional behavior of people in the workplace and in general, their understanding of the organizational context of work, it should be considered that they are determinants of results and effectiveness. They, in turn, depend on the well-being of human resources, because the presumption here is that the more satisfied, motivated and relaxed people are at work, the better they will perform in terms of labor productivity and set the parameters of a good social climate.

From what has been said so far, it is necessary to understand that organizational culture and social responsibility are a key mechanism for structuring work in enterprises and largely determine not only the attitude, but also the productivity of human resources towards the goals and tasks that should be achieved. Therefore, organizational culture and social responsibility are a prerequisite, both for bullying human behavior and for overcoming it or ignoring it, as far as the application of formal mechanisms in the activities of enterprises is concerned. Hence, it should be kept in mind that the occurrence of human factors bullying or its absence entirely depends on how the organizational culture is designed and what are the social responsibilities of enterprises not only to human resources, but also with an orientation to business practices, customers and the partners.

This is how the understanding arises that an organizational culture that is inappropriate or inappropriate for specific

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social and business challenges or that does not correspond to generally accepted beliefs, values and attitudes is a catalyst for bullying behavior for the human factors and its negative attitude towards the respective enterprise. And this is normal, because the organizational culture defines all the norms and values that should be applied and understood by the human resources of the enterprise about what to do and how to approach the process of work and social relationships. After all, organizational culture is not an artificially created mechanism, but is determined primarily by managers and leaders in an enterprise and, on this basis, shapes the appropriate or inappropriate understanding and behavior of human resources in the workplace, i.e. it is a prerequisite for bullying or the lack thereof. Managers and leaders are usually the people who need to set the tone for what the organizational culture should be, know it, and implement those specific mechanisms that will best match the performance of people's work and behavior. Closely related to organizational culture is social responsibility, because depending on how it is designed, ethical (or unethical) behavior, ethical work practices and relationships between human resources that cause or limit different forms of bullying.

Of course, the limits of organizational culture and socially responsible behavior in enterprises, as a prerequisite for the occurrence of human factors bullying, can be in a wide range. This will depend on various factors and circumstances that shape the perception of human resources not only towards management but also towards the enterprise as a whole. The reasons are complex, but the presence of workplace bullying can arise from a dysfunctional management context in terms of the abuse of hierarchical power and unreasonable pressure on the human factors to fulfill goals and tasks outside of their job description or pressure for quick results. In one way or another, this creates an imbalance in the relationship between management and contractors, as well as among the contractors themselves, who cross the line of fair competition to their assigned tasks, social conflicts and tension are created, and constructive behavior and teamwork are eliminated. Such negative practices, influenced by organizational culture and lack of ethical understanding of work and behavior, reflect on human resources through workplace bullying.

Such toxic behavior is destructive to any initiatives and good intentions of HR when companies knowingly or unknowingly apply bad practices and unethical behavior in the workplace, creating bullying, stress and discomfort to people. Then human resources think more about their physiological and psychological well-being and to overcome forms of bullying than to create creative strategies at work, to be loyal to the enterprise, to work diligently and motivated, responsibly and safely. That is why human factors bullying in the workplace is one of the big problems of modern business, to which enterprises from all sectors of the economy should pay serious attention and implement strategies for prevention and protection.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the scientific literature [1]–[3], workplace bullying is defined as harmful or unwanted behavior that is repeated regularly in relation to an affected party by one or more

persons who cause physiological or psychological harm through their actions. Usually these actions are purposeful, but sometimes bullying can arise from the inaction or passivity of one person (or group) of people towards another (others), so that unpleasant emotions or harmful health effects occur. The interaction of the human factors in the manifestation of bullying can be from the point of view of the bullies who carry out intentional actions towards others or a defensive reaction of those who are bullied, as a result of which a two-way relationship of negative interaction is created, leading to serious consequences for people's health and behavior, social conflicts and interpersonal animosities leading to escalation of tensions and organizational collapse [4]-[8]. On the other hand, workplace bullying can be through psychological attacks when sabotaging someone intentionally or manifesting in an online environment (cyberbullying) [9]-[11].

One of the insidious aspects of bullying in the workplace is that it is not always visible to others because it can occur without the bullied being overt or with silent resistance in what they are doing at work. In the general context of the problem, human factors bullying in the enterprise arises consciously and unconsciously from the actions and behavior of people who have specific goals to harm someone or simply do not realize that their inaction causes discomfort to others. In any case, a connecting element in this process is the organizational culture and social responsibility of the enterprise, which set the framework of values, beliefs, perceptions, the way of organizing work and the ethical attitude towards people in work activities and informal relationships [12], [13] . They are key dimensions that are subject to influence by top management when it comes to shaping the behavior and action of the human factors in the enterprise, related to the way work is done and the social processes during workplace relationships. Thus, the lack of adequate mechanisms for a positive influence on the organizational culture or the manifestation of unethical labor and social practices in the work process can create conditions for the emergence and spread of human factors bullying, as a form of unwanted behavior, i.e. hindering normal work and communication processes.

In the scientific literature, authors [14], [15] advocate the thesis that the human factors bullying occurs when the organizational culture is not designed to reflect the specific goals of the enterprise and its corresponding strategy, since the same should be unique to the business and emphasize not only on results, but also on human relationships. The latter are extremely important for the work and social climate in an enterprise, because a good organizational culture is a prerequisite for commitment and dedication of human resources, mutual assistance and joint efforts to achieve goals and results, which presumably excludes unregulated management practices, stress, tension, apathy and forms of bullying behavior. According to research by authors [16]-[21], a total of six fundamental dimensions characteristic of organizational culture can be distinguished as a prerequisite for workplace bullying.

The first dimension has to do with the work characteristics in the enterprises, which reflect the imposed work practices and tasks to fulfill the goals. When they do not conform to work standards, professional tension and conditions for bullying arise, which can create conflict between managers and contractors, and this can lead to underperformance.

The second dimension is associated with the use of power and the hierarchical structuring of enterprises, i.e. excessive decentralization and an authoritarian attitude of managers lead to bureaucratic procedures, mechanical implementation of goals and tasks, strict control of activity, high levels of stress and tension, lack of motivation and low job satisfaction. On the other hand, the presence of wide freedom and self-initiative of the human factors without the intervention of the management or its passivity can lead to informal power relations that blur the boundary of the real goals and priorities, to lose the focus of the work, which weakens the effect of the stable organizational culture. These premises are grounds for the emergence of bullying among human resources because interest groups are formed, there is no fair mechanism for sanctioning undesirable behavior and a vacuum is formed between the necessary intervention of the top management and the lack of order in the management system leading to chaos.

The third dimension partly arises from the first because it is about the personal frustration of human resources, as well as the lack of standards and good practices for the performance of work, i.e. goals and objectives, as well as the lack of organizational values to believe in and follow. Usually, this problem arises when ethical norms of behavior are absent or not observed, individualism is stronger than collectivism, in enterprises there is an established normative base, but it is not observed or applied for personal interests and goals. It can then be concluded that human factors bullying is tolerated by top management or, due to objective and subjective factors, is not taken into account when determining human resource policy and effective management practices. When a tendency is formed to violate ethical norms by senior managers and no measures are taken to sanction unregulated behavior practices, this approach is adopted by employees at lower levels in the enterprise, who abuse power and create forms of bullying. Given the strict adherence to the regulatory framework and ethical climate in the work process, the possibility of aggressive behavior, malicious interpersonal attacks or bullying behavior is often unacceptable or reduced to oneoff incidents. Thus, the regulated rules and sanctioning mechanisms for unacceptable behavior at work, including bullying, are a strong motivator for human resources to follow the rules and the good tone of interpersonal communication and professional relationships.

The fourth dimension concerns the social climate, which in the absence of a stable organizational culture leads to interpersonal conflicts and aggression, which can develop into violent behavior and targeted personal or group revenge. This happens when the enterprise is passive to the professional and interpersonal relations of the human factors, allowing to attack or humiliate people with experience and competences that would presumably overshadow incompetent managers and contractors with a desire for power and fast career development. On the other hand, such a trend can lead to a collapse in human relationships and work performance, because the values in an enterprise are transferred to newly appointed team members or those who are transferred from another branch or division of the enterprise. If poor work practices and behaviour, bullying and lack of socialization are imposed, it will deform people's understanding of values, beliefs, perceptions and ethical attitude, which usually leads to turnover, passivity, lack of motivation, fear of punishment and aggression towards received physiological or psychological trauma.

The fifth dimension is associated with bullying in group or team processes, when a person or members of the group (team) are identified who are being bullied for objective or subjective reasons, but in any case not corresponding to normal working practices in the collective. They (the reasons) can be discriminatory, reflect interpersonal preferences, or arise from group divisions, sociopathic forms of bullying and violent behavior.

The sixth dimension arises from the dynamics of business, digitization, innovation and changes that enterprises must carry out, leading to the human factors bullying by excessive work demands, professional overload and fatigue. In other words, profit and efficiency are important, while the well-being of human resources and their needs remain in the background. In another aspect, the excessive overloading of human resources with work and demands to quickly respond to current and potential problems in enterprises can lead to professional burnout or an aggressive state from the pressure to achieve results, which reflects not only on communication and relationships, but also to turn into violent behavior and bullying.

In the scientific literature, authors [22]–[27] study the role of social responsibility from the point of view of the human factors bullying and the negative impact on the activity of the enterprise as a whole. The basis of bullying is the absence or weakly expressed socially responsible behavior towards human resources in terms of ethical practices and neglect of social factors affecting work and behavior. The socially responsible behavior of enterprises is closely related to the organizational culture, emphasizing the emotional state of people and their behavior in the work process, directing the process to the personal characteristics of the person and the interaction in a group (team). The basis of this activity is socially responsible and, in particular, ethical behavior, which has a significant role in overcoming the human factors bullying by unregulated and sloppy management and labor processes, leading to a drop in productivity and staff turnover.

According to authors [28]–[30], one of the main problems of social responsibility towards human resources in enterprises is related to the creation of a suitable working environment where all forms of bullying are ignored when people are satisfied not only with their treatment, but also when ethical rules and procedures are followed in relation to assigned tasks and achieved results. This means having a clear regulation and responsibility for undertaken commitments, a fair attitude to real results and a corresponding system for career, material and non-material stimulation, so as to avoid staff turnover and undermotivation. In addition to this, ignoring the bullying of human resources is supported by causes and initiatives of enterprises to support socially weak employees, those in a difficult life situation or with health problems, including volunteering inside and outside the enterprise.

On the other hand [31]–[34], the socially responsible behavior of enterprises is oriented not only to the well-being of human resources, but also to their participation in social initiatives and charity campaigns, enhancing the image not only of the corporate brand, but also supporting social processes. When human resources feel engaged and

empathetic to the social affairs of enterprises, they tend to cooperation, volunteerism, cohesion, high morale, commitment and responsiveness, which reduces contradictions and opportunities for counterproductive behavior. In this regard, it is important for companies to reduce the forms and effects of human resource bullying by creating and implementing socially responsible behavior programs that will improve the social climate and create a positive impact on the morale, motivation and willingness of people to work for the brand.

As it became clear, organizational culture and social responsibility play a key role in preventing employee bullying in the workplace. Telecommunications companies are no exception. Although telecoms are mostly focused on various ways of generating revenue, they pay no less attention to their social commitment and business ethics towards different sections of the society. For example, in literature [35], a study was done among users of telecommunication services, it is concluded that a large proportion of these users believe that social responsibility practices are just cosmetics, rhetoric and only on paper without any significant impact in real life.

Telecommunications companies implement multifaceted and active social responsibility. They participate in voluntary initiatives that strive for a higher degree of social responsibility. During research in Bulgarian business practice [36], [37] it was established that one of the main areas of social responsibility, including the most initiatives, is in the field of human resources. It covers all levels of the organizational structure of telecommunications enterprises and the social initiatives in it are of a different nature. This fact is not accidental. Undoubtedly, the most dynamically developing sector in the Bulgarian national economy is telecommunications. The reason is the rapid development of technologies, which requires the rapid adaptation of operators, and one of the ways of this is the proper care of employees.

III. METHODS

In the Bulgarian scientific literature, there is a lack of publications from the practice of telecommunication companies that definitively examine the influence of organizational culture and socially responsible behavior on the human factors bullying. The main purpose of the publication is to randomly survey a group of respondents in small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises on the territory of three large cities in the Republic of Bulgaria, in order to determine whether organizational culture and social responsibility are a prerequisite for the human factors bullying and, accordingly, what are the factors and indicators affecting this process. The study in the publication carried out in Bulgarian was telecommunications small and medium-sized enterprises in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas. The study is part of the work of the authors to investigate the aspects of bullying in the workplace and in particular in the field of telecommunications, and the publication presents only some of the results obtained according to specific research parameters in the relevant scientific and practical field.

For the purposes of the study, a survey method was used a Web survey. The main advantage of this method is that it saves time and costs for its implementation. The electronic survey was sent to 36 telecommunications enterprises, and the total number of returned and completed surveys is 68. The respondents are representatives of 29 small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises. Through the publication, the authors apply an approach to derive main factors and indicators, as a prerequisite for the influence of organizational culture and social responsibility on the human resources bullying in the workplace. On the other hand, an opportunity is sought to establish those of them that human resources mark in relation to the prevention of workplace bullying, so as to improve the working atmosphere and social interactions in the investigated telecommunication SMEs.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study carried out in a practical environment showed some activities and processes that are manifested in relation to the human factors bullying in a working environment as a result of the influence of organizational culture and socially responsible behavior in small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises in the territory of three large cities in the Republic of Bulgaria. From the answers of the respondents in the surveyed small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises, factors and indicators that influence the human factors bullying and at the same time people express their position and view on the problem regarding its prevention in the workplace, so as to improve the work process and social relationships in the studied small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises.

The results shown and the discussion on them in the publication reflect a part of the empirical study, as it covers a larger scale for the study of bullying in its various forms and manifestations in small and medium-sized enterprises from the telecommunications industry in the Republic of Bulgaria. To this end, the results and the discussion will be on the main aspects of the problem, without setting out detailed details of the integrity of the study, so as to make a brief announcement of the obtained data from the practical study and to fix the main points of view of the authors.

From Fig. 1 it is evident that respondents were asked about the impact of organizational culture and social responsibility on human factors bullying in the workplace.

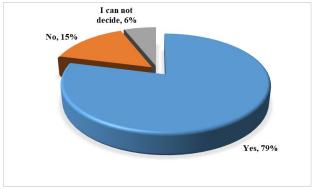


Fig. 1. Answer to the question: "Do you think organizational culture and social responsibility influence human factors bullying in the workplace?"

In Fig. 1 shows the response of the respondents that the organizational culture and social responsibility significantly influence the manifestation of human factors bullying in the workplace - 79% answered with "Yes", only 6% are not sure, and 15% - consider that they do not influence. The

answers of the respondents indicate that the high percentage of positive responses to the question (as confirmed by the next question) are a prerequisite for personally experienced bullying at the workplace or that people have witnessed it, which in one way or another reflected their judgment. Of course, the same applies to the presence of unregulated organizational practices or social problems that have led to a negative attitude of the human factors towards the relevant enterprise and in particular the presence of bullying.

From fig. 2 it is evident that the respondents were asked a question about the work context in which the applied organizational culture and socially responsible behavior could possibly provoke an occasion for bullying in the respective telecommunications company.

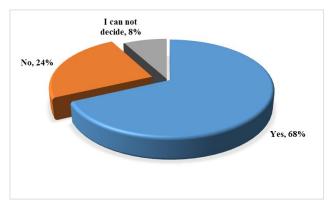


Fig. 2. Answer to the question: "In the general context of work, do the applied organizational culture and socially responsible behavior in your enterprise provoke an occasion for bullying?"

The percentage of positive answers (68%) to this question is not small, as the respondents are of the opinion that the organizational culture and socially responsible behavior of the investigated telecommunications enterprises provoke the presence of workplace bullying. Perhaps this is a normal perception of the human factors towards the manifestation of bullying, because a large part of people associate it with the presence of power in an organization and, accordingly, the possibility, desire, unwillingness or inability of the top management to deal with the causes of its occurrence. In other words, human resources associate bullying with the impact of organizational culture and socially responsible behavior, and the result is the leadership and management style of superiors, i.e. people notice more problems in the way the enterprise is managed and communicated. It follows from this that the presence of a large percentage of respondents experience some form bullying, the parameters of which are set by organizational culture and socially responsible behavior, but this does not mean that it does not seep down the hierarchical chain to the lowest level.

The question for the respondents is important, but also for the management of the surveyed telecommunications companies, because a well-established organizational culture and commitment to social responsibility can create an environment in which workplace bullying of employees is rare, not the rule. Modern organizations, including those in the telecommunications sector, have a different orientation to their organizational culture, which in turn reflects the absence / presence of varying degrees of human factors bullying in the workplace.

From fig. 3 presents the results of the next question asked to the respondents is related to the type of orientation of the

organizational culture in the respective telecommunications company.

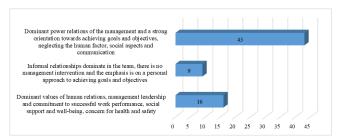


Fig. 3. Answer to the question: "Please indicate what type of orientation characterizes the organizational culture in your enterprise?"

From Fig. 3, it can be established that in the studied small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises, those dominated by power relations of the management and a strong orientation towards achieving goals and objectives, ignoring the human factor, social aspects communication - 43 answered, followed by those dominated by values of human relations, management leadership and commitment to successful work performance, social support and well-being, concern for health and safety - 16 responded. Enterprises in which informal relationships in the collective dominate and lack of management intervention answered only 9. This can be explained by the fact that the processes in the organizations of this sector are based on strict rules and procedures, which necessitates a somewhat similar management approach. However, even more so in the conditions of digital transformation and in the era of artificial intelligence, the role of the human factors should not be neglected, because it is precisely this that makes an organization sufficiently flexible and adaptable in such dynamic conditions [38].

From fig. 4 it is evident that respondents were asked what indicators should include organizational culture and social responsibility to prevent human factors bullying in the workplace.

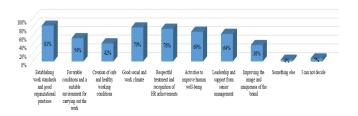


Fig. 4. Answer to the question: "Please indicate what you think are the main indicators that the organizational culture should cover to prevent human factors bullying in the workplace"

The results show that the first place is occupied by the indicator "Creation of working standards and good organizational practices" - 56 respondents, followed by "Good social and working climate" - 54 respondents. The least indicated was the indicator "Improving the image and uniqueness of the brand" - 26 respondents, and in penultimate place "Creation of safe and healthy working conditions" - 29 respondents. These results are understandable, because in recent years, in the conditions of a saturated market, telecommunications enterprises initiate social initiatives that have a positive effect on their reputation and image. When conducting studies in the field

of human resources, as one of the main areas of social responsibility, the efforts of senior management and operational managers are noticed, which are aimed at continuous improvement of safety and healthy working conditions for all workers and employees within the structure.

From fig. 5 it is evident that the respondents were asked about what are the main indicators that should cover the social responsibility to prevent the human factors bullying in the workplace.

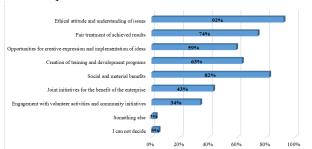


Fig. 5. Answer to the question: "What do you think are the main indicators that social responsibility to prevent human factors bullying in the workplace?"

Regarding the main indicators that should cover the social responsibility to prevent the human factors bullying in the workplace, the most answered for "Ethical attitude and understanding of the problems" - 92% (the respondents of this question and the following two had the opportunity to indicate more than one possible answer, and the percentages obtained are based on the total number of indicated answers, not the number of surveyed respondents), and lastly "Engagement with volunteer activities and public initiatives" - 34%.

From fig. 6 it is evident that the respondents were asked about what are the factors that affect the work and behavior of the human factors in the presence of inappropriate organizational culture and social responsibility leading to workplace bullying.

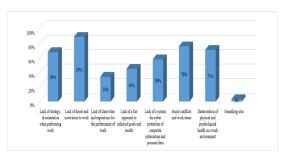


Fig. 6. Answer to the question: "In the presence of inappropriate organizational culture and social responsibility leading to workplace bullying, what do you think are the factors that affect human factors performance and behavior?"

Despite the efforts of telecoms to take care of their employees, there is still a lack, both in organizational culture and social responsibility, of elements that clearly highlight the impact of human factors bullying in the workplace. In the next question, the respondents indicated the factors that affect the work and behavior of the human factors in the presence of inappropriate organizational culture and social responsibility, leading to bullying. The results show that the leading factor for this is "Lack of desire and motivation to work" - 89%, followed by the factor "Social conflicts and

tension" - 76%. With the fewest answers is the factor "Lack of clear rules and regulations for the performance of the work" - 34%, which is dictated by the dominant power relations of the management and a strong orientation towards achieving goals and tasks.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the publication was to study small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises to determine the influence of organizational culture and social responsibility as a prerequisite for human factors bullying in the workplace. Through the publication, results were formed, the interpretation of which showed that in Bulgarian conditions (or at least in the territory of the cities where the empirical study was carried out) organizational culture and social responsibility have a rather negative impact on human resources, and accordingly it can be perceived that are a prerequisite for workplace bullying. It can be argued that this is a natural process of the activity of any enterprise, because organizational culture and socially responsible behavior are a barometer of all phenomena and processes in an organizational context. The study found that the human resources of the investigated small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises are influenced organizational culture and social responsibility, which in the context of work create forms of bullying. They can arise both from the management methods and mechanisms that apply the respective telecommunications enterprises, i.e. at the strategic level, as well as from the policies that are created at the operational level, i.e. human factors personal behavior and workplace relationships.

The study found that in the studied small and mediumsized telecommunications enterprises, the organizational culture and socially responsible behavior in one form or another create human factors bullying, as a result of which conditions and prerequisites are created for this to reflect, both on health and psychological condition of the people. For this reason, an attempt was made to establish the factors and indicators that give rise to human resources bullying and to reveal those of them, which, according to the employees the investigated small and medium-sized telecommunications enterprises, are important preventing the human factors bullying in the workplace. Empirical data in the publication can serve the authors for future research to establish the typological features of the types of bullying by categories of its manifestation, as well as the role of senior management in terms of managerial actions and behaviors forming inappropriate organizational culture and social responsibility, leading to bullying and indecent behavior in the workplace.

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