

Whistleblowing

Quantitative research (Interview survey CAWI)
Data collection 23rd – 28th May 2020
2,000 people,
a representative sample of the online population Czech Republic

Authors of the study: Markéta Čápíková a Kryštof Rybáček
Data and Technology: Behavior



4 June 2020

Research Concept

Objective, research questions and data collection.

The aim of the research was to map the awareness of whistleblowing and to measure the degree of tolerance of people towards various forms of unethical and unlawful behaviour in the working environment.

Data collection took place using the CAWI method on the Trendaro online panel from 23 to 28 May 2020. Two standardized questionnaires were used for collection, the average length of completion was approximately 20 minutes. Quantitative data analysis was used.

The survey was conducted on 2,000 people representing the online population of the Czech Republic. The sample quota exactly corresponds to the Czech online population in terms of gender, age (18+), region, municipality size, education, income and past voting behaviour (2017).

Behavioural approach to the research

Within the research, we are unique in minimizing declarative responses and the Trendaro questionnaire application has a design that reduces cognitive bias. As part of our approach, we further focus on measuring the subconscious-emotions, needs, opportunities.

At the same time, we made full use of advanced randomization (A / B testing) in the research and connect all data from the research with the interactive application of the Czech Atlas („Atlas Čechů“).

Research Questions

- What is the people's awareness of the concept of “whistleblowing”?
- Do they encounter unethical or unlawful behaviour in the workplace?
- Do they solve these situations? What barriers do they perceive?
- How sensitive are people to situations involving unethical and unlawful behaviour?
- What topics activate people the most and how to communicate them?
- How people perceive the stories of specific whistleblowers?



Summary

Why it is important to talk about whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is an important topic.

One-fifth of people encountered unethical or unlawful behaviour at work.

When they tried to solve the situation, few were finally satisfied with how it turned out. But some gave it up before the solution. They were skeptical - they felt they couldn't do much, or they were afraid of losing their job.

People are reluctant to take a drastic step, with the suspicion of unfair conduct most often confided only to colleagues or family. Probably also because when they dealt with something in the past, only a fifth were finally satisfied with how the situation was resolved. In addition, **39% of people believe that there is no law to protect them** if they decide to report unfair practices.

The term whistleblowing is not known to everyone.

The word whistleblower (literally "the one who blows the whistle", figuratively speaking: who draws attention to illegitimate, unethical or unlawful practices in the workplace) does not go well for Czechs. The majority (71%) do not know the term or do not find it familiar. Younger and more educated people know how to deal with it more often, perhaps also thanks to a better knowledge of English.

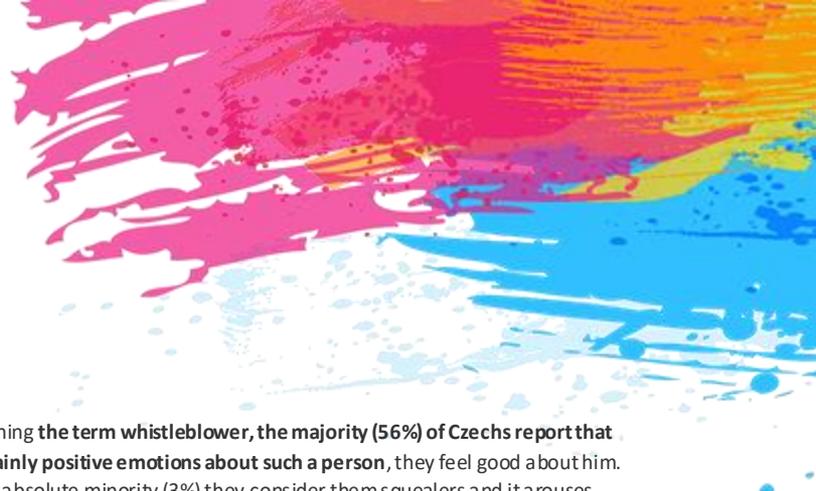
After explaining **the term whistleblower**, the majority (56%) of Czechs report that **they feel mainly positive emotions about such a person**, they feel good about him. Only for the absolute minority (3%) they consider them squealers and it arouses anger in them.

The direct impact of the negotiations is the key.

People deal with more situations that have a negative impact directly on them. They often tolerate minor thefts until they are reminded of a consequence that affects them directly. A motivation for people to report is that something will change after their report. In case of a bad ending, they are overwhelmed by skepticism that they can do nothing.

Specific stories work and engage.

Most respondents respond to topics **related to nature and health**. These can often be communicated just without mentioning the consequences, people will figure it out themselves. Topics in the test that are associated with financial damage are addressed more by people when they have a negative impact directly on them (lower budget for remuneration at work, damage in the municipal budget).



**Why is whistleblowing
and protection of
whistleblowers an
important topic?**



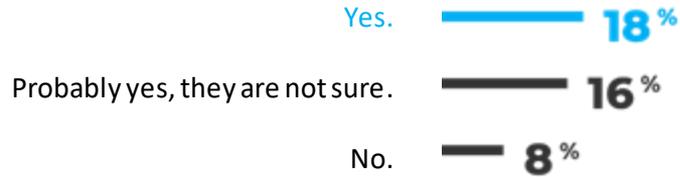
17% of people worked in an organization where there was unethical or unlawful behaviour.

Do they suspect that during their working career they worked in an organization where there was unethical or unlawful behaviour?



***Almost a fifth* have encountered this action directly.**

Have they encountered unethical or unlawful behaviour directly during their working career?



This mainly concerned *petty theft* and *bribes*.

BRIBES

ECOLOGY

TAXES

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

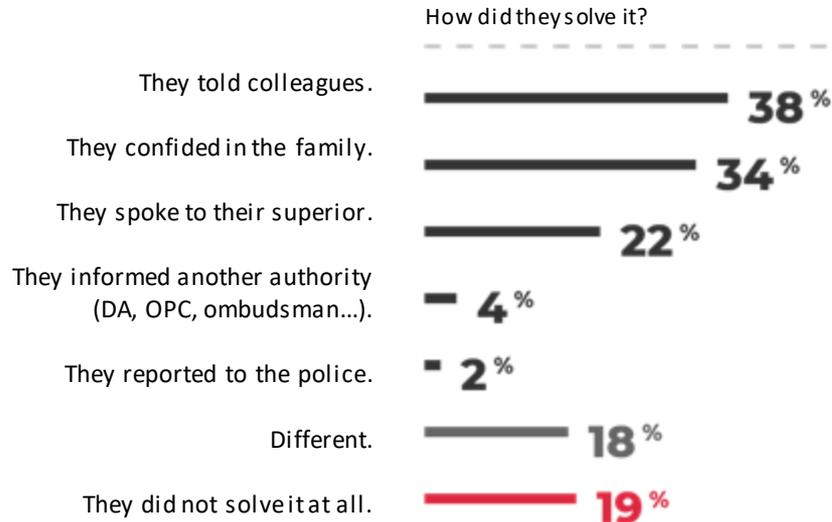
MOBBING

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

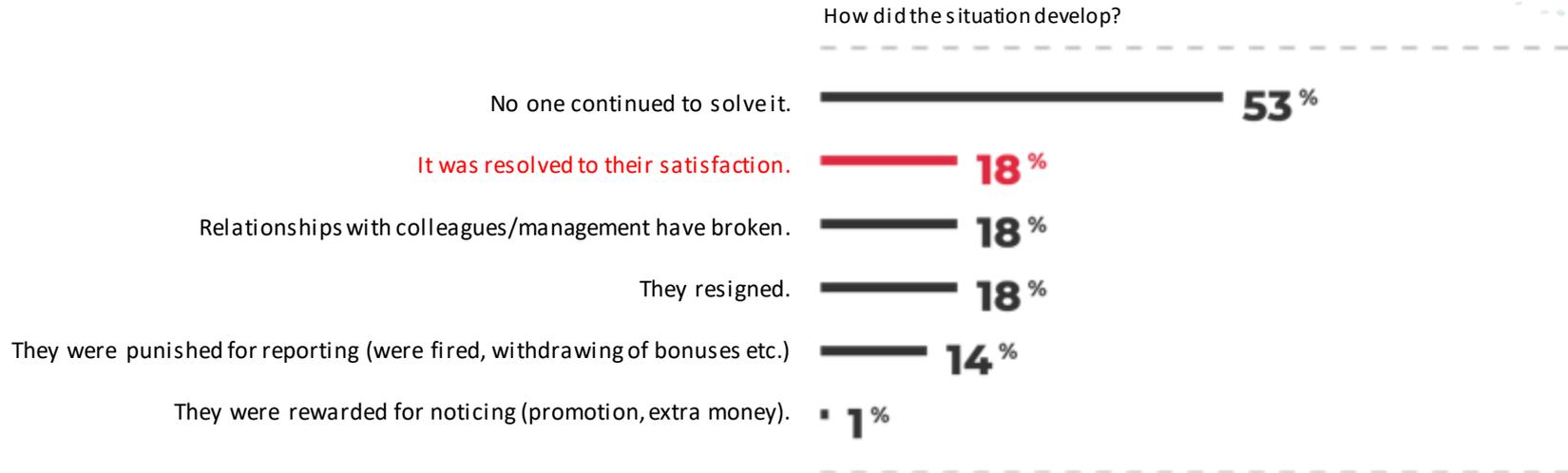
PETTY THEFTS

PAYROLL PAYMENT

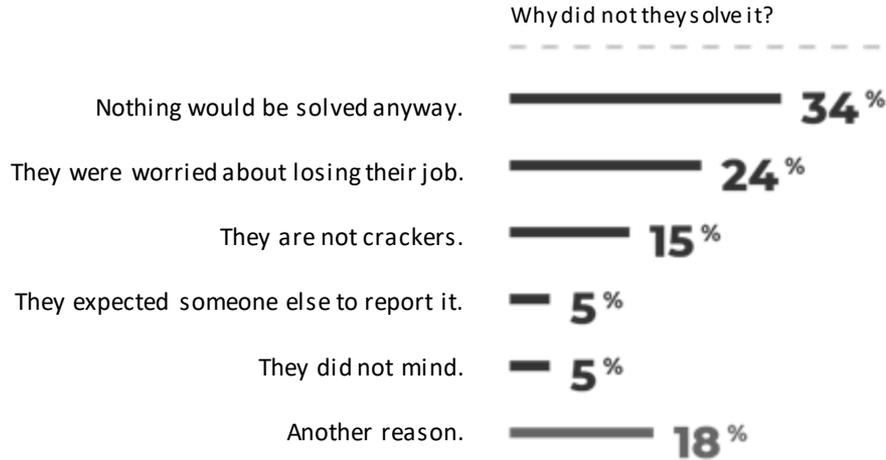
Those who encountered unethical behaviour *directly* addressed their situation most often with colleagues and family.



Only 18% of the people who tried to solve the situation are satisfied with how it was finally resolved.



If people did not solve unlawful or unethical behaviour, it was often caused by scepticism and fear of losing work.



39 % of people believe there is no law that would protected them when reporting.

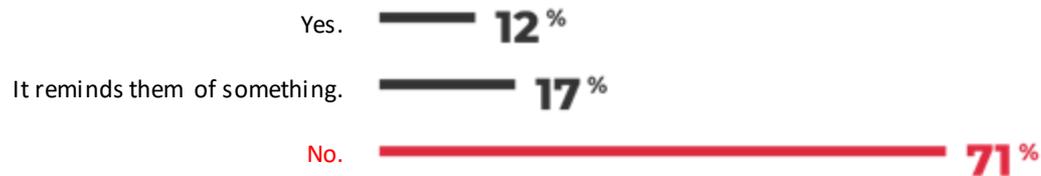
According to them, is there a law that would protect them when reporting?



Whistleblower is an unknown concept to most people.

Men, university graduates and younger people know the term more often.

Do they know who the whistleblower is?



Those who know the term can define it relatively well.

Men, university graduates and younger people know the term more often.



After explanation who a whistleblower is, 56% of people have positive emotions for him.

Only 9% of people have a strong positive emotion for him.

Who is a whistleblower?

A person who reports or publicly reports information about crime, wrongdoing, or other deficiencies that he or she has learned about in connection with his or her work (whether in the private or public sector).



Strongly like



Like



-



Bored

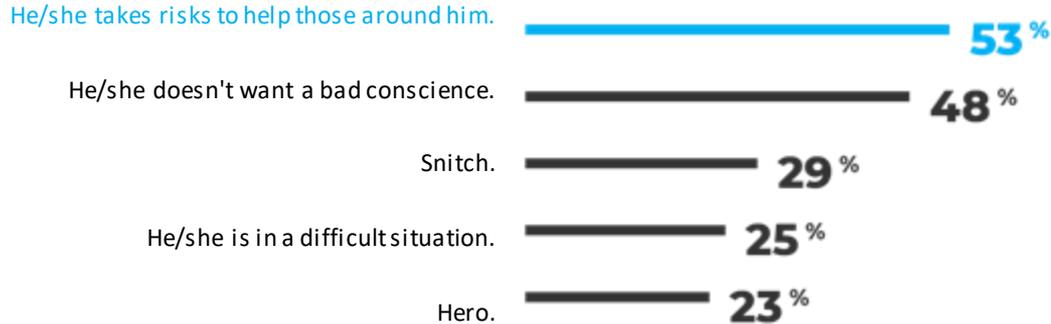


Anger



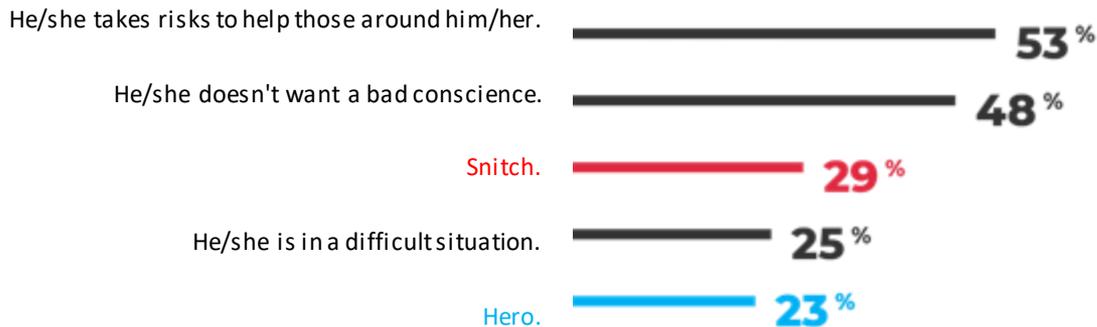
They associate with him that he/she wants to help those around him.

What do they associate with a whistleblower?



However, they are divided, whether it is more heroism or „snitching“.

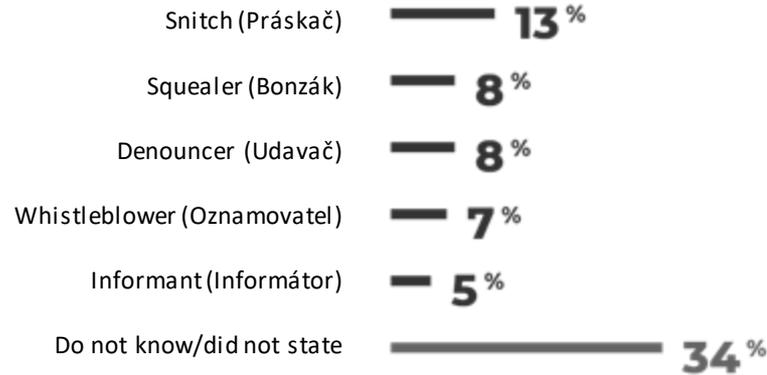
What do they associate with a whistleblower?



As a Czech equivalent term, often negative expressions come spontaneously to their mind.

But when they see a particular person and their story behind the concept, they react better.

What expression would they use to describe it in Czech?



Sample situations

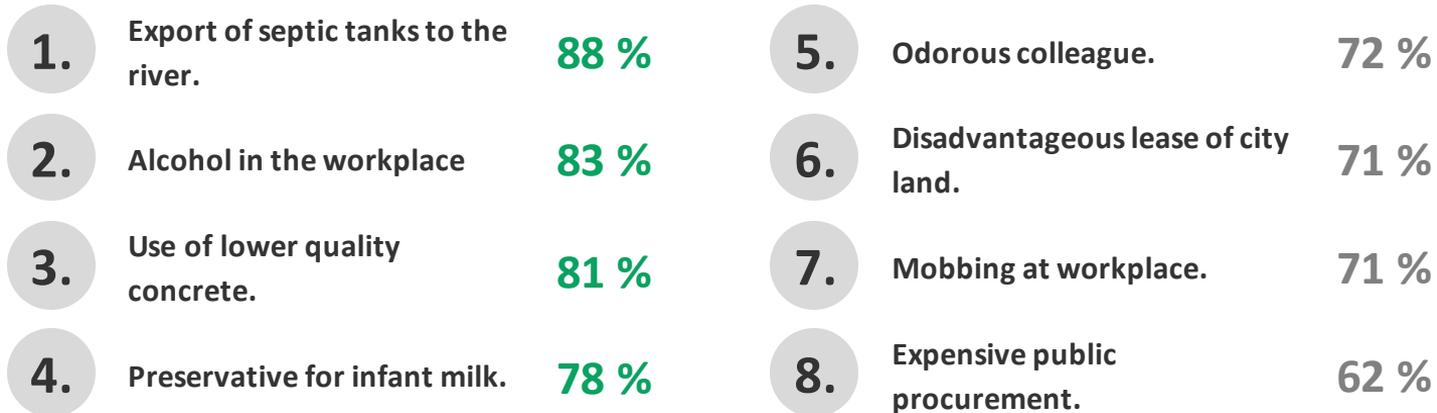


Situations concerning nature and health attract the most attention.

In these cases, people see a clear threat without describing the consequence and perceive it as a problem that they are willing to solve actively.

What situations do people solve mostly?

(% of people who perceive the situation as a problem and will actively solve it)



Summary

People are active in the event of threats to nature and health.

From the tested situations, people are **willing to take active action** especially in cases where there is a **threat to nature or health**. In addition, the strongest topics have the "advantage" in that people themselves imagine the threat that the situation may cause.

Topics in the test that are associated with **financial damage**, people deal with more when they have a negative impact directly on them (lower budget for remuneration at work, damage in the municipal budget). Minor thefts are often tolerated until you remind them of the specific consequence.

The stories of specific people and the positive effects of their actions attract public attention

Respondents react positively to real actions of specific people and agree that they did the right thing. **They are more heroes than „snitches“** for them. The stories of specific whistleblowers, the positive effects of their actions and the fact that they are doing the right thing is the best way to communicate this topic to the general public and to arouse interest in it.



About authors

Markéta Cápíková is a sociologist focusing on research on brands and public opinion. She specializes mainly in quantitative data analysis.

Kryštof Rybáček is a sociologist with experience from dozens of researches for brands, companies and public opinion. He specializes in the analysis of quantitative data and their visualization.

With the help of the company Behavio, which provide data collection technology and access to the Czech Atlas („Atlas Čechů“).

