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Mobbing in Organizations: Analysis of Particular Cases in a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

The research has been developed from the framework of the relational sociology and articulated functionally with the approaches of the subjective well-being, psychological and social, as well as with the related theoretical and empirical of mobbing in the organizations, in this case in a higher education institution. The methodological approach is historical-hermeneutical, includes a mixed perspective analysis (qualitative – quantitative) of particular situations. It is intended to show the relational complexity of the dysfunctionality of the mobbing on the basis of analysis of the particular situations, expecting that the educational institution - may have additional tools for the resolution of this type of conflict and thus be able to build institutions with healthy environments for their employees.

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1. Introduction

The central theme of the present investigation is the study of mobbing or harassment to the interior of an institution of higher education, through individual cases. Its purpose is to enable it to provide the institution of higher education tools that allow it to identify, understand, analyze and act on the problem to improve the situation. This study is important, because the impact of this phenomenon affects the quality of life of the workers and therefore in the performance, commitment and job satisfaction of the victim. The direct impact on the worker - a human being - that being a victim of this harassment, modifies its behavior labor, family and social, ending to destabilize the work

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environment leading to the abandonment or renunciation of the work. The mobbing corresponds to a problem that involves different factors: psychological, social, ethical, and legal consequences with serious personal, social, cultural, economic and political; therefore, for the study and understanding is necessary the evaluation of the relationship and its characteristics, framed in a context of labor with incidence in personal aspects, social and cultural in the life of the victim. In situations of mobbing, the deterioration and breakdown in relations is evident. Taking into account the above, from the relational sociology - raised by Donati, (2006) - we can say that the relations are constructive, its term refers to the linkage between human beings in a positive way. Therefore, according to this author, any relationship carried in a negative way and that generate conflict, is seen as a pathology. The relational approach, opens the door to a specific type of social intervention that is characterized by act not on individuals or groups, but about relationships and through relationships. This type of intervention in pathological situations or problems is what Donati (2006) called "relational pragmatic". The basic assumptions of the pragmatic relational are the following:

- a) there are no isolated subjects and objects, but traps of relationships in which the subjects and objects are defined is suggested
- b) to intervene means operate on those frames of relations to change them through the promotion of emerging effects, also called "network effects"
- c) is necessary to take account of the relationship that is created between those who intervenes and the subject on which he acts.

Mobbing is a type of conflict associated with the expressions of inadequate interaction in the workplace of the violence that characterized to complex societies. The vast majority of the specialized literature, mobbing is also referred to as moral harassment in the workplace, bullying, harassment institutional, laboral psycoterror, etc. Konrad Lorenz was the first one who used the English term mobbing to refer to the aggression of a group of small gregarious animals that bothered a solitary bigger animal (Lorenz, 1991). At the same time a Swedish doctor who was studying the child social behavior in different environments to the classroom took the Lorenz term to identify a highly malicious behavior of small gangs of children, of cases directed against a single child (Heinemann, 1992). In the organizational framework Robbins and Judge (2009) emphasize that from the traditional theory the conflict is synonymous of violence, destruction and irrationality and thus should be avoided, and regarded as the result of poor communication. For that is not present, it is necessary to establish the cause to correct and improve the performance of the parties involved. DREU and Vliert, (1997) distinguish cognitive and socio-emotional elements within the scope of the conflict and emphasize the need to distinguish between both to enhance the first and minimize the latter. For its part, Korsbaek (2004, p. 35) mentions a definition presented by a political scientist who said that the conflict is a "form of interaction between individuals, groups, organizations and communities that involves fighting for access to scarce resources and its distribution". Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) and Einarsen (2000), argue that the mobbing is when someone experience permanent negative actions from other people and who faces difficulties to defend for themselves. Baron Duque (2004) presents the premise that the power and negotiation are implicit elements in the mobbing, accordingly, within an organization this phenomenon is used as a means to acquire power, partnering in this way with all the ethical and moral aspects of the workers.

In addition Hirigoyen (2011) describes what a person is being subjected to mobbing at the time that an action against him is presented each week, for a minimum period of six months. Similarly, the mobbing can be identified in particular situations characterized by omission or ignorance of the worker in a systematic way, which could be understood as a form of aggression, to the extent that restricts the interaction of the worker labor in its context. In this sense, Serna (2008, p. 133) argues that "the corporate culture of an institution is how organizations do things, such as setting priorities and give importance to the various business-related tasks, in addition to include what is important to the company. Likewise, culture impacts on how managers solve the strategies raised". For its part Hall (1996, p. 75) Proposes that the organizational climate refers to the "own work environment of an organization, a term that designates a set of properties of the working environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the employees, who are supposed to be a force that influences the behavior of the same". In relation to the moments or stages that encloses the manifestation of the scenes of the Mobbing, Trujillo, and Hernandez Valdebarrano (2007, p.77) pose that

"From an organizationally point of view, Leymann (1997) sets out four typical stages in the development of bullying that describe the emergence and evolution of the majority of the processes of harassment:

Phase 1. The emergence of some critical incident

Phase 2. The systematic persecution

Phase 3. The intervention of the superior

Phase 4. The abandonment of work"

The medical sciences and disciplines such as psychology and psychiatry in referring to psychological abuse, coincide with the arguments raised by Hirigoyen (2005) "...the intentional behavior, executed from a position of power and designed to be devalued, produce psychological damage, destroy self-esteem and reduce personal confidence...the abuser it does so by insults, accusations, threats, destructive criticism, screams, manipulations, silences, indifference and despises" (Peña and Sanchez, 2007, p. 25) Mobbing is, therefore, which is characteristic of organizations with a structure of working poor, highly bureaucratized, where deprives the lack of interest and the absence of support from superiors, the existence of multiple hierarchies unclear, excessive loads of work due to shortage of staff, the existence of non-official spontaneous leaders struggling to keep the informal power, as well as the absence of instances to settle the conflict and the lack of regulations. (Peña and Sanchez, 2007, p. 33). In particular, it identifies the contributions of Fidalgo & Penuel (2010) with the use of the scale Cisneros as assessment tool of the mobbing. The contemporary analysis of the Mobbing should not only be reduced to their patterns of expression, but their implications in the well-being and quality of life of workers. In this sense, White, A. & Diaz, D. (2005) emphasize the close relationship between the dimensions of the subjective well-being, psychological and social as central elements of the overall measure of the construct. Specifically, White, A. and Diaz, D. (2006) propose that there is a directly proportional relationship between the Social Welfare and Mental Health, in this regard when you develop institutional policies that promote the welfare is being strengthened, the access to vital satisfactory experiences, which in turn consolidates self-esteem as well as the positive assessment of the life and thus become predictors of positive mental health and social integration. Blanco, Diaz, Moreno, Gallardo, Valley, Van Dierendonck and Rodriguez (2006) developed the adaptation of the scales of psychological well-being of Ryff (1989; 1995; 1998; 2002) which presented as central dimensions of the construct the appropriate, positive relationships, autonomy, domain of the environment, purpose in life and personal growth. Subsequently, Abello, Amaris, Blanco, Madariaga, Diaz and Arciniegas (2008) showed in his study the measurement of welfare from a dimensional perspective at the subjective level, psychological and social in a sample of adults in the city of Barranquilla, as one of the primary points associated with the present study. The earlier approaches converge with the contributions of Rodríguez and Goñi-Grandmontagne (2011) in its analysis related to the three-dimensional structure of the subjective well-being and the implications of the same factors associated with the quality of life. It was also evidence this relationship in the studies of Revilla and Perez (2012) on welfare and quality of life from the perspective of the Information Society. In this same perspective, Fernández-Lopez, Fernández-Fidalgo, Cieza (2010) analyzed the concepts of quality of life, health and welfare from the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), associated with the concepts of Subjective wellbeing and happiness, under a gaze paradigmatic for the mental health and human development of biopsychosocial order. These findings are consistent with the contributions of Requena (2000) in its analysis of the Satisfaction, well-being and quality of life at work. From the earlier approaches exposed from the conceptual framework in the present investigation has identified the following question problem: How does it affect the presence of the Mobbing the psychological and social welfare, life satisfaction, job stability and the organizational climate, in the analysis of particular situations in an institution of Higher Education?

2. Methodology

This research is qualitative applied, supported by a methodology for the analysis of information called Study of particular situations, with a humanistic hermeneutic paradigm: interpretive. For the collection of the information were used as strategies the semi structured in-depth interview, the Cisneros Scale and Amalio Blanco's Scales. The

criterion for selection of the sample is intentional and is not based on any parameter of probability sampling. Within the study of particular situation, there are important principles of validity (understood as the degree to which a measuring instrument really measure) and reliability as it provides the researcher stable, consistent and error-free results.

3. Results

The following is a summary of the main findings from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the application of the scales of Cisneros, Psychological Well-being, social welfare and life satisfaction, as input for the analysis of particular situations in each of the 10 participants who formed the sample for this study. In this vein, it establishes a connection with the functional studies reported by now (2003), from the point of view of the aggressor, in cases where the victim is subjected to mobbing, this evidence empowerment, the high level of self-esteem and even satisfaction and joy, to see their goal fulfilled. From the qualitative perspective in the analysis of contents of the semi-structured interviews of synthetic form were found the following emergent categories associated with exposure to mobbing, which are referenced in a synthetic way below in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of the content of the semi-structured interviews about the exposure to Mobbing

Dimensions of analysis	Categories of Analysis Content
Identification of the exposure to the particular situation of moobing	The work is not valued.
	Psychological abuse.
	Relegated in the decision-making.
	Assignment of functions not in line with the charge.
	Lack of respect in direct dealings.
	Permanent situations of tension.
	Absolute feeling of fear of losing their jobs.
	Demotion at work with the change of position.
	Underestimating the capacity of performance.
	Permanent Tension generating desire to quit or leave the job.
	Improper handling of power.
	Exert pressure with actions that seek the resignation of the victim.
	Limit the skills.
	Disrespectful Treatment and mockery.
	Feel ridiculed in front of coworkers
	Drastic changes that affect the emotionality.
	Deny the opportunities.
Relational Analysis of the interaction of the worker with his boss and his peers	Abuse of power.
	Improper use of the authority.
	Power as destructive agent.
	Communications with unjust demands.
	Retaliation for expressing disagreement with constant harassment with offensive comments.
	Improper treatment with threatening content.
	Lack of humility in the treatment.
	Difficulty in recognizing the skills.
	Little cordial treatment and verbal aggression.
	Inadequate labor environment.
	Difficulty in communication and difficulty to produce solutions
	Inadequate assignment of functions
	Assume a conformist attitude.
	Feel ignored and undervalued in their training and skills.
	Assume submissive behavior to avoid reprisals.
	Sense of dissatisfaction by being in repetitive situations of tension.
	Associated factors with the coping of the particular situations of mobbing
Loss of interest in the organization and permanence by need.	
Go to their place of work with the feeling of sadness.	
Discrimination to be promoted.	
Does not take in consideration the effort of the employees in their jobs.	
Deterioration in the communication and retaliation for expressing disagreement.	
Feeling of powerlessness to find solution to adverse situations.	
Absolute indifference to the problem.	
Little support network within the organization.	
Assume the silence to avoid negative consequences such as loss of job.	

Despite facing the situation is the sense of unease.
 Loss of the sense of belonging to the organization.
 Negative thoughts related to the sojourn in its employment and despair in its resolution

Source: Author

From the quantitative perspective, in relation to the analysis of the scales applied to the sample of the study, in first instance describes the outcomes associated with psychological well-being Scale (α :.895), then the corresponding to the scale of Social Welfare (α :.71), as well as the trends identified in the scale of Life Satisfaction (α :.81) and finally the analysis of the scale Cisneros associated with the strategies of psychological harassment (α :.92).

The emergent categories derived from the qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews showed that the theoretical consistency of the contributions that have derived from the perspective of the Relational Sociology of Donnati (2011), since the main categories associated with the exposure, the relationships and coping strategies, are displays of the dysfunctional system that generates the Mobbing in organizations, affecting not only the worker, but to the culture and organizational climate. In general terms from the quantitative results are evidence that the studies reported by authors such as Rodriguez and Goni-Grandmontagne (2011), Fernández-Lopez, Fernández-Fidalgo, Cieza (2010), Barón (2004) and Requena (2000), is reaffirmed in the functional relationship that exists between the levels of psychological well-being, social and life satisfaction, such as concerning associated with the negative impact that generated them in the exposure to the particular situations of mobbing which is evidenced by the use of the scale Cisneros. Consequently, in the light of the present results the mobbing can occur when the individual demonstrates a strong personality that does not allow any manipulation, also by having the luck to enjoy personal situations or positive family that others cannot share; there are also other characteristics that can influence the appearance of the mobbing as is the age difference, work experience, the customs, the level of education, among others. Different authors have found in their research that there is a great diversity in the way people react to the interpersonal conflicts and the escalation of the conflict in the workplace. These authors also indicate that some people are more sensitive than others and some react most dramatically before harassment situations and match that one of the variables involved in the phenomenon of the mobbing is emotional intelligence. (Zapf, 2001; Gross, 2001; Einarsen, 2000).

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