

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE


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## Mobbing and corporate social responsibility: does the status of the organisation guarantee employee wellbeing and intentions to stay in the job?

**JEL Classification:** M14

**Keywords:** *workplace mobbing; employees' emotional state; employee intentions; CSR; Poland & Lithuania*

### Abstract

**Research background:** In spite of abundant evidence that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributes to improving the emotional state of employees as stakeholders and can serve as a useful tool for reduction of their turnover in organizations, until now, it remains unclear how the different status of CSR is related to consequences accompanying mobbing.

**Purpose of the article:** This study compares the emotional state and intentions of Polish and Lithuanian organizations' employees who have experienced mobbing with regard to the status of CSR. The paper presents part of the results of a wider study conducted in two neighbouring states, which are exclusively related to the employees' emotional state and employee intentions after experiencing mobbing in the workplace.

**Methods:** The research sample involved 823 respondents employed in Lithuania and Poland. The questionnaire survey was conducted using the questionnaire "Mobbing as a Psychosocial Stressor in the Organizations Accessing and Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility — MOB-CSR". Comparisons are made with regard to and CSR and relate to Lithuania (LT) and Poland (PL), when organisations are divided into three groups: (I) Is CSR; (II) Seeks to be-come CSR

and (III) Does not seek to become CSR. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test were used as the research methods.

**Findings & Value added:** CSR is related to employees' better emotional state and lesser intentions to leave the organisation, but the study revealed unexpected results showing that according to certain parameters, the situation in the organisations seeking CSR was better than in those already declaring this status (e.g. the feeling of hopelessness, reluctance to seek better results, etc.). It is discussed why the results between countries that have similar historical experience and are culturally close differ. The conclusions emphasize the necessity for practitioners and researchers to evaluate the impact of change on employees' emotional state and intentions at different stages of CSR implementation more carefully. Besides, the results revealed a significant impact of the different status of enterprises with regard to CSR on employees' emotional state and intentions to stay in the job. This article contributes to the literature analysing organizational management by filling gaps in empirical research on CSR, mobbing, employees' emotional state and intentions in different cultures.

## Introduction

Over the past two decades, the concept mobbing has gained currency in management and organizational psychology literature (Vandekerckhove & Commers, 2003; Baillien *et al.*, 2008, 2014, 2017; Kovacic *et al.*, 2017; Minářová *et al.*, 2020). Gharleghi *et al.* (2018) highlight that mobbing has a significant effect on employees' workplace behaviour, resulting in decreasing job involvement, labour productivity (Soljan *et al.*, 2008; Terzioglu *et al.*, 2016; Rasool *et al.*, 2020) and increasing absenteeism and termination of employment (Yildiz, 2018; Rasool *et al.*, 2020). Severe consequences for the organization and victims are determined by the specificity of this phenomenon. Knowingly, the concept mobbing has been perceived by Leymann (1996) as attacks by a group of co-workers that recur at least once a week and last for at least six months. Due to its importance, authors such as Angeles *et al.* (2012), Mardanov and Cherry (2018) addressed its effect on employees' state of health and quality of life. Other authors accentuate work-related professional and social consequences to the victim (Vartia, 2001; Duffy & Sperry, 2007, 2012).

Although there are no doubts about the negative effect of mobbing, research shows uneven manifestation of its forms in the different cultures of the world (Escartin *et al.*, 2011; Spector *et al.*, 2014) or even in neighbouring countries (Arenas *et al.*, 2015, Meriläinen *et al.*, 2019a, 2019b). A study conducted in 44 countries by Van de Vliert *et al.* (2013) enabled to state that negative interrelationships at work were more frequent in poorer countries, while according to Power *et al.* (2013), in the regions focusing on higher labour productivity, bullying is more perceived as acceptable. Therefore, the question arises whether these conditions are valid in Europe, characterised by considerable cultural differences and economic development

disparities, and where Central and Eastern European countries distinguish themselves. Several studies demonstrate that jobs in these countries are characterised by a significantly higher risk of mobbing (Kovacic *et al.*, 2017; Meriläinen *et al.*, 2019a, 2019b), however, Zapf *et al.* (2020), who confirm this trend, maintain that it is difficult to draw unambiguous conclusions about the extent of prevalence of mobbing in different regions of the continent, all the more so as most studies are conducted in Northern and Western Europe. Nevertheless, despite the increasing interest in the mobbing phenomenon in Eastern and Central Europe in recent years, it still remains an unresolved problem (Minářová *et al.*, 2020).

Some authors (e.g. Lewicka-Strzalecka, 2006; Wilk, 2018; Tetrevova, 2018; Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020), looking for the ways to solve the mobbing problem, focus on the corporate social responsibility (CSR). The CSR includes ethical, economic and legal responsibilities towards stakeholders (Carroll, 1991, 1999; Schwartz & Carroll, 2003; Androniceanu, 2019) and is defined as actions that increase social good, going beyond the interests of the enterprise and legal requirements (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Therefore, it is maintained that the CSR policy that is based on the Code of Ethics and allows to regulate of employees' and managers' behaviour (Chudzicka-Czupała *et al.*, 2017), along with the commitments to ensure employees' physical and psychological well-being (Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene, 2015) help to avoid mobbing.

Given the aforementioned, and due to the fact that the relationship between mobbing and the CSR has not received considerable attention from management scholars (Carbo, 2009; Vveinhardt *et al.*, 2017), the authors of this paper seek to fill in a gap in management literature through addressing the relationship between the previously mentioned two variables in Polish and Lithuanian organizations.

We start by reviewing the existing literature on mobbing and its relation to the CSR, focusing mostly on the consequences of this phenomenon to the employees who have faced it. The following section presents materials and methods used in our study. It is followed by research results, as well as their discussion. Then, we summarize the obtained empirical results and the final part of the paper concludes, presents limitations of the study and provides directions for future research.

## Literature review and empirical hypotheses development

### *Mobbing*

One may state that it is a multidimensional phenomenon analysed from different standpoints, and studies on mobbing carried out across the world have considered a wide range of factors. Moreover, workplace mobbing is encountered in countries with different level of development as well as in various sectors of industry. Undoubtedly, no country can escape this phenomenon. Diverse research areas reveal the relevance of the studied phenomenon.

Mobbing studies by Leymann (1990, 1993, 1996) became a powerful incentive to research and analyse extremely harmful negative relationships between employees. Leymann (1996, p. 170) divided the activities of harassment used in the process of mobbing into five large groups: the group of actions making impact on self-expression and communication; the group of actions influencing opportunities to take part in social interactions; the group of actions directed at attacking reputation, authority; the group of actions of encroachment on professional and life quality; the group of actions of direct attacks in the health area (Leymann, 1996, p. 170). The latter case includes hazardous assignments, physical danger or physical assaults, and active sexual harassment. The distinguished actions of mobbing were later proved by various studies in different countries (Zapf & Kuhl, 2000; Katrinli *et al.*, 2010; Leon-Perez *et al.*, 2013).

One should, however, add that psychological and medical studies on mobbing have expanded beyond the boundaries of these disciplines, where the phenomenon was related not only to the employees' stress, health disorders, but also to dysfunctions of management of the organization, unfavourable organizational climate, loss of human capital, economic loss, etc. For example, mobbing in employees' relationships is often analysed problem in the literature devoted to HRM and business ethics. At present, mobbing is regarded as an increasingly relevant topic in management research (Jacobson *et al.*, 2013, p. 82).

A lot of pieces of research on mobbing which analyse rude employees' behaviour in different aspects have been conducted in different countries. One claims that an unhealthy organisational culture and dysfunctional psychological climate create favourable conditions for occurrence of mobbing (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003; Žukauskas & Vveinhardt, 2011). Furthermore, the findings by Notelaers (2010) confirmed that organisational reasons (i.e. system of work organization), determine the occurrence and escalation of mobbing. Very high job requirements and weak job control are related to

the appearance of a target that experiences severe bullying (Notelaers, 2010, p. 113). In addition, the slackness to report violators, liberal penalties and the absence of appropriate organizational rules facilitate the development of workplace mobbing (Horvat & Pagon, 2012, p. 159). Shallcross *et al.* (2010, p. 27) add that in the case of mobbing, the behaviour is usually hidden in informal networks, friendships, “loyalty”, and it enables the formation of powerful mechanisms of emotional abuse, including those related to human resource management practices.

Sometimes mobbing causes dysfunction of relationships between employees. As a result, negative consequences, including, *inter alia*, resignation of employees may appear (Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020). Research conducted in different countries show that the consequences for victims may be devastating. According to Yildirim and Yildirim’s (2006) survey, 10% of them ‘considered committing suicide sometimes’. Other research brought equally negative consequences and respondents mentioned health and sleep problems (Ovayolu *et al.*, 2014), lower job satisfaction and isolation (Erdogan & Yildirim, 2017), feeling tired and stressed, headaches and irregular sleeping (Zacharová & Bartošovič, 2016). Of course, these negative phenomena also have substantial impact on both the financial and non-financial situation of the companies. One should also add that problems in organization of the processes inside the companies may turn into a factor provoking mobbing (Majerova 2015; Majerova *et al.*, 2015; Groucutt *et al.*, 2018) or creating conditions for its escalation.

### *Emotional state and stay in the job*

The emotional state of employees shows how persons feel, respond to processes taking place in the organization’s environment (Tzafrir & Hareli, 2009; Villani *et al.*, 2017) and allows to predict further behaviour. On the one hand, although the emotional state of employees significantly depends on how the person himself/herself is able to cope with worrying situations at work (Cheng *et al.*, 2014; Kinnunen *et al.*, 2010), on the other hand, a positive or negative state depends on objective circumstances determining certainty (Callea *et al.*, 2019; Vander Elst *et al.*, 2010), security related to employee protection and support (Sverke *et al.*, 2019). Job insecurity is a subjectively experienced threat of having to give up one’s job sooner than one would like (Näswall & De Witte, 2003), but research findings may vary from country to country. For example, a study conducted by Näswall and De Witte (2003) in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden has shown that manual workers, older employees and those with lower levels of education experienced higher levels of insecurity, while in Germany the

link between job insecurity and the early career was observed (Klug *et al.*, 2019). Another study shows that greater responsibility for the employee welfare, taken by enterprises, in ensuring the basic security need can have a positive effect on the employee's relationship with the enterprise itself (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). In other words, the employee's emotional state in the organization depends on a set of subjective and objective circumstances, which depends to a large extent on the policy implemented by the organization. Still, an emotionally insecure and dissatisfied employee will not necessarily make a quick decision to leave the job, but it all has to do with whether he/she intends to stay in it for a longer term (McGinley & Mattila, 2020; Supartha, 2019). Research shows that, on the one hand, job insecurity promotes the appreciation of one's workplace (Reiter, 2010) and on the other hand, the search for better conditions is negatively associated with staying in the same job for a longer period of time (Mussagulova *et al.*, 2019). Besides, it is also observed that even people with higher levels of education, who have encountered difficulties, tend to emigrate to other countries not only from the post-Soviet space (Groutsis *et al.*, 2020; Lapshyna & Düvell, 2015; White, 2016).

### *Mobbing and social responsibility*

From the perspective of the stakeholder theory, which Garriga and Mele (2004) attributed to the group of institutional theories, a physically and psychologically safe, healthy work environment and risk prevention are an integral part of the CSR policy (Montero *et al.*, 2009; Liu *et al.*, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2020; Zulfıqar *et al.*, 2019). The organisation's emotional environment, climate can explain the employee's intention to leave or stay (Shim, 2010; Vivilaki *et al.*, 2019; Lan *et al.*, 2019). Studies show that negative relationships negatively affect employees' emotional and physical state (Vveinhardt *et al.*, 2018; Lever *et al.*, 2019), emotional commitment to the organization (Lopez-Cabarcos *et al.*, 2016), and promote the intention to leave (Berthelsen *et al.*, 2011; Laschinger & Fida, 2014; Hollis, 2015; Hsieh *et al.*, 2019). Meanwhile, implementation of employee welfare tasks under CSR has a positive effect on employees' emotional state due to reduced mobbing (Vveinhardt *et al.*, 2018). A study conducted by Vveinhardt *et al.* (2018) in Lithuania shows that employees of CSR-oriented companies feel better and are less inclined to leave the organization compared to companies that pay less attention to social responsibility. That's why one can state on the direct or indirect benefit of being socially responsible to the enterprises (Gkorezis & Petridou, 2017). That is because CSR organizations may focus on external stakeholders and image retention

(Czubala, 2016). The emphasis on CSR positively influences employees' attitudes towards their workplace (Gharleghi *et al.*, 2018, p. 10), making them feel happier and more likely to stay. However, according to some authors (e.g., Liu *et al.*, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2020), despite abundant research on external stakeholders, the impact of CSR from the perspective of employees' security has not been sufficiently investigated. Moreover, no further evidence that would be based on comparisons of the different positions of companies with regard to CSR in several countries could be found.

According to Lin-Hi *et al.* (2015), CSR also causes respective expectations of corporate behaviour for stakeholders. The expectancy theory, on the one hand, shows how CSR affects job attractiveness in a career context (Lin *et al.*, 2012; Tsai *et al.*, 2016; Tiron-Tudor *et al.*, 2019), and on the other hand, reveals the relationship between personal expectations and the negative reaction of co-workers, manifesting itself by bullying (Skogstad *et al.*, 2011; Samani & Singh, 2014; Paul & Kee, 2020). That is, employees' productivity related to career expectations provokes mobbing, the encounter with which leads to disappointment in organizational justice (Adoric & Kwartuc, 2007; Afe *et al.*, 2019), and disappointments become the cause of terminated psychological contract and intentions to leave the job (Meriläinen *et al.*, 2019a, 2019b). Hosmer and Kiewitz (2005) see close links between organizational justice, which expresses the perception of honesty, and stakeholder theories. According to them, honesty of the organization, perceived by stakeholders, determines change in their behaviour.

Nevertheless, only a few articles examining workplace mobbing/bullying in the context of CSR were detected in the scientific research database (the search was performed in Web of Science, Sagepub, Springer, Ebsco). For example, it is noted that the implementation of the CSR agenda can reduce bullying and harassment, which encourage employees to leave the organization (Ram, 2018; Vveinhardt *et al.*, 2018), but it has been found that the prevalence of mobbing was lower in CSR-implementing organizations, although the phenomenon was not completely eliminated (Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020). In addition, Zhao *et al.* (2020) has pointed out that a better understanding of stakeholders' motivation can have a positive effect in reducing corporate hypocrisy that is also reflected by tolerance to bullying.

### *Cultural and economic context*

*Cultural context.* Although the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are generally attributed to the region of post-communist states, and in the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Poland and Lithuania formed the Republic of the Two Nations, this does not eliminate the differences determined by certain cul-



tural values (Borker, 2012). From the perspective of the expectancy theory, it is attempted to explain the influence of different cultural conditions on the attitude towards CSR (Sieminski & Krukowski, 2018), motives (Geiger *et al.*, 1998), corporate management (Zhang *et al.*, 2006), and involvement in interpersonal conflicts (Friedman *et al.*, 2006). Some studies demonstrate that the link between mobbing, employees' emotional state and intentions to change a job may also depend on a specific cultural context. For example, Ahmad and Kaleem (2019) compared how workplace mobbing had affected intentions to leave the job in Australian and Pakistani companies. It has been found that negative interrelationships encourage intentions to change the job because they have a negative impact on emotional well-being. However, national culture was mitigating this effect and the impact of negative experiences in the workplace on well-being and intentions to change the job was weaker in Pakistanis' case than in Australians' case. Besides, considering the oriental cultural context, Majeed and Naseer (2019) argue that through the mechanism of experienced eustress, bullying may improve job performance, increase career success, and creativity. However, as stated earlier, inclusion of social responsibility in the organisational agenda has a positive impact both on the organisation itself, as well as its perception by the environment (one should, however, state that there are some opponents of the CSR concept — see e.g. Chwistecka-Dudek, 2016).

*Economic context.* However, economic and labour market indicators that may influence different employee behaviour show certain differences. First, the unemployment rate in the two countries differs. In 2019, the average unemployment rate in Lithuania was 6.3 percent (male unemployment was higher than female) (The Official Statistics Portal. Labour market in Lithuania). Meanwhile, in Poland it was much lower — 3.5 percent (European Central Bank. Statistical Data Warehouse), and there were slightly more unemployed women than men. This is related to the different effect produced by market-oriented labour regulation policy, which increased unemployment in Lithuania, like in Latvia and Slovenia, and unlike in Poland (Bayar & Maxim, 2020). In addition, there are differences in the influence of trade unions and the traditions of the social dialogue itself, which are rather weak in Lithuania (Kalanta, 2020); thus, employees here may feel less secure (Mai *et al.*, 2018) and less likely to change jobs. The change in GDP over the last five years also differed: in Lithuania it increased from 2 to 4.3; while in Poland, from 4.2 to 4.5 (Eurostat. Real GDP growth rate — volume).



All of this enables to assume that although CSR in general should reduce the manifestation of mobbing in the organization, cultural differences can affect the attitude towards CSR, its impact on employee relationships, and employees' intentions to stay in the job or leave it.

Based on the results of the performed analysis of the scientific literature and the insights of the authors of this article, the following hypotheses were raised before starting the survey:

**Hypothesis 1:** *In the organisations that do not seek to become socially responsible, employees' emotional state will be the worst, thus resulting in highest employees' intention to leave the job.*

**Hypothesis 2:** *Differences between organizations' CSR status, employees' emotional state and employee intentions are not statistically significant in Lithuanian and Polish organisations.*

## **Research methodology**

### *Sample*

In this study, the choice of the two countries was determined by the fact that until the 19th century, Lithuania and Poland functioned in Europe as The Republic of the Two Nations that had common law, many creators of art, historical and political personalities are considered a common cultural heritage, and before the Soviet occupation, a part of Lithuania was mostly Polish. In addition to the significant role played by Catholicism for a large share of citizens, which is related to civic self-awareness (Müller, 2011), comparing the nearest regions of Poland and Lithuania, Pawlewicz *et al.* (2020) drew attention to the similarities in the socio-economic potential, as it was influenced by similar factors, including socio-economic change that took place in both states in the 1990s and the accession of states to the European Union in 2004. Some studies also show similarities in entrepreneurial problems (Greblikaite *et al.*, 2016), education (Vandenheede *et al.*, 2014) and values, which distinguish Lithuania and Poland from other post-Soviet states (Yen *et al.*, 2020).

The conception of this study was based on previously separately conducted studies on mobbing and CSR. No research works have been found in scientific research databases on employees' intentions to leave the job in the intercultural context of mobbing and CSR. For this reason, enterprises declaring CSR in Poland and Lithuania were randomly selected. As not all

enterprises seeking CSR have completed this procedure, they have formed a second group. The third group consisted of randomly selected enterprises that did not seek CSR and did not declare it. This approach was chosen because it allows to compare the situation of different enterprises in terms of CSR.

Simple random sampling was applied. Random numbers were obtained using the Random Number Generator and by selecting organizations from databases of the national registers of legal entities, whose employees were surveyed upon the receipt of the management's consent.

The survey was conducted in 2019. Because the survey was conducted remotely, after stopping the survey, the survey platform recorded that 945 (Poland) and 742 (Lithuania) respondents started and did not finish filling in the questionnaire; thus, the overall response rate of properly completed questionnaires was 43.7% (PL) and 55.3% (LT).

### *Procedures*

The total number of employed persons in Lithuania in 2019 was 1 287 920, and the total number of employees in Poland at the beginning of 2019 was 16 409 000. The required sample for this study was calculated using Schwarze's (1992) formula:

$$n = \frac{N z^2 p (1-p)}{\varepsilon N + z^2 p (1-p)}, \quad (1)$$

when  $N$  is the size of the population,  $p$  is proportion,  $z$  is a standard Z-score,  $\varepsilon$  is the margin of error.

For  $p = 0.5$ ,  $z = 1.96$  and  $\varepsilon = 0.05$ , the required sample for Lithuania is 384 respondents, and for Poland it is 384 respondents too. Using the questionnaire survey method, this study involved 823 employees of Polish and Lithuanian organizations. Our survey involved 410 respondents from Lithuania (hereinafter, LT) and 413 respondents from Poland (hereinafter, PL), which reflects the surveyed population of each country.

After obtaining the consents of the enterprise's managers, invitations to participate in the study were sent to their employees, emphasizing the principle of free participation, providing guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, and committing to publish the data only in a summarised form.

The questionnaire was available on an online platform designed for surveys; i.e., the questionnaire survey was conducted remotely. This platform allows to activate certain protections; therefore: (1) the function that prevents respondents to fill in the questionnaire from the computer with the

same IP address was activated; (2) all questions were mandatory — this means that respondents could not send their answers if they had not answered at least one question; (3) the function blocking responses with equal ratings was activated. Due to all of these protections there were no inappropriately filled or incomplete questionnaires in our survey.

### *Measures*

The survey was conducted selecting the questionnaire validated in various Lithuanian samples “Mobbing as a Psychosocial Stressor in the Organizations Accessing and Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility — MOB-CSR” questionnaire (Vveinhardt & Andriukaitienė, 2015; Vveinhardt *et al.*, 2017). This questionnaire was modified and adapted by preparing it in Polish and English languages (more detailed in: Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020). The questionnaire adaptation process consisted of nine conditional stages.

At the 1st stage, our task was to find four independent and translators who were not familiar with each other (two translators who had to translate the questionnaire into Polish and two translators who had to translate the questionnaire into English), so that later their translations could be compared. Polish language linguists translated the Lithuanian version of the questionnaire into Polish, and English language linguists translated the questionnaire into English.

At the 2nd stage, the synthesis of two Polish translations and two English translations was performed, comparing statements to the Lithuanian version of the questionnaire.

At the 3rd stage, the synthesis of translations into both languages was assessed by performing expert assessment. Experts were selected according to the following criteria: PhD in Social Sciences, acquired not later than 5 years ago, the field of science: management and/or psychology; the main research object in the publications of the last five years is workplace mobbing, corporate social responsibility or a research area is close to these.

At the 4th stage, the authors revised wordings of statements, taking into account the experts’ average score and comments. In the form given to experts, the suitability of statements could be evaluated from 1 point to 5 points. It was foreseen to refuse statements with the average rating of 3.5 and below, but there were no such ratings. Statements with the average rating above 3.5 but less than 5 were also revised.

At the 5th stage, the survey of the target population, involving 6 respondents, was conducted. Purposefully, 3 persons were chosen, whose mother tongue is Polish; and 3 persons, whose mother tongue is English.

Respondents who participated in the target survey represented various age groups (18–30; 31–45; 46–60 year olds' groups), different positions (managers; ordinary employees who did not have subordinates; workers; i.e., persons doing physical work), had various education (higher university; upper secondary; primary).

At the 6th stage, after testing with the target population, the wordings of statements were revised; i.e., respondents' observations were taken into account by changing the scientific language into spoken language so that it is understandable to people with different education and positions.

At the 7th stage, two translators who did not know each other and who did not participate in the second stage of questionnaire adaptation did a back translation of the questionnaire that was revised according to all comments.

At the 8th stage, the questionnaire was reviewed after back translations, comparisons with questionnaire versions in three languages (Lithuanian, English, Polish) were made, and after minor corrections, the final version of the questionnaire intended for conducting the study was prepared.

At the 9th stage, after conducting the survey, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranging from 0.75 (the lowest value) to 0.96 (the highest value) was calculated for the subcategories of the questionnaire (for more details see: Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020).

Statements diagnosing workplace mobbing as a psychosocial stressor were negatively coded, while statements diagnosing corporate social responsibility factors in most cases were coded positively; therefore, recoding of the latter was performed. To test the hypotheses, The Mann-Whitney Wilcoxon Test (also known as the Mann-Whitney U test) was chosen, which compares the shift in the location of distributions. In addition, non-parametric criteria to compare three or more distributions were employed. These were the Kruskal-Wallis H test, which is a nonparametric equivalent of a one-factor analysis of variance.

## **Results**

Respondents were divided into three groups according to CSR status: (I) are CSR — 418 respondents in the total sample; (II) seek CSR — 246 respondents in the total sample; (III) do not seek CSR — 159 respondents in the total sample (Tables 1–4). Using the Chi-Square test (Table 1), employees' emotional state was analysed in two ways: by dividing according to 14 characteristics and by combining them. In both cases, calculations demonstrated that in most cases, the status of organization differed statistically

significantly. Although in both countries, employees' emotional state in the organisations seeking CSR and organisations declaring CSR was significantly better than in the organisations that did not seek CSR in their aims, the situation according to two remaining parameters singled out. It means that statistically significant differences with regard to the status were found only in the Polish case (the best emotional state was found in the organisations that have declared social responsibility; and worst, in the organisations that have not declared). According to individual characteristics indicating employees' emotional state, statistically significant differences were found only in Poland (except for the reluctance to seek better results and the feeling of hopelessness, where the situation coincided in both countries). Hence, in Lithuanian organisations, their status in terms of CSR does not have a significant impact on employees' emotional state. Besides, trends came to prominence that in some cases, especially in Lithuania (e.g., psychologically frustrating relationships, the feeling of hopelessness, experienced stress, the need to visit doctors due to deteriorated health condition, etc.), employees felt better in organizations seeking CSR than in the ones that already had this status, although differences were significant not in all cases. Meanwhile, in Poland, differences are significant in cases such as the feelings of hopelessness, the lack of strength to do the job in a quality manner, fatigue at the end of the working day. This allows to state that, however, only the differences recorded in Polish organisations are statistically significant. Although no statistically significant differences were found in Lithuania (found only in these statements: "Think that they are in a completely hopeless situation in this job" and "No longer have a wish to seek best work performance"), the percentages show identical trends as in Poland.

The results of the Chi-Square test (Table 2) showed that employees' intentions to leave the organisation were related to the state of the organisation's social responsibility, but trends in both countries significantly differed. Intentions to terminate employment relationships were most rarely reported in Polish companies declaring CSR, and differences were statistically significant. In turn, in Lithuania, the least likely to leave the job were employees of organisations seeking social responsibility, although differences between holders of different status were not big and not statistically significant. In most cases, according to individual indicators, employees of Polish organizations that have declared CSR showed greater willingness to remain in the current organisation, compared to the organisations that were still seeking such status, although in the latter, there were less employees stating that they could no longer work and that they would not work long in the current conditions. In other words, although the formally reached status

influenced intentions that are more favourable to the organisation, such status is also related to more radical dispositions of the part of employees to leave the job. Again, only differences recorded in Polish organizations are statistically significant, while Lithuanian percentages show similar trends to those in Poland.

### *Testing hypothesis 1*

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed (Table 3) in both countries. The first hypothesis was tested using the Kruskal-Wallis H test. Analysing subcategories *Employees' emotional state* and *Employee intentions* separately for Lithuanian and separately for Polish cases, statistically significant differences were found everywhere. Irrespective of whether Lithuanian organisations' employees have experienced or have not experienced mobbing, their emotional state is worst in those organizations that do not seek to become CSR. The situation is similar with employee intentions to leave their workplace. In Polish organisations, the worst emotional state of employees and their pessimistic intentions are found in those organizations that do not seek to become CSR and in those that seek to become CSR. As to the best emotional state of employees and the least intentions to leave the job, these were found in those organizations that have the CSR status.

### *Testing hypothesis 2*

The hypothesis 2 was rejected (Table 4). The second hypothesis was tested using the Mann-Whitney U test, which showed the presence of significant differences even in the organizations of the same status in different countries. Comparing subcategories *Employees' emotional state* and *Employee intentions* in both countries, statistically significant differences were found in those organizations that seek to become CSR and that do not seek to become CSR. The situation in Poland, compared with Lithuania, is worse; i.e., Polish employees feel worse and their intentions to leave their workplace are more strongly expressed. In the organizations that are CSR, employees' emotional state and intentions to leave the organization are very similar in both countries.

## **Discussion**

The CSR agenda creates conditions that make employees more inclined to stay in the organization (Aguilera *et al.*, 2007; Lee *et al.*, 2012; Samanta,

2013; Ndjama *et al.*, 2017) and work in reducing violence in employee interrelationships (Fenwick & Bierema, 2008; Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene, 2015; Vveinhardt *et al.*, 2018). The results of this study demonstrate that CSR itself is related to employees' better emotional state, although the results between the two countries with regard to the different position of the organisation in terms of CSR diverged. Our findings are then in line the ones of Subba and Kumar (2018), who claimed that CSR stimulated positive emotions of employees. Employees' emotional state is that criterion which links the improvement of the emotional state with CSR initiatives directed against negative interpersonal relationships in the context of the stakeholder theory. According to Amponsah-Tawiah and Mensah (2015), as the health and safety of employees, as well as their quality of life help to meet the expectations of most stakeholders, this is the balancing act for the stakeholder theory.

The results of our study also confirm the influence of the cultural variable (Mueller *et al.*, 2012). Interestingly, links between a better emotional state (weaker in one country and stronger in another) and an intermediate position of CSR, which was more favourable to employees, showed up. Similar studies have not been detected and the comparison is not possible, but McShane and Cunningham (2012) state that there may be differences in the correspondence of the image presented in the CSR program to the organisation's actual identity and the extent to which the CSR program itself is developing. It cannot be ruled out that the stagnating development of this program may negatively affect employees' emotional state, which was improving until then. Moreover, the results of our study are then in line with the findings of Garavan *et al.* (2010), who stated that CSR was commonly related to a more psychologically favourable atmosphere within the organisation. If such a positive climate exists in the organisation, as a rule, employees rather will not be willing to leave it. In addition, our survey confirms the research of Lee (2020) who revealed that CSR made a positive contribution in developing the employee-organization relationships. One may then state the better atmosphere in the organisation, the lesser inclination of the employees to leave the job.

In spite of the differences found between the two countries, in any case, trends show that the decision to seek CSR has a positive effect on employees' dispositions too. These findings clearly confirm the existence of links between attitudes of employees, the organisation, and CSR. In other words, employees exhibit a respectively worse attitude in the organisations with a lower focus on social responsibility and vice versa. One should, however, add that this can be also related to management behaviour and interpersonal relationships. In addition, our results are in line with the findings of Civi-



lidag (2014), who carried out a survey of hotel employees in Turkey and revealed that mobbing strongly correlated with burnout and job satisfaction. However, employees' emotional state and their intentions to leave the job in Poland and Lithuania differ. Then, we can say that in spite of resemblance of both countries (historical heritage), substantial differences exist as well. This confirms the findings of Kliestikova and Janoskova (2017), who investigated consumer profiles across countries. Their research showed that the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic were grouped into different clusters, despite the fact that the two countries share the same socio-cultural history, as they formerly belonged to Czechoslovakia. In this case, the expectancy theory can explain the existence of differences between CSR-related expectations of employees as culturally diverse stakeholders and different treatment of justice of the organization implementing CSR, leading to different reactions.

### *Implications*

There are several contributions of our study. First, it delivers findings to the current debate on mobbing in relation to CSR. Second, the study is based on analysis of countries (international approach) and take into account a large sample of respondents (over 800). There is no doubt that this aspect constitutes a significant added value of the study. Third, such research is relatively rare in both countries (if not even on international scale) due to rather sensitive nature. It may be regarded as another advantage of our study.

Our study and the trends it has identified have several significant consequences for the organizational governance practice, as they provide a better understanding of the dynamics of employees' emotional state and intentions in introducing CSR, as well as enable organizations to assess the impact of change on employees as a stakeholder group more responsibly. It should be pointed out to organisations' leaders that the CSR status does not mean the end of the process, because employees' emotional state may be worsening even after the formal acquisition of this status. From the scientific standpoint, this study not only expands knowledge about the influence of CSR on the manifestation of mobbing and its consequences in Polish and Lithuanian organizations but also proposes a new attitude to research into social responsibility, emphasizing the importance of studying the "intermediate" state of organizations.

## Conclusions

This study provides new evidence on how the organization's state, or in other words, its status with regard to CSR affects employees' emotional state and their intentions to stay in the organization. So far, the criterion of intentions with regard to the further job, linking them to different types of negative experiences, in the organizations with different state of social responsibility has been little discussed in the scientific literature. The focus has usually been on the dual state of organizations, which is distinguished by presence or absence of the socially responsible company. We have introduced the third, that is, the intermediate, state, which is related to the stage of becoming the socially responsible company. That is, we have distinguished enterprises that still do not have the CSR status, but have already stated their intentions to acquire it and/or are seeking it. In other studies, this "intermediate" state is often overlooked, although it is important for employees' emotional state and intentions to stay in the organization or look for a job elsewhere. Although the CSR status does not guarantee that mobbing will be fully eliminated, the statement of the organisation itself to become socially responsible and the steps it starts taking can be treated as a significant turning point accompanied by improved emotional state and lesser intentions to change the workplace. This is a dynamic process that is related to higher requirements increasing tension; thus, the problems caused by that tension become prominent in the enterprises seeking the CSR status not accidentally but, at the same time, significantly better interpersonal relationships and disposition towards work itself are noted. At the same time, looking through the prism of parameters measuring individual employees' as stakeholders' emotional state and intentions, certain signs of "stagnation" of organizations that have declared CSR can be discussed.

Although this study is the first contribution of this kind, revealing the situation in Polish and Lithuanian companies, what matters is not the country in which employees' state changes, how it changes or where CSR processes take place "better" or "worse". On the one hand, differences highlight how variables of the country and its prevailing attitudes to social responsibility can be important at the same stages of organizational change. On the other hand, they may show the declarative aspect of CSR, which has no direct significant positive effect on employees' emotional state and intentions to stay in the organization. This way, this becomes an argument that does not allow to unequivocally state that the CSR status significantly guarantees employees' greater well-being in all countries. As such empirical data analysis has not been conducted in the countries analysed, the pre-

sented study marks a high contributing factor to the regional body of knowledge.

Of course, the study also has several limitations. *First*, this study did not seek to find out what specific measures applied by the organisation or managerial behaviour determined employees' emotional state and intentions to stay in the job. It only states employees' reactions to the specific state of the organisation with regard to the CSR status but says nothing about the dynamics of change related to the very process of implementing social responsibility. *Second*, the limitations are related to the survey method itself, which, despite its inherent advantages, cannot guarantee the absolute accuracy of respondents' responses and more reflects instantaneous emotions (Queirós *et al.*, 2017). *Third*, this study did not separately assess internal communication of organisations; that is, how precisely respondents knew their organization's position with regard to CSR. Based on researchers' attention, both external and internal communication are a sufficiently relevant problem for the organizations implementing CSR (Morsing *et al.*, 2008; Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2009; Crane & Glozer, 2016).

Further research follows from limitations. Therefore, in the future, it would make sense to conduct longitudinal studies in individual organizations, which would show how employees' emotional state and intentions are changing in the social responsibility implementation process. Such a view would enable to better organize change that would contribute to the reduction of negative consequences of employees' experienced stress. Interestingly, in the case of Lithuania, the state of the organization with regard to CSR did not have a statistically significant influence on employees' emotional state; therefore, in the future, it would be meaningful to evaluate in more detail which aspects of social responsibility are accentuated and what attention is paid in different countries, while the study could be repeated with a larger sample and in a larger number of countries. Besides, it would make sense to further evaluate the internal communication aspect and to repeat the study in other Central and Eastern European countries.

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## Annex

**Table 1.** Emotional state of employees who have experienced and who have not experienced mobbing in different CSR groups of Lithuanian (N=410) and Polish organizations (N=413)

Employees' emotional state	Country	Mobbing experiences	Seeks to become CSR		Is CSR		Does not seek to become CSR		Chi-Square test results	
			LT, N=93		LT, N=244		LT, N=73			
			Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%		$\chi^2$
Feel that relationships at work are psychologically crushing	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	85	91.4	212	86.9	60	82.2	3.098	0.212
	Poland, N=413	Experienced	8	8.6	32	13.1	13	17.8		
		Did not experience	115	75.2	150	86.2	48	55.8	29.023	<b>0.0001**</b>
Think that they are in a completely hopeless situation in this job	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	88	94.6	227	93.0	62	84.9	6.144	<b>0.046*</b>
	Poland, N=413	Experienced	5	5.4	17	7.0	11	15.1		
		Did not experience	143	93.5	159	91.4	64	74.4	22.072	<b>0.0001**</b>
Constantly feel stress and tension at work	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	78	83.9	185	75.8	51	69.9	4.672	0.097
	Poland, N=413	Experienced	15	16.1	59	24.2	22	30.1		
		Did not experience	91	59.5	132	75.9	32	37.2	36.932	<b>0.0001**</b>
Cannot relax after working hours too	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	78	83.9	191	78.3	57	78.1	1.404	0.496
	Poland, N=413	Experienced	15	16.1	53	21.7	16	21.9		
		Did not experience	121	79.1	148	85.1	47	54.7	30.505	<b>0.0001**</b>
Feel that no longer have strength to do the job well	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	85	91.4	203	83.2	60	82.2	4.028	0.133
	Poland, N=413	Experienced	8	8.6	41	16.8	13	17.8		
		Did not experience	131	85.6	148	85.1	50	58.1	31.067	<b>0.001**</b>

**Table 1.** Continued

Employees' emotional state	Country	Mobbing experiences	Seeks to become CSR			Is CSR			Does not seek to become CSR			Chi-Square test results			
			LT, N=93		PL, N=153		LT, N=244		PL, N=174		LT, N=73		PL, N=86		
			Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity		%	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
Cannot concentrate on work as before any longer	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	81	87.1	208	85.2	59	80.8	1.318	0.517					
			12	12.9	36	14.8	14	19.2							
			125	81.7	146	83.9	52	60.5	20.297	<b>0.0001**</b>					
Began to question professional competence	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	84	90.3	222	91.0	62	84.9	2.280	0.320					
			9	9.7	22	9.0	11	15.1							
			132	86.3	155	89.1	56	65.1	25.275	<b>0.0001**</b>					
No longer have a wish to seek best work performance	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	83	89.2	204	83.6	50	68.5	12.857	<b>0.002**</b>					
			10	10.8	40	16.4	23	31.5							
			144	94.1	158	90.8	59	68.6	36.711	<b>0.0001**</b>					
Due to worsened emotional state are forced to see the doctor	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	88	94.6	214	87.7	61	83.6	5.342	0.069					
			5	5.4	30	12.3	12	16.4							
			142	92.8	163	93.7	65	75.6	22.912	<b>0.0001**</b>					
Due to the depressing atmosphere at work, began to get sick more often	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	11	7.2	11	6.3	21	24.4							
			88	94.6	230	94.3	63	86.3	5.945	0.051					
			5	5.4	14	5.7	10	13.7							
Due to deteriorated relationships at work, are at odds with the family	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	143	93.5	163	93.7	66	76.7	21.583	<b>0.0001**</b>					
			10	6.5	11	6.3	20	23.3							
			83	89.2	228	93.4	66	90.4	1.886	0.389					
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	10	10.8	16	6.6	7	9.6							
			141	92.2	162	93.1	56	65.1	45.518	<b>0.0001**</b>					
			12	7.8	12	6.9	30	34.9							

**Table 1.** Continued

Employees' emotional state	Country	Mobbing experiences	Seeks to become CSR			Is CSR			Does not seek to become CSR			Chi-Square test results			
			LT, N=93		PL, N=153		LT, N=244		PL, N=174		LT, N=73		PL, N=86		
			Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity		%	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
At the end of the working day, feel very tired	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	63	67.7	151	61.9	46	63.0	1.002	0.606					
			30	32.3	93	38.1	27	37.0							
			68	44.4	101	58.0	21	24.4	26.438	<b>0.0001**</b>					
Feel tired even in the morning, before leaving home	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	74	79.6	197	80.7	55	75.3	1.004	0.605					
			19	20.4	47	19.3	18	24.7							
			107	69.9	130	74.7	43	50.0	16.608	<b>0.001**</b>					
Think that this marathon of fatigue, stress and tension will never end	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	84	90.3	215	88.1	58	79.5	4.874	0.087					
			9	9.7	29	11.9	15	20.5							
			126	82.4	148	85.1	48	55.8	31.373	<b>0.0001**</b>					
<b>Employees' emotional state</b>	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	27	17.6	26	14.9	38	44.2							
			54	58.1	131	53.7	35	47.9	1.684	0.431					
			39	41.9	113	46.3	38	52.1							
<b>Did not experience</b>	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	53	34.6	85	48.9	13	15.1	28.625	<b>0.0001**</b>					
			100	65.4	89	51.1	73	84.9							
			107	43.5	216	51.7	48	30.2	21.833	<b>0.0001**</b>					
<b>Did not experience</b>	N=823	Did not experience	139	56.5	202	48.3	111	69.8							

**Note:** \* statistical significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; \*\* statistical significance level  $\alpha = 0.01$ .

**Table 2.** Intentions of employees who have experienced and who have not experienced mobbing in different CSR groups of Lithuanian (N=410) and Polish organisations (N=413)

Employee intentions	Country	Mobbing eExperiences	Seeks to become CSR		Is CSR		Does not seek to become CSR		Chi-Square test results	
			L.T, N=93	PL, N=153	L.T, N=244	PL, N=174	L.T, N=73	PL, N=86		
			Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%		$\chi^2$
State that under these conditions, they simply can no longer work in this organisation	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	83	89.2	219	89.8	60	82.2	3.215	0.200
	Poland, N=413	Experienced	10	10.8	25	10.2	13	17.8		
		Did not experience	140	91.5	152	87.4	53	61.6	38.919	<b>0.0001**</b>
Often think that they should leave this organisation	Lithuania, N=410	Experienced	13	8.5	22	12.6	33	38.4		
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	73	78.5	181	74.2	50	68.5	2.134	0.344
		Experienced	20	21.5	63	25.8	23	31.5		
State that it is very likely that they soon will be looking for a new job	Lithuania, N=410	Experienced	102	66.7	133	76.4	33	38.4	36.939	<b>0.0001**</b>
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	51	33.3	41	23.6	53	61.6		
		Experienced	73	78.5	195	79.9	50	68.5	4.274	0.118
Are constantly looking for a new job so that when they run out of patience, they would not have to go straight onto the street	Lithuania, N=410	Experienced	20	21.5	49	20.1	23	31.5	25.503	<b>0.0001**</b>
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	101	66.0	130	74.7	37	43.0		
		Experienced	52	34.0	44	25.3	49	57.0	4.094	0.129
Are sure that they will not work in this organisation long	Lithuania, N=410	Experienced	79	84.9	211	86.5	56	76.7	32.113	<b>0.0001**</b>
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	14	15.1	33	13.5	17	23.3		
		Experienced	133	86.9	154	88.5	53	61.6	2.014	0.365
	Lithuania, N=410	Experienced	20	13.1	20	11.5	33	38.4	29.644	<b>0.0001**</b>
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	73	78.5	203	83.2	56	76.7		
		Experienced	20	21.5	41	16.8	17	23.3	61.6	
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	136	88.9	148	85.1	53	61.6	29.644	<b>0.0001**</b>
		Experienced	17	11.1	26	14.9	33	38.4		

**Table 2.** Continued

Employee intentions	Country	Mobbing experiences	Seeks to become CSR		Is CSR		Does not seek to become CSR		Chi-Square test results
			Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	
			L/T, N=93	PL, N=153	L/T, N=244	PL, N=174	L/T, N=73	PL, N=86	
			Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	$\chi^2$
			67	72.0	166	68.0	45	61.6	2.040
			26	28.0	78	32.0	28	38.4	0.361
<b>Employee intentions</b>	Lithuania, N=410	Did not experience	85	55.6	117	67.2	22	25.6	40.414
	Poland, N=413	Did not experience	58	44.4	57	32.8	64	74.4	
	N=823	<b>Did not experience</b>	152	61.8	283	67.7	67	42.1	31.736
		<b>Experienced</b>	94	38.2	135	32.3	92	57.9	

**Table 3.** Employees' emotional state and employee intentions in different CSR groups of Lithuanian (N=410) and Polish organisations (N=413)

CSR status		Seeks to become CSR, N=93	Is CSR, N=244	Does not seek to become CSR, N=73	Seeks to become CSR, N=93	Is CSR, N=244	Does not seek to become CSR, N=73	Kruskal-Wallis H
Subcategories		Median			Mean Rank			$\chi^2$ p
Lithuania, N=410	Employees' emotional state	1.71	1.79	2.00	195.6	198.4	241.8	8.446 <b>0.015*</b>
	Employee intentions	1.60	2.00	2.20	196.8	199.1	238.0	7.083 <b>0.029*</b>
Poland, N=413	Employees' emotional state	2.50	2.00	3.00	209.8	163.4	290.3	65.364 <b>0.0001**</b>
	Employee intentions	2.60	2.00	3.30	206.1	168.2	287.1	57.669 <b>0.0001**</b>

**Table 4.** Lithuanian and Polish organisations according to CSR status: employees' emotional state and employee intentions

S	Seeks to become CSR, N=246						Is CSR, N=418						Does not seek to become CSR, N=159					
	LT, N=93	PL, N=53	LT, N=9	PL, N=53	Mann-Whitney U	p	LT, N=2	PL, N=1	LT, N=2	PL, N=1	Mann-Whitney U	p	LT, N=73	PL, N=86	LT, N=73	PL, N=86	Mann-Whitney U	p
	Mean	Median	M-W U	Z	p	Mean Rank	M-W U	Z	p	Mean Rank	M-W U	Z	Mean Rank	M-W U	Z	p		
EE	1.7	2.50	101.07	3.8	<b>0.0001</b>	204.10	204.10	1.0	0.7	199.1	199.1	1.0	2.0	3.0	61.95	1789.46	<b>0.0001</b>	
S	1		.5	63	**	1.79	2.00	1.0	0.7	1.0	0.77	0.87	0	0	51.69	.5	67	**
EI	1.6	2.60	106.69	2.9	<b>0.003*</b>	204.74	204.74	0.9	0.75	2006.55	2006.55	0.9	2.2	3.3	64.93	1984.40	<b>0.0001</b>	
N	0		.0	26	*	2.00	2.00	0.3	0.75	5.5	30	0.75	0	0	18.43	.0	05	**

S – Subcategories; EES – Employees' emotional state; EIN – Employee intentions.