

UDC: 159.9

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-4665-2018-3-10>

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## WORK POLLUTION IN HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION SECTOR FROM SPAIN AND POLAND

*The purpose of this confirmatory study was to investigate work environment in order to verify the model of individual and organizational antecedents of mobbing in two corresponding samples from Spain and Poland. 3 scales were applied: Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised (NEQ-Re), Overall Personality Assessment Scale (OPERAS), Work Psychosocial Climate Scale (ECPT). Results mainly supported the organizational climate as a source of mobbing. Decreased emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were found among characteristics of victims. Polish version of the ECPT (back translation) was introduced as a reliable and valid measure. Questionable reliability was obtained for 4 out of 5 factors of the OPERAS - Polish version (back translation). Further implications of the results are discussed.*

**Keywords:** workplace mobbing, personality, organizational climate, cross-cultural study.

### Introduction

Research on the workplace climate contamination in professions based on teamwork and constant interaction with people, students, clients, or customers results in fundamentally good indicators of quality of work life perceived by workers. This subjective perception affects not only individuals, but also opinions shared in a social context of the organization. Thus, if a majority of employees show a positive attitude, it is generalized to all members of the organization. However, if the prevailing opinion is rather negative, employees' behavior becomes counterproductive with higher rates of absenteeism or turnover, leading to a poor-quality service (Tous Pallarès, 2009, 2011). Negative psychosocial environment, pollution at work furthermore results in increased levels of stress and frustration, causing hostility and the emergence of mobbing behavior (Leymann, 1996).

### Workplace mobbing as an interpersonal pollutant

The most commonly accepted, academic definition describes mobbing and organizational pollution as:

*Harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction, or process, the bullying behavior has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over a period of time (e.g., about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes*

*the target of systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal strength are in conflict.* (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2011, p.15).

Mobbing stands for a large psychological concern present at the workplace with global prevalence rates ranging from 11% to 18% (Nielsen, Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010). Paradis, Demets, Dion, Tivendell and Pietrulewicz (2014) have introduced a concept of interpersonal pollution, which refers to various, negative factors present in the work environment as contamination in human interactions between employees. Hence, the term covers a wide range of evident, as well as more subtle organizational maltreatments, perceptible in leadership practices, workplace climate, or work organization (Hoel & Beale, 2006; Tepper, 2007; Dion, 2009; cited in Paradis et al., 2014), and might be convincingly applied in the context of workplace mobbing. Recurrent hostile behavior can be classified as a pollutant, due to its detrimental impact on employee's mental health, general well-being and job performance (Carretero-Dominguez, Gil-Monte & Luciano-Devis, 2011; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2012).

However, researchers have identified the organization to be the source of mobbing in a number of cases. For example, higher incidence rates of aversive behavior were observed in large, bureaucratic organizations where a harasser could remain unnoticed (Thylefors, 1987; cited

in Moreno Jiménez, Rodríguez Muñoz, Garrosa Hernández & Morante Benadero, 2005). Quinlan (1999; cited in Moreno Jiménez et al., 2005) claimed that workplace insecurity increases tension between employees and may lead to incivility. Moreno Jiménez et al. (2005) conducted an exploratory study on antecedents of mobbing and found that deficiencies in resources necessary to complete a task had a promoting effect on mobbing behavior (Moreno Jiménez et al. 2005).

Results of a meta-analysis conducted by Topa Cantisano, Depolo & Morales Domínguez (2007) have strongly supported the hypothesis of structural sources of mobbing. Values which are predominant in certain occupational environments create a tolerant atmosphere for psychological terror, and accompanied by organizational maltreatments, account for interpersonal contamination in the workplace (Paradis et al., 2014). As observed by explorers, mobbing can be sometimes considered a semi-rational organizational strategy to accomplish goals or to control performance (García Izquierdo, Meseguer, Soler & Sáez, 2014). From this point of view, it is referred to in the literature as organizational mobbing (Neuberger, 1999; cited in Meseguer de Pedro, Soler Sánchez, Sáez Navarro & García Izquierdo, 2007), or structural mobbing (Salin, 2003; cited in Sánchez Meca, Meseguer de Pedro, Soler Sánchez, García Izquierdo & Sáez Navarro, 2007), or institutional harassment (Hiri-Goyen, 2001; cited in Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007), with unethical workplace climate, and a great concern in terms of interpersonal pollution (Paradis et al., 2014).

#### **Organizational pollution and antecedents of mobbing in organizational pollution**

The hypothesis of organizational antecedents of mobbing has been originally proposed by H. Leymann (1996), who discovered poor working conditions to connect organizations facing this problem. According to his reasoning, psychological terror occurring in a workplace naturally involves employers and managers, as a party which establishes formal boundaries of co-operation (Leymann, 1990; cited in Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2005). It is not without significance that 50-80% of victims are mobbed by their superiors (Einarsen et al., 2005; Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, some accurate remarks from other professionals have signaled that research on organizational causes of mobbing had been frequently deficient in clear theoretical framework and therefore narrowed to a report of significant relationships of multiple variables. Baillien, Rodríguez Muñoz, de Witte, Notelaers and Moreno Jiménez (2011) applied the Karasek's Job Demand-Control model in mobbing explorations. The JDC model explains how the relationship between demands at work and employee's perception of control over tasks influences performance. Baillien et al. (2011) demonstrated that workload positively correlates with the frequency of negative acts, while autonomy was negatively related. What is more, they found a significant interaction effect between related variables, so the risk for mobbing was particularly

high under conditions of high demands and low autonomy. Their results have supported that the JDC model can be used as a relevant theoretical background for mobbing emergence in organizations.

In addition, the importance of social relations, as a factor moderating conflict escalation, has been well established in the literature (Leka & Jain, 2013; Topa Cantisano et al., 2007; Carretero Domínguez et al., 2011). Poor relationships with co-workers and supervisors have been proved to be associated with high stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Warr, 1992; cited in Leka & Jain, 2013). It is subsequently related to lack of trust between employees, which results in increased ambiguity and hostility due to ineffective communication (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; cited in Leka & Jain, 2013). Eventually, uncooperative work environment becomes more susceptible to negative psychosocial factors, such as mobbing (Cohen & Willis, 1985; House & Wells, 1978; cited in Leka & Jain, 2013).

Carretero Domínguez et al. (2011) have proved that social support is a protective factor against harmful effects of mobbing. As further complemented, when work environment does not provide enough support, family and friends can give a helping hand (Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie & Einarsen, 2003; cited in Carretero Domínguez et al., 2011).

#### **Personality of mobbing and organizational pollution victims**

Predominant beliefs maintain that mobbing and work contamination occurs as a reaction to a person with difficult personality. However, researchers have encountered many problems trying to validate this hypothesis (Leymann, 1996). Glasø, Matthiesen, Nielsen, & Einarsen (2007) investigated personality features of people who suffered from mobbing and later compared it with non-victims to generate a victim personality profile. Their analysis resulted in a conclusion that there was no universal type of personality particularly vulnerable to mistreatment. Nevertheless, they found a small group of victims sharing following characteristics: introversion, lower agreeableness, lower conscientiousness, lower openness to experience and higher emotional instability. Furthermore, they discovered emotional stability to be significantly lower among victims than non-victims, confirming the importance of personality factor in conflict escalation (Glasø et al., 2007).

Consequent study on personality profiles among nurses in Norway yielded some contradictory results. High conscientiousness and low agreeableness was shown to have a predictive power over a status of mobbing victim (Lind, Glasø, Pallesen, & Einarsen, 2009). As explained, conscientious workers might be perceived irritating because of their strict and meticulous working style (Pervin et al., 2005; cited in Lind et al., 2009). No effects of Extraversion, Openness to Experience and Neuroticism were reported. Lind et al. (2009) suggested that the relationship between mobbing and personality may be more complex. Vartia (1996; cited in Lind et al., 2009) had

reported that controlling for work environment and work climate could greatly reduce the association between the Neuroticism and mobbing.

Although scientific evidence does not seem to show clear conclusions about personality antecedents of mobbing, it proves their significance. Some researchers are not yet convinced whether individual differences lead to victimization or they result from prolonged exposure to hostile behavior (Leymann, 1996). Targets of mobbing may sometimes take a victim role and, hence, become more predisposed to further attacks (Glasø et al. 2007). Also, some people may have a tendency to react more negatively to hostile acts than the others (Moreno Jiménez et al., 2005). However, it is difficult to examine in a cross-sectional analysis.

### Research objectives and hypotheses

In a view of multiple negative consequences related to organizational contamination and mobbing, the scientific interest in this area has arisen from pragmatic reasons rather than as a theoretical construct (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2012). Scientific attention should be addressed to mobbing as an organizational problem (Leymann, 1996) with supposed effects on entire societies (Agulló & Shepherd, 2000; cited in Rodríguez Carvajal, Moreno Jiménez, Rodríguez Muñoz, Garrosa Henández & Morante Benadero, 2005; Ojzyńska, 2004; cited in Warszewska-Makuch, 2008). Focusing on groups reported to be at increased risk for harassment can contribute to a general improvement of workplace safety (Warszewska-Makuch, 2008; Zdziebło & Kozłowska, 2010). The purpose of this research is to investigate a work environment in order to propose a method of assessing psychosocial costs involved in working with people and, eventually, serve to minimize its negative effects on work group climate.

In this confirmatory study the model of organizational pollution and individual antecedents of mobbing will be tested in a bicultural sample from Spain and Poland. It was originally proposed by Leymann (1996) and extensively explored by Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper (2011).

Accordingly, two general research hypotheses a number of specific suppositions have been formulated.

- Hypothesis 1: There are significant differences in personality dimensions of victims and non-victims of mobbing in context of organizational pollution, measured according to the five-factor model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992; cited in Tous Pallarès, Vigil Colet, Camps & Lorenzo Seva, 2013).

The specific hypotheses refer to speculated results for the five factors of personality:

H1.1: Victims of mobbing show lower Extraversion than non-victims.

H1.2: Victims of mobbing show lower Agreeableness than non-victims.

H1.3: Victims of mobbing show lower Conscientiousness than non-victims.

H1.4: Victims of mobbing show lower Emotional Stability than non-victims.

H1.5: Victims of mobbing show lower Openness to Experience than non-victims.

- Hypothesis 2: Workplace climate correlates with the emergence of negative acts, assuming a 3-factorial structure of the workplace climate (Tous Pallarès, Mayor Sánchez, Espinosa Díaz & Bonasa Jiménez, 2011).

Consecutively, 3 specific hypotheses regarding the workplace climate have been formulated:

H2.1: Work Content relates negatively to the frequency of negative acts.

H2.2: Personal Relations correlates negatively to the frequency of negative acts.

H2.3: Role Definition correlates positively to the frequency of negative acts.

### Research Procedure

Data from Spain and Poland were collected using convenient sampling and chain sampling methods, during June-August 2014 in 4 organizations located in two provinces: Tarragona and Valencia, and during January-March 2015 in 4 organizations from Toruń. A battery of 4 tests was distributed among employees in a pencil-paper form, during or after work hours.

### Measures applied

Initially, the respondents were asked to provide demographic information and answer additional questions concerning their position at work, experience, work time and days of absence.

For assessment of the frequency of mobbing behavior, the Revised Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ-Re) by Einarsen and Raknes (1997; cited in Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007) in Spanish (Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007) and Polish version (Warszewska-Makuch, 2007) was used. The scale shows good internal consistency with the Cronbach's alpha of .89 for the Spanish version and the Cronbach's alpha of .94 for the Polish version (Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007, Warszewska-Makuch, 2007). The main advantage is evaluating the risk of mobbing without employing the terms: *mobbing*, *bullying*, or *harassment*. Thus, the NAQ-Re reduces negative emotions derived from mistreatment, allowing more accurate measurement (Einarsen & Hoel, 2001; cited in Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007).

The Work Psychosocial Climate Scale (ECPT) by Tous Pallarès et al. (2011) was applied in order to evaluate the workers' perception of organizational environment. The ECPT is a set of 16 questions combined into 3 factors: *Work Content*, *Personal Relations*, and *Role Definition*. The authors have demonstrated that the scale is appropriate for psychosocial intervention as a reliable measure with the Cronbach's alpha of .74 (Tous Pallarès et al., 2011). For the purposes of this study, the test has been translated to Polish. The method of back translation has been used to verify the compatibility of items with the original (Ozolins, 2009).

The Overall Personality Assessment Scale (OPER-AS) is a short inventory based on the five-factor model of personality (Costa, McCrae, 1992; cited in Tous Pallarès et al., 2013). It was applied to measure personality traits

free from social desirability and acquiescence effects in 5 dimensions: *Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience*. Test-retest reliability yielded a Cronbach's alpha above .7 for 3 factors and  $\alpha=.7$  for 2 factors, thus the scale shows good psychometric properties (Tous Pallarès et al., 2013). The questionnaire has been validated in a multi-occupational sample of 3,838 people (51% woman) from 13 to 95 years old, so its application is allowed in a wide range of environments (Tous Pallarès et al., 2013). Similarly to the ECPT, for the purposes of this study, the OPERAS had been translated to Polish and later compared with the original by the means of back translation.

**Sample**

Research was conducted in two countries: Spain and Poland, in a sample of 91 workers: 39 from Spain, and 52 from Poland, predominantly women (69.2% in Spain and 90.4% in Poland). Participants were employees of public organizations: hospitals, schools, university administration departments and libraries. The age has been restricted to 50 years or more ( $M=55.10$  years, range 47-65 years in Spain and  $M=53.34$  years, range 46-62 years in Poland). They represent a group frequently reported to be at increased risk of mobbing (Leymann, 1996; Rodríguez Carvajal et al., 2005; Warszewska-Makuch, 2008; Almodovar Molina, Galiana Blanco, Hervás Rivero & Pinilla García, 2011; Kłos, 2011).

**Results**

The SPSS package (version 22.0) was used for data processing and statistical analysis. Victims of mobbing have been diagnosed based on the Leymann criteria (Me-

seguer de Pedro et al., 2007; Warszewska-Makuch, 2007; Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009) in order to establish unequivocal classification between the countries. Hence, subjects who indicated at least 2 negative acts occurring on a weekly or daily basis were labeled as victims (Leymann, 1996).

As revealed, 71.8% of employees from Spain and 73.1% from Poland had encountered a negative act at work during the 6 months preceding study participation. The Leymann criteria (Leymann, 1996) allowed recognition of 5 victims among Spanish respondents (12.9%). 10 victims were found in the Polish sample (15.7%). The most prevalent forms of mobbing were job-related maltreatments. Observed prevalence rates are consistent with other reports (Almodovar Molina et al., 2011; Omyła-Rudzka, 2014).

Spanish workers who were exposed to frequent negative acts obtained lower indicators of the Emotional Stability ( $M=34.20$ ,  $SD=9.68$ ), and Conscientiousness ( $M=40.40$ ,  $SD=9.56$ ) than not exposed employees. The differences were significant at  $p<.05$  (Table 1). Moreover, a moderate, negative correlation was found between the Emotional Stability and the total NAQ-Re score ( $r_s=-.366$ ,  $p<.05$ ) in both groups of victims and non-victims.

In the Polish subset, no differences were found in terms of personality dimensions at  $p>.05$  (Table 1). However, an additional analysis yielded a negative, moderate association between the Agreeableness and the total NAQ-Re score ( $r_s=-.310$ ,  $p<.05$ ). What is interesting, the correlation appeared to be even stronger in the group of non-victims only ( $r_s=-.416$ ,  $p<.01$ ; Figure 1).

Table 1.

**OPERAS: differences in personality dimensions between victims and non-victims of mobbing and organizational pollution, measured by U Mann-Whitney test (Spain N=38; Poland N=49).**

Dimensions	Spanish sample					Polish sample				
	Non-victim		Victim		Difference	Non-victim		Victim		Difference
M	SD	M	SD	M		SD	M	SD		
Social Desirability	60.58	8.50	61.80	5.76	80.00	60.71	7.54	62.20	7.97	190.50
Acquiescence	46.36	6.38	48.20	4.87	68.50	57.81	10.52	55.00	9.26	184.00
Extraversion	44.67	8.53	38.40	10.23	49.50	45.31	7.83	50.30	7.34	134.50
Emotional Stability	48.27	8.87	34.20	9.68	24.00*	45.10	7.07	41.00	8.60	152.50
Conscientiousness	50.73	6.67	40.40	9.56	30.50*	44.81	7.06	42.40	10.23	194.50
Agreeableness	50.27	7.42	46.80	5.36	55.00	47.93	8.79	46.90	9.21	206.00
Openness to Experience	54.30	5.97	50.60	8.71	55.00	46.62	8.87	49.70	7.44	166.50

Note. Average score = 50.

\* $p<.05$  (1-tailed).

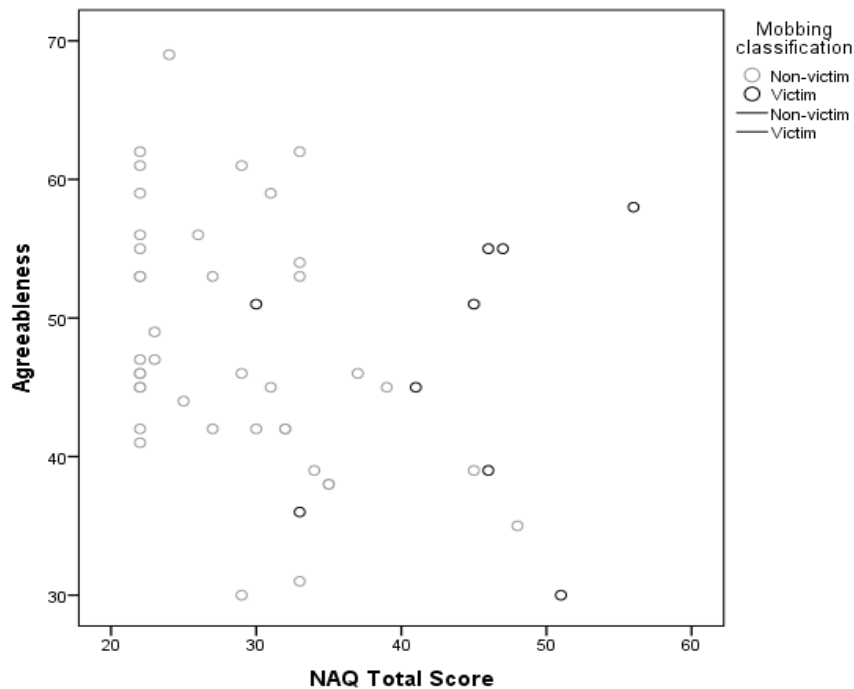


Figure 1. Scatter Plot Presents Scores on the Agreeableness and NAQ-Re Total in the Polish Sample.

Subsequently, strong evidence was provided for organizational pollution antecedents of mobbing at work. In the Spanish sample, employees who were regularly exposed to hostility obtained lower results in terms of the Work Content and Personal Relations, and higher scores on the Role Definition dimension. The differences were

only statistically significant regarding the Personal Relations ( $U=20.00, p<.01$ ; Table 2) and Role Definition ( $U=25.50, p=.01$ ; Table 2), suggesting that the targets of mobbing do not feel comfortable as a part of the organization or the work team (Tous Pallarès et al., 2011).

Table 2.

**ECPT: Mean Scores, SD and Differences in Perception of Workplace Climate Between Victims and Non-Victims of Mobbing and Organizational Pollution in The Spanish (N=38) And Polish (N=49) Sample, Measured By U Mann-Whitney Test.**

Dimensions	Spanish sample				U	Polish sample				U
	Non-victim		Victim			Non-victim		Victim		
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Work Content	58.39	5.00	53.6	9.66	61.50	53.46	9.34	52.00	8.20	172.50
Personal Relations	54.55	4.45	48.4	4.16	20.00**	49.64	10.38	48.30	14.03	195.00
Role Definition	40.79	7.58	57.2	13.68	25.50*	42.33	6.88	57.50	12.30	61.50*
										**

Note. Average score = 50.

\*  $p=.01$  (1-tailed).

\*\*  $p<.01$  (1-tailed).

\*\*\* $p<.001$  (1-tailed).

Consecutive analysis of correlations revealed that the ECPT dimensions were related to the occurrence of mobbing and organizational pollution at work in the Spanish sample (Table 3). The Work Content was moderately, negatively associated with the NAQ-Re total score ( $r_s=-.392, p<.05$ ) and 3 NAQ-Re sub-factors. This factor was also related with the NAQ-Re total score among non-

victims ( $r_s=-.360, p<.05$ ). A moderate, negative association was furthermore found between the Personal Relation and 4 types of harassment, as well as with the NAQ-Re total score ( $r_s=-.468, p<.01$ ). The Role Definition was the strongest and positive correlative to all types of mobbing, and the NAQ-Re total score ( $r_s=.497, p<.01$ ).

Table 3.

**Correlation Matrix of The ECPT Dimensions and The NAQ-Re in The Spanish Sample (N=38): Spearman's Rho Coefficients.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1 Work Content									
2 Personal Relation	.316*								
3 Role Definition	-.319*	-.215							
4 Personal Harassment		-.278	-.423**	.401*					
5 Job-related Harassment		-.394*	-.445**	.571**	.594**				
6 Age or Gender Harassment			-.495**	-.324*	.437**	.361*	.486**		
7 Organizational Harassment			-.305	-.347*	.351*	.560**	.601**	.299	
8 Other Forms of Harassment			-.337*	-.283	.556**	.546**	.557**	.614**	
9 NAQ Total			-.392*	-.468**	.497**	.753**	.893**	.503**	
								.777**	
									.675**

Note: The NAQ total score is a sum of factors' scores.

\* p<.05 (2-tailed).

\*\* p<.01 (2-tailed).

Simultaneously, the perception of the workplace climate was correlated with mobbing emergence in the Polish group. The Work Content moderately, negatively related to all types of mobbing and the NAQ-Re total score ( $r_s = -.437, p < .01$ ; Table 4). Furthermore, a strong, positive association was observed between the Role Definition and all dimensions of the NAQ-Re, as well as the

NAQ-Re total score ( $r_s = .579, p < .01$ ; Table 4). The Personal Relation appeared to be related with the Person-related mobbing and organizational pollution ( $r_s = -.325, p < .05$ ), suggesting high risk of personal attacks at work among people who have poor relationship with co-workers. Interestingly, presented correlations remained significant ( $p < .05$ ) after excluding the group of victims.

Table 4.

**Correlation Matrix of The ECPT and The NAQ-Re in The Polish Sample (N=49): Spearman's Rho Coefficients.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Work Content						
2 Personal Relation		.535**				
3 Role Definition		-.221	-.111			
4 Person-related mobbing		-.504**	-.325*	.575**		
5 Job-related mobbing		-.322*	-.108	.466**	.816**	
6 Physical intimidation		-.375**	-.191	.367**	.601**	.552**
7 NAQ Total Score		-.437**	-.216	.579**	.948**	.940**
						.639**

Note: NAQ Total Score is a sum of factors' scores.

\*p<.05 (2-tailed).

\*\*p<.01 (2-tailed).

Eventually, an analysis of psychometric properties of the translated scales yielded encouraging results. Good internal consistency of the ECPT was shown with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .851. All of the items were correlated with the scale between  $r = .264$  and  $r = .872$ , except for the item 4, which turned out to be unrelated ( $r = .015$ ). Furthermore, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  exceeded .70 for single factors. Although, Jum Nunnally (1978; cited in Lance, Butts & Michels, 2006) has recommended reliabilities above .80, coefficients of .70 have been considered acceptable regarding early stages of research.

The OPERAS was also shown to have good internal consistency with the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .837 (Jum Nunnally, 1978; cited in Lance et al., 2006). Most of the items were sufficiently correlated with the scale between  $r = .204$  and  $r = .652$ . Subsequent calculations showed appropriate internal consistency of the Agreeableness factor ( $\alpha = .725$ ) and questionable internal consistency of the remaining dimensions ( $\alpha < .70$ ). Moreover, some items which were

weakly related or unrelated with the scale, turned out to be sufficiently correlated with single factors. At the same time, other items were shown to have weak association with single factors, although their correlation with the entire scale was adequate. The only item confirmed as an unrelated element of the OPERAS was the item 35 with  $r < .10$  in both cases. Presented results reveal an emerging need for conducting a further analysis in order to confirm the 5-factor structure of the scale.

**Discussion**

This study aimed to examine the relevance of individual and organizational antecedents of mobbing associated with organizational pollution in selected samples from Spain and Poland, introducing the ECPT and OPERAS scales to the Polish context, and proposing a uniform method of assessment.

Results of the present study show a partial congruence with initial hypotheses and previous findings. Distinct personality features were only found among victims

in the Spanish sample. Emotional instability and low conscientiousness emerged as characteristics of workers who suffer from mobbing and organizational pollution in consequence, similarly to the reports from Glasø et al. (2007). Einarsen (1999; cited in Glasø et al., 2007) has distinguished two types of mobbing: predatory and dispute-related, induced by certain personality traits. Susceptibility to negative emotions, concern, irritability, or mood changes might make an impression of weakness hence increase vulnerability to the predatory type of mobbing. Whereas, neglecting duties at work may provoke negative reactions of an organizational polluted environment and dispute-related mobbing (Glasø et al. (2007).

Scientific evidence is not consistent about personality features prevailing among organizational pollution and mobbing victims. In the study of Lind et al. (2009), the Extraversion and Openness to Experience were shown to be irrelevant in predicting the status of a mobbing victim. Congruent results were obtained in this study, as reported differences between victims and non-victims, in terms of these two dimensions were not significant.

However, the initial assumption of the individual antecedents of mobbing in the context of organizational pollution was not confirmed in the Polish sample. At first, presented results may be burden by a significant error of questionable psychometric properties of several dimensions of the translated OPERAS scale (John & Soto, 2007 cited in McCrae, Kurtz, Yamagata & Terracciano, 2011). Secondly, some authors have argued that the workplace climate was the main background for hostility thus any observable differences in personality traits could result from prolonged exposure to psychological terror (Leymann, 1996). Polish people have often demonstrated their increased resistance to pathologies present in the ecosystem of workplace. They seem to be used to mobbing, as if it was a part of an organizational routine. The reason for unfavorable work conditions have been sought in the communist period (Dumiat, 2010).

This study presented explicit evidence for the organizational environment as the main antecedent of mobbing at work in the context of organizational pollution, confirming reports from several previous works (Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2007; Sánchez Meca et al., 2007; Baillien et al., 2011; Carretero Domínguez et al., 2011). Targets of mobbing showed negative perceptions of their work polluted environment, what was related to experienced hostility. The main feature of mobbing is imbalance of power between a victim and a perpetrator (Warszewska-Makuch, 2005). Work-related stressors may exhaust resources needed to cope with difficulties and resist negative effects of incivility. In these conditions an employee becomes an easy target to prolonged terror (Hoel & Salin, 2003; cited in Baillien et al., 2011). Many authors have linked mobbing with weakness and lack of resources (Vartia, 1996; Zapf & Einarsen, 2005; cited in Baillien et al., 2011). Low autonomy at work, poor personal relations, and role ambiguity observed among victims of psychological terror

suggest unsuccessful adaptation to organizational requirements (Tous Pallarès et al., 2011).

At last, some cultural differences were discovered between the Spanish and Polish sample. The psychosocial climate contamination occurred as the strongest correlative to person-related mobbing in the Polish sample and job-related mobbing in the Spanish sample. Van de Vliert, Einarsen and Nielsen (2013) have proposed the climato-economic theory of cultures to understand mobbing emergence. Poland was found among survival cultures. It was characterized by seeking economic security and suspiciousness towards other people (Van de Vliert et al., 2013). On the contrary, Spain was suggested to be oriented towards self-expression. This culture would rather be open for other people and focused on the quality of life (Van de Vliert et al., 2013). Insufficient economic resources against threatening climatic conditions might cause frustration and suppression of hostility in more subtle forms of aggression, such as mobbing and organizational pollution (Fisher & Van de Vliert, 2011; cited in Van de Vliert et al., 2013). Simultaneously, difficult environment may strengthen interpersonal bonds, creating closed groups with strict social rules (Richter & Kruglanski, 2004; cited in Van de Vliert et al., 2013). Acquiescence effect and a negative correlation between agreeableness and exposure to hostile acts were observed in the Polish sample, corroborating the tendency to conform to the group and eliminate outsiders.

#### **Study limitations and suggestions for future research**

There are several limitations to the present study. Primary weaknesses refer to the sample size and the sample structure. Due to convenient sampling method and a small number of mobbing victims, the generalization of the results should be made very carefully. Questionable psychometric properties of the OPERAS scale furthermore support the need to replicate this study in an extended sample. Finally, analyzed data comes from self-reports accounting for a certain bias. Mobbing behavior always appears within a specific organizational pollution context and victims may tend to emphasize the workplace in their causal attributions. Data collection from multiple sources could bring additional insight (Bowling & Beehr, 2006).

#### **Concluding remarks**

Previous research has strongly supported the impact of negative organizational pollution climate in mobbing emergence (Topa Cantisano et al., 2007). While, no consistent outcomes on personality characteristics of victims and non-victims of mobbing have been yielded so far, it has been suggested as an important factor (Glasø et al., 2007). This subject has never been examined by employing the ECPT and OPERAS. In a view of detrimental consequences related to prevailing hostility among employees (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Einarsen & Nielsen, 2012), the introduction of short and simple research tools might support future work.

Findings presented in this article outline the profile of a mobbing victim and organizational pollution concentrated around the negative perception of the work envi-

ronment, emotional instability, decreased conscientiousness or disagreeability. It can serve as a reference in development of managerial strategies targeted at increasing

employees' autonomy, providing a clear ecosystem structure, and supporting team integrity in order to prevent interpersonal pollution at work (Paradis et al., 2014).

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#### «ЗАБРУДНЕННЯ» РОБОЧОГО КЛІМАТУ У СФЕРАХ МЕДИЦИНИ ТА ОСВІТИ В ІСПАНІЇ ТА ПОЛЬЩІ

Мета дослідження полягає у вивченні робочого середовища з тим, щоб запропонувати метод оцінки соціально-психологічного навантаження, пов'язаного з роботою з людьми, і, в остаточному підсумку, мінімізувати його негативні наслідки для створення гарного психологічного клімату на робочому місці. Було використано три шкали: Опитувальник негативних дій, Шкала загальної оцінки особистості, а також Шкала психологічного клімату на роботі. Дослідження проводились у двох країнах: Іспанії та Польщі. Вибірку склав 91 працівник: 39 – з Іспанії, 52 – з Польщі, переважно жінки (69,2% - в Іспанії та 90,4% - у Польщі). Учасниками були працівники громадських організацій: лікарні, школи, університети та бібліотеки. Вік респондентів становив 50 років і більше, адже вони представляють групу підвищеного ризику мобінгу. Результати проведеного дослідження показали, що організаційний клімат можна розглядати як «джерело бойових дій» (мобінг). Серед характеристик «постраждалих» було виявлено зниження емоційної стійкості та сумлінності. Було виявлено деякі культурні відмінності між іспанською та польською вибірками. Психосоціальне перенавантаження у польській вибірці було спровоковано людьми, а в іспанській – самою роботою. Польська версія Шкали психологічного клімату на роботі (зворотний переклад) показала себе як надійний та дієвий засіб дослідження. Сумнівна валідність була зафіксована для 4 з 5 факторів польської версії (зворотний переклад) Шкали загальної оцінки особистості. У статті запропоновано деякі рекомендації щодо покращання робочого клімату та зниження соціально-психологічного навантаження у професійній сфері «людина – людина».

**Ключові слова:** робочий клімат, особистість, організаційний клімат, міжкультурне дослідження.

*Sumbitted on January, 24, 2018*