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Preface

The presented papers form an important starting point for academic discussions and show us the diverse spectrum of interesting issues perceived from the perspective of organizational behaviours and organizational culture, enriched with examples of the interpretational possibilities offered by the psychoanalytic understanding of social phenomena. What merits special attention is the fact that half of the articles contributed to the collection present a systemic-psychodynamic approach, still relatively little known in Polish management. This approach is based on psychoanalytic theories and the concepts developed therein.

The exceptional nature of this collection consists in showing the diversity of perspectives regarding both the understanding and the empirical examination of the phenomena and processes which we observe in organizations. It contains six articles that describe from the cognitive-behavioural perspective phenomena as complex as whistleblowing (I. Świątek-Barylska, M. Opara: *Perception of whistleblowing by professionals-to-be. Results of the research*) and organizational creativity and ambidexterity in Polish enterprises (K. Bratnicka: *Creativity and performance. Testing ambidextrous hypotheses in Polish SME's context*). These two articles are based on extensive empirical studies and can form a very good groundwork for further research, and they have a great practical importance for managers, too.

The two subsequent papers present the issue of organizational culture described from the behavioural standpoint (J. van Cleff, and P. van Nispen: *Organisations, Projects and Culture*) and

from the systemic-psychodynamic perspective (L.F. Stapley: *Exploring the Meaning of Work in the Context of Organizational Culture*). Although it might seem that everything has already been said about organizational culture, it is worthwhile to consider the thought expressed by L.F. Stapley that we focus on the identification of symptoms of culture rather than understanding what it really is.

Then, the last two papers reveal the world of organizations through reference to strictly psychoanalytic constructs, such as death drive, mourning and melancholia (S. Kahn: *Eros & Thanatos: A Psychoanalytic Examination of Death in the Context of Working Life*) and the concepts of organization-in-the-mind, narcissism, unconscious, introjective identification (X. Eloquin: *The Tyrant-in-the-mind: Influences on Worker behaviour in a Post-totalitarian Organisation*). These papers, based on psychoanalytic theories, reflect upon and illuminate some of the new contours and shapes, perhaps previously not fully seen or appreciated from others perspectives.

It is my hope that this collection of six papers will form a framework for noticing, exploring, and reflecting upon the forces and processes that exist beneath the surface of our interactions with other people and our changing world. I believe that the submitted publications constitute interesting reading on modern management from the perspective of psychoanalytic and "classic" approaches to management. I hope they will become the source of many inspiring discussions and academic polemics.

Adela Barabasz



Perception of whistleblowing by professionals-to-be. Results of the research

Postrzeganie informowania w dobrej wierze przez przyszłych profesjonalistów. Wyniki badań

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Abstract

A whistleblowing survey was completed by a sample of Polish students at Bachelor and Master level. The purpose of the research was to verify their knowledge and perception of whistleblowing. This group seems to be very important as professionals-to-be, who will be responsible for creating a positive attitude for whistleblowing in their organizations. The results indicate a low level of knowledge and non-crystalized opinion. Recommendations are made for university authorities to increase the knowledge and willingness for whistleblowing among young people at the beginning of their career.

Keywords: whistleblowing, organizational behavior, citizenship behavior, ethics.

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu jest zjawisko zwane *whistleblowing*, określane w polskiej literaturze jako informowanie w dobrej wierze. Celem opracowania jest zbadanie poziomu wiedzy oraz postrzegania zjawiska sygnalizowania nieprawidłowości przez studentów. Ta grupa respondentów została uznana za ważną z punktu widzenia kształtowania stosunku do zjawiska whistleblowingu, jako że stoi u progu kariery zawodowej i w najbliższym czasie będzie wpływać na kształtowanie postaw i zachowań członków organizacji. Rezultaty badań wskazują na niski poziom znajomości oraz niewykrystalizowany stosunek do badanego zagadnienia. W artykule wskazano na działania mogące przyczynić się do podniesienia wiedzy i poziomu akceptacji informowania w dobrej wierze wśród przyszłych profesjonalistów.

Słowa kluczowe: whistleblowing, informowanie w dobrej wierze, sygnaliści, zachowania organizacyjne, zachowania obywatelskie, etyka.

Introduction

Whistleblowing is defined as revealing illegal, immoral or unlawful practices that are under the employers' control by current or previous organisation's members to people or institutions that can take effective measures regarding those actions [Near, Miceli 1985]. It is an action that organisations declare as desired, on the other hand as various whistleblower stories described in literature show, not always supported [Winiński 2013]. Whether the employees decide to report a misconduct depends on many factors connected with themselves, the organisation and its surrounding. In the tradition stemming from personality research, it was believed that the environment is the subject of a person's impact. Behaviourists, however, claimed that the dependence is quite the opposite, namely that the environment (situation) determines the person's behaviour. In the 1930s both approaches were integrated by Kurt Lewin, who stipulated that behaviour is a function of a person and a situation [Czarnota-Bojarska 2010]. On the basis of that theory, interactionism's development emerged, according to which the "influence on the individual differences in behaviour (...) possesses not only a person (feature) and not just the environment, but also their interaction. Either of them can dominate depending on the specific situations" [Strelau et al. 2007]. Douglas T. Kenrick, Steven L. Neuberg and Robert B. Cialdini are of a similar opinion, indicating the need to take into consideration a person, a situation and their mutual relationship as the basis for understanding an individual's social behaviour [Kenrick, Neuberg, Cialdini 2002]. A person who is starting a professional career becomes a member of a chosen organisation and begins to function among other people in a defined organisational culture and legal space. At this stage they do not have their own professional experience but they have their knowledge (a cognitive element of attitude) and a shaped system of values. These factors influence decisions that a new employee makes and behaviours he or she exhibits in a new workplace [Bugdol 2006]. As the research shows, moral awareness is an important determinant of ethical decision making [Nguyen et al. 2009; Jones 1991]. In this context, it is crucial to find out what knowledge and attitude towards whistleblowing people who are at the beginning of their career have, since it will influence their behaviours in this matter.

1. The meaning of whistleblowing for an organisation

The results of the international research conducted by ACFE in 2012 [*Report to the Nations...*] shows that on average an organisation's losses resulting from embezzlement and misconduct amount to 5% of yearly income. Misconduct is not only costly for an enterprise but can also prove to be a result of hard to bear consequences, as they have an influence on the final financial results. However, the outcomes of misconduct and corruption should not be looked at from a financial perspective only. The widespread popularisation of IT technologies has increased the speed of the information flow, and its result is such that not only positive but also negative

opinions about a particular company travel around the world and shatter its reputation [Bishop, Hydoski 2010].

Apart from measurable financial losses, companies bear the non-financial consequences such as low morale, fall of the brand reputation or the deterioration of business relations. Hidden indirect costs such as limited expansion and growth, flawed reputation and a low morale can be much higher than the direct costs [*Raport: Badanie przestępczości gospodarczej...*].

The early detection of misconduct, which *whistleblowing* enables, allows entrepreneurs to decrease the losses connected with the long-lasting occurrence of illegal and unethical actions. Abuses and corruption cannot be totally eliminated, however their quick detection allows a decrease in their negative consequences and minimises the possibility of its appearance in the future, which can increase profitability in that moment as well as in the years to come. An early reaction to malpractice is mostly beneficial for retaining organisational reputation. Correcting the mistakes and solving the internal problems before they become known by the public allows enterprises to maintain their reputation, as well as present themselves in a positive light as those which can deal with most difficult situations [Rogowski 2007; Lewicka-Strzałecka 1999]. This also reflects positively on building a culture of trust with all stakeholders, and shows employees that they are working for a company, in which not only rules but also the declared values are obeyed.

2. Whistleblowing practice in Poland

Whistleblowing as a research analysis topic is a relatively new phenomenon. There does not even exist a Polish equivalent of the English notion called *whistleblowing*. In literature either descriptive notions are used (informing in good faith or raising the alarm) or neologisms, which sound unnatural and are not widely recognized. In everyday language one can encounter notions with a negative connotation (a snitch, a mole, a denunciator or a traitor). As the research shows, the most appropriate translation of *whistleblowing* is an "informer in good faith" (38% of the surveyed). There is however a lack of a definite majority that would accept the newly emerged notion.

It is probable that the English expressions (the process) and *whistleblower* (the person) will become a part of the Polish language in their original forms but adhering to the grammar rules of our language [Arszułowicz 2005]. Few publications on the subject of whistleblowing have been published in Polish academic journals so far, although it does not mean that this issue does not exist in Polish business practice. In this case, it seems that the practice is ahead of theory and research. Malpractice, abuses and abnormalities reported by employees are rarely investigated by the media. On the other hand, companies take actions to encourage employees to fight those abnormalities by creating ethics committees and ethics guidelines. Such actions provide a comfortable, anonymous and safe environment for an employee to report an abuse or a malpractice inside of the organisation. In order to provide

a service on the matter of whistleblowing, a few consulting companies have emerged on the market offering investigation counselling and legal consulting. These companies also offer counselling in putting codes of practice and ethics into operation, however such initiatives operate on a relatively small scale [Świątek-Barylska 2013].

International research conducted by ACFE show that the most common ways of detecting malpractice are: informing about misconduct and fraud, executive meetings, and internal auditing. Slightly above 43% of the crimes in the world have been detected thanks to the information provided by people from the inside or outside of organisations, while half of those were exposed by the employees as a result of them having access to the data and company documents. Clients and anonymous reports have also played a significant role in exposing unethical activities [Report to the Nations...].

In Poland, crimes are most often detected by a state system working to report suspicious transactions –19% and internal auditing –16%. It is alarming that 16% of detected malpractice surface by accident, which is twice as much as the corresponding number of those globally. Only 3% of misconduct is detected in Polish enterprises through a system of confidential informing – *whistleblowing*, and it is a negligible percentage in comparison to the usage of this tool all over the world [Raport: Badanie przestępczości gospodarczej... 2011].

The perception and reactions to whistleblowing seem to be dependent on the historical background. Misinterpreting this notion is a European problem – people mistake whistleblowing for denunciatory activities (Whistleblowing, Fraud and the European Union, 1996). Therefore the course of Polish history affected the perception of whistleblowing. Losing statehood in the second half of the 18th century (the partitioning of Poland) and economic growth related mainly to the inflow of foreign capital (German and Jewish) triggered off a substantial division into two categories – “us” and “them”. After World War II, the socialist state took over ownership of private enterprises and remained under the influence of the Soviet Union, deprived of the freedom of speech. These circumstances could have had an influence on the attitude of Polish employees towards whistleblowing. Such a negative attitude may prevent employees from combating malpractice even in a supportive formal-legal environment.

From research conducted in 2012 for the Stefan Batory Foundation, the attitude towards *whistleblowers* and *whistleblowing* in Poland depends on the situational context, type of malpractice and one’s own personal gain or loss. Only in a life-threatening situation will whistleblowing always be perceived as a positive act. An equally high level of acceptance appears when the revealed malpractice threatens the safety of employment or exposes corruption. Simultaneously, there exists a huge fear of retaliation from the employer, especially of being made redundant [Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego 2012]. Whistleblowing has not yet been regulated by the law and all the situations connected with it are now judged from the perspective of existing legal norms. Polish law does not protect the *whistleblower* in a preventive manner, as they can only

protect themselves from retaliation from their employers or co-workers [Wojciechowska-Nowak 2011; Rogowska, Rudecka 2011].

3. Determinants of whistleblowing

Making a decision about undertaking actions in the view of a misconduct in the workplace or in the social environment, as well as the success of *whistleblowing*, depends on many factors.

The factors that have an influence on unmasking an unethical activity by employees can be divided into two groups, individual (connected directly with the characteristics of the *whistleblower*) and situational. This division can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Factors influencing undertaking *whistleblowing* actions

Individual factors	
Unchanging factors	Changing factors
Work results/efficiency Position in an organisation Level of salaries Education Value placed on whistleblowing	Gender Age Duration of employment/ Seniority Individual level of job satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of job satisfaction • Level of payment satisfaction • Attachment to the job • Attachment to the organisation • Personal morality
Situational factors	
Organisation/Job characteristics	Misconduct characteristics
Organisation’s attitude towards whistleblowing Organisational justice Organisational atmosphere/culture Resources owned by the company Type of an organisation (private or public)	Type of the committed misconduct Severity of harm

Source: own research based on [Vadera, Aguilera, Caza 2009, pp. 553-586].

3.1. Individual factors

Researchers agree to the extent to which variables such as gender, age, duration of employment, personal morality, individual level of attachment and job satisfaction influence the decisions about revealing malpractice. These factors’ relationship with *whistleblowing* has yet not been unanimously determined [Dworkin, Baucus 1998; Lee, Heilmann, Near 2004; Cassematis, Wortley 2012]. The remaining individual factors are treated in literature as relatively unchanging. *Whistleblowers* are more often people with higher education holding higher positions in the company, often belonging to the managerial tier and having the impression that their position in the company places on them the obligation to unmask malpractice [Miceli, Near 1984; Mesmer-Magnus, Viswesvaran 2005].

3.2. Situational factors

The organisational culture has a considerable impact on deciding whether to reveal a malpractice. If a friendly, ethical or democratic atmosphere exists in the company, employees are more willing to report observed misconducts. The more the culture is open to moral values, the more probable it is that an act of whistleblowing inside the company will occur. However, if there exists an atmosphere of fear and hostility, the smaller the inclination towards revealing malpractice there appears, and when it does it usually happens through external channels of communication. Co-workers and employees support is also not without meaning, as it encourages employees to report ethically suspicious behaviour and cancels out the probability of retaliation, and so consequently enhances their feeling of safety [Rogowski 2007].

The type of misconduct observed is also not without meaning. In the case of a situation when an employee notices such actions as: mismanagement, sexual harassment or felony, they are more willing to reveal these situations than when seeing a crime that may cause relatively smaller damage [Near et al. 2004; Wise 1995; Świątek-Barylska 2013]. It is also important whether the consequences of these actions are in any way harmful for the employee [Near, Miceli 1985; Cassematis, Wortley 2012] and whether they stand in opposition to the values exhibited by them.

It is assumed that there exists a whole "silent hierarchy" regarding the validity of the factors that influence a decision about *whistleblowing*. Apart from the individual variables that apply to an employee and the variables that are related with the work environment, the exposers' life situation is valid. This is the part that is hard to check and establish to what extent it influences the revealing of the immoral actions. It can enhance or weaken the influence of other factors. One should, however, bear in mind that none of the factors occurs without the others and that is why it is hard to unequivocally specify which of them have the biggest meaning for a particular situation. In this study, the subject of interest is one of the individual factors influencing the whistleblower's behaviour, namely the meaning that it gives to whistleblowing [Deaux 1993; Vadera, Aguilera, Caza 2009]. A young employee, taken on by an organisation, becomes its member and apart from his or her competences, introduces their attitude and values to the company. One should be aware of the meaning of these factors for the employee's behaviour in the workplace.

4. Methodology of the study

The aim of the research was to examine the level of knowledge about whistleblowing and the attitude towards such behaviours among people at the beginning of their professional career. The research was conducted among students as they constitute a social group that is just starting their professional life. Moreover, they are open-minded and are in the process of learning and that makes it much easier to convey certain values to them and make them aware of the changes that need to be introduced to an organisation. It should be highlighted that the surveyed people have no professional work experience that

can influence the researched variables. The questionnaire that was used for this research was completed by 135 respondents. From all the questionnaires, 112 were accepted for further analysis and 23 were rejected due to their being incomplete in their answers. 63 women (57% of the sample group) and 49 men (43% of the sample group) took part in the study. In the respondent group, 15% of the surveyed were people who were at the first level of their studies and did not have a university or college diploma, 63% completed their Bachelor level studies, and the remaining 22% had Master's degree. The respondents were aged 19-31 and 32% of them were students of economic faculties. 18 of those were studying management, while 14 were studying economics. People studying the humanities constituted 17% of the surveyed, and among them were also students from the biology, philology, technical, social, logistics, IT, pedagogical, art, mathematics and international relations faculties. The research was conducted in Poland.

5. Findings of the study

The research has shown a very low level of knowledge regarding what whistleblowing is. Only 23% of the respondents knew what it meant. The majority of that group were students of the economics specialisations (69.2%). Their knowledge about whistleblowing was drawn mainly from the Internet and from the university courses. The remainder of the surveyed (77%) had no knowledge about what whistleblowing is or had a wrong idea about it. One can assume that the result was influenced by the foreign-sounding name along with the lack of a commonly-accepted Polish equivalent for whistleblowing. The result can be seen as alarmingly low due to the fact that the respondent group comprised of students, who have the possibility of expanding their knowledge not only in the area of their studies, and from whom it (such knowledge) is expected. This group of future employees, managers or company owners constitutes a sort of elite which in the future will be holding power in crucial positions and will be shaping the organisational space, simultaneously influencing the behaviour of future employees.

The survey was designed in such a way that after checking whether a respondent knew what the notion of whistleblowing meant, people not knowing it could find an explanation enabling understanding of the notion. Thanks to that, the surveyed students could give answers to the next questions. The respondents were asked which Polish word they associated with the word *whistleblower*. Their answers are depicted in Figure 1.

The most popular answers were: snitch (27%), informer (21%) and a denunciator (16%). Almost half of the surveyed group (46%), after getting acquainted with the notion of whistleblowing, admitted that they had mixed feelings regarding it. A rather positive attitude was exhibited by 26% of the respondents, and definitely positive was exhibited by only 5%. 9% of the surveyed approached *whistleblowing* in a negative way, and 4% definitely negatively (see Figure 2). There is no relation between the academic specialisation of the surveyed and their attitude towards *whistleblowing*.

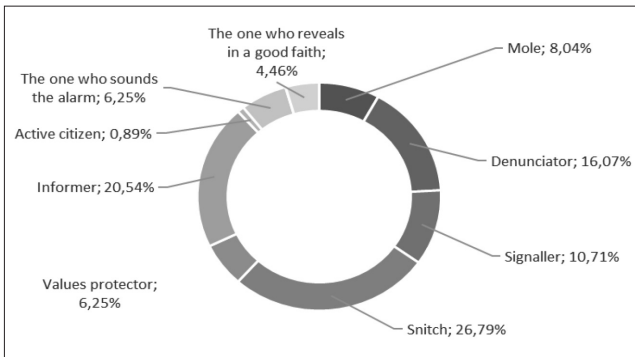


Figure 1. Polish counterparts of the notion *whistleblower*

Source: own research.

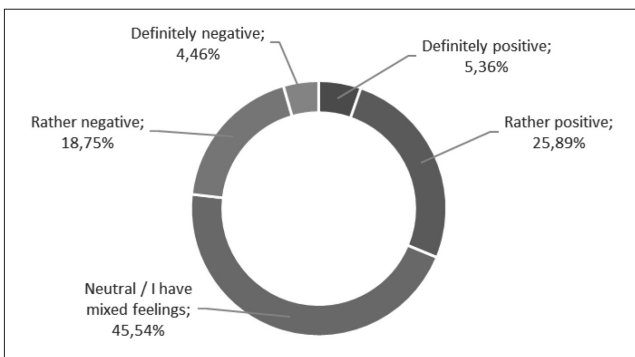


Figure 2. The attitude of the surveyed students towards *whistleblowing*

Source: own research.

Despite the equivocal attitude towards whistleblowing, the majority of the surveyed students (67%) declared their readiness to make misconduct known in case it was very serious. Readiness towards revealing malpractice was also chosen when supported by a legal obligation and the authorities' support for whistleblowers. 61% of the respondents would not decide to blow the whistle in situations when there was no immediate negative effect on themselves.

The respondents were presented with hypothetical situations and asked to present their views. The respondents decided not to inform about the following misconducts:

- professor's notorious lateness for classes (altogether 91% of the respondents),
- notorious cancellations of one of the classes (70% of the respondents).

They were eager to report:

- acceptance of plagiarism at the university (52%),
- professor's discrimination against students because of their gender (62%),
- being accepted by the university as a student as a result of being a close acquaintance or by family connections (59%),
- passing a subject with a positive grade in return for a bribe (74%).

The research has shown the three most prevalent reasons for not taking action in cases of dealing with misconducts. They are:

- fear of retaliation from the students or professors (47%),
- minor social danger (46%),
- not feeling the need to report such behaviour (24%).

Among the reasons indicated for not reporting the misconduct there were also: fear of being ignored by others, lack of faith in the possibility of solving and correcting the existing situation, lack of prospects for the improvement of the situation, student solidarity, fear of being given the nickname "mole", the prospect of putting oneself in trouble and lack of time to report unethical behaviour.

Among all the people surveyed, only 9 (8%) of them admitted that they had reported unethical behaviour. Among the reported malpractices were:

- an unfair system of awarding grades by a professor,
- a professor not abiding by university rules,
- gender discrimination against students,
- lack of legal knowledge referring to the job being carried out by a dean's office employee,
- corruption,
- plagiarism allegation.

In the whistleblowing process, the most crucial are the entities along with the information channels regarding the malpractice that took place. The ranking of entities that students would like to inform has allowed for creating a list of preferred information recipients about the misconducts that occurred. (the lower the score, the more important the role). See Table 2.

Table 2. Preferred recipients of the misconduct information

Recipients of the misconduct information	Number of points
Husband/Wife or a partner	1.55
Family members or friends	2.58
Other students	2.79
People responsible inside the organisation/institution/university	4.55
People accepting notifications by specialised Internet websites that are meant to unmask malpractices	4.67
Anybody who would like to know more using the Internet (for instance by publicizing the information on social networks, blogs, etc.)	6.29
Authority members outside the university/organisation (for instance the police, the ombudsman, members of parliament, municipal council members, etc.)	6.47
Reporters or information agencies	7.09

Source: own research.

The students also indicated various channels by means of which they would most willingly report the observed misconducts. The most popular channel was a special website

created for reporting misconduct (75%) and email (64.3%) Telephone contact was also a frequent choice (30.4%) and a face-to-face meeting (25%). A small percentage of the surveyed chose fax (0.9%) and traditional mail (8%). This is most probably connected with the age of the respondents who belong to the Y generation actively using technology and digital media.

Conclusions

The aim of the research was to obtain information on the topic of knowledge on *whistleblowing* and attitudes towards it among people at the beginning of their professional career in Poland. As the research showed, whistleblowing is a notion that is not popular among the surveyed. Only 23% of the respondents knew what exactly it was, however, that does not mean that actions revealing unethical behaviour do not take place in Poland. They are just not called *whistleblowing*. Few people heard about *whistleblowing* during their studies. One opportunity of increasing knowledge about this concept would be introducing courses during which the subject of *whistleblowing* could be raised. As the results show, spreading knowledge about whistleblowing and increasing readiness for revealing unethical actions would have a positive effect on introducing appropriate legal regulations that would take into consideration such actions, as has already been done in the USA and Great Britain.

Young people at the start of their professional career do not have an unequivocal attitude towards whistleblowing. 54% of the surveyed express their opinions about it, while the rest, that is almost half of them (46%), cannot express an unequivocal opinion about it. That means that there exists a big group of people who should be enlightened about the concept of whistleblowing and its ethical, social and economic consequences for the employees and organisations. Universities can play a big role in this process, as they should not only inform their students about what whistleblowing is, but also indicate the positive aspects of reacting to malpractice in this way, shaping positive attitudes in detecting misconducts.

Among the real-life situations presented to the respondents with an angle of an academic life, one can distinguish two groups that can cause a divergent readiness in reaction to them. Students choose mostly not to react in situations such as a professor's repetitive lateness for a class or absence from a class. These situations are connected with the organisational culture that allows for such situations to take place and the students surveyed – as the results show – are ready to accept them and not to react. It is quite the opposite with accepting a plagiarism, discriminating against students because of their gender or passing a course in return for a bribe. The appearance of such situations makes the students feel that there has been a social injustice and a breach of the law. Both groups of answers indicate the situation's influence (both the organizational culture as well as the law) on modelling the behaviour and at the same time declared readiness to blow the whistle.

The most popular reason for not reporting an observed malpractice is the fear of retaliation from students or professors (47%) and the minor severity of the harm (46%). Students would be more willing to report the misconducts if they were sure that they could remain anonymous and consequently avoid the mentioned retaliation. That is why creating an atmosphere supporting fighting against malpractice, readiness of the executive tier to react to such information and choosing an appropriate channel of communication, are so important.

About the observed misconducts, respondents would firstly inform a partner, then the family members, other students and people responsible from the organisation or the university. Such a hierarchy of answers results from the level of trust towards certain people or institutions but is on the other hand connected with a different perception of internal and external whistleblowing [Świątek-Barylska 2013]. Most often, the first step after noticing malpractice is to share this observation with the people closest to them, usually, so that they would give their advice and emotional support, and only later to pass on this information further. It is worth emphasizing that among the first group that students are willing to inform about malpractice are people responsible from the organisation/institution/university. That means that the authorities of the faculty can play a significant part in building a culture and procedures that would support revealing malpractice. The most popular channel of informing would be a specially-designed website or email. These tools provide anonymity and do not require direct contact or engaging in conversation, which reduces the emotional stress for the whistleblower.

Finally, one should emphasize that the knowledge and attitude towards whistleblowing among people starting their professional career is not fully formed. The type of practice regarding whistleblowing they will encounter at the universities and later with their first employer will shape their attitudes for the following years and there is still – as the research shows – much to be done in this field.

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