

Workplace Harassment and Bullying

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What is Workplace Harassment

Bullying and harassment in the workplace is an unfortunate reality for many people. The term harassment does not only refer to psychological harassment (psychological harassment), but even in moral (mobbing) and sexual harassment, as well as bullying or violence (Salin, 2006a;.) Harassment in the workplace has preoccupied researchers since the decade 1980, when Leymann published his ideas about negative attitudes in space work (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010; Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Bjorkqvist, Osterman and Hjelt-Back (1994), argued that workplace harassment can be described as "the repetitive activities aimed at bringing mental (but sometimes and physical) pain, and are addressed to one or more persons, who for one or the other reason, they are unable to defend themselves" (pp. 173-174). Although others researchers since Leymann have used different names such as bullying, harassment or workplace harassment, most researchers agree that describe a similar or equivalent phenomenon (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010).

The term workplace bullying has been described as an umbrella term, as it can incorporate harassing, intimidating and aggressive or violent behaviors (Fox & Stallworth, 2004). Likewise, in a review of workplace bullying research work, Einarsen (2000) used the terms bullying, harassment and victimization synonymous with mobbing. In Scandinavia, the term "mobbing" was introduced by Heinz Leymann (1990), who referred to it as a psychological phenomenon, where the repeated incidents, which are often insignificant, have significant negative implications for the target. As a result, the term mobbing is commonly used in the Nordic countries to describe workplace bullying (Einarsen, 2000; Rylance, 2001). In the United States, researchers often describe bullying behaviors with the term "emotional abuse" (Keashly, 1998, 2001), which often characterized by a persistent and persistent form of "workplace aggression" (Baron & Neuman, 1996, 1998). Researchers in Australia and Great Britain (Hoel & Cooper, 2001; Rayner & Cooper, 2003; Sheehan et

al., 2004) tend to use the term "bullying in the workplace".

Harassment in the workplace can take many different forms. THE sexual harassment is generally defined as "the unwanted behavior associated with gender, which creates a hostile work environment or 'look and feel' attitudes receive", where the same undesirable conduct becomes a condition or condition of employment or job promotion' (Pryor and Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 79). Psychological harassment, by on the other hand, it has been studied under many different names, including "bullying" (Einarsen et al., 2003), "mobbing" (Zapf and Gross, 2001), "victimization" (Aquino, 2000) and "generalized workplace abuse" (Richman et al., 1999).

Despite differences in terminology, researchers agree that these concepts refer to repeated and systematic acts of hostility, which are either verbal or non-verbal or even para nature. According to other researchers workplace harassment, defined as interpersonal behavior that intends to harm another worker in the field (Bowling & Beehr, 2006), which takes the form of verbal abuse (Johnson & Indvik, 2006; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005), violence (Barling, Rogers & Kelloway, 2001) or sexual harassment (Barling et al., 2001 Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Rospenda, Richman, Ehmke & Zlatoper, 2005).

General harassment, but not sexual or racial harassment, can fall under concept of workplace bullying (Hadikin & O'Driscoll, 2000). Indeed, the Workplace Bullying Taskforce (Queensland Department of Industrial Relations, 2002), was created by the Queensland Government in Australia to investigate the phenomenon of workplace bullying, decided to use the term "harassment" instead of "bullying in the workplace", finding that the term harassment is more widely recognized in organizations and that its use will more easily raise awareness of the phenomenon in the workplace. However, in their definition for workplace bullying or harassment, they distinguished between harassment and sexual harassment. Harassment in the workplace is

repeated conduct, other than sexual harassment, which is directed at an individual employee or group of employees and is offensive; intimidating, humiliating or threatening, unwanted and unsolicited (Branch, 2014).

Workplace bullying, according to Margaret (2007), is defined as repeated mistreatment of an employee who is targeted by one or more employees with a malicious mixture of humiliation, intimidation and sabotage of his performance. THE workplace harassment is "any negative, interpersonal interaction in the workplace, which affects terms, conditions or decisions employment related to a person's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, but not based on any legal protected characteristic" (Rospenda & Richman, 2004, pp. 221–222). According to Olweus (1990), the definition of bullying and harassment covers all situations in which one or more people over a period of time feel that they are subjected to negative acts that no one can defend themselves against of these. Although a single serious episode, such as a physical assault, can to be considered bullying and harassment, the definition emphasizes the term "repeated negative acts" (Olweus, 1990). The World Health Organization defines harassment in the workplace as "repeated, unreasonable behavior directed at one worker or group of workers, who creates a risk to health and safety" (Cassitto et al., 2003, p. 12), where health is broadly understood as physical, psychological and social. Bullying is an escalating process, in which the person who confronts him ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negativity social acts. A conflict cannot be characterized as bullying if the incident is a single event or if two parties of approximately equal strength are in conflict". (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2003, p. 15).

Summarizing the above, there are three recurring elements found in too many definitions of bullying behavior: a) the persistent nature of the act, b) the consequences suffered by the person or persons being bullied, and not necessarily the intentions of the bully, and c) the potentially destructive consequences of her activity of harassment to the person experiencing it (Soares, 2002).

Due to the fact that as we have seen above there are many words to describe the same or similar phenomena in the workplace, as well as many definitions that cover a variety concepts, for the needs of the specific thesis we will use the concept of bullying and workplace harassment. Therefore, whether we are talking about workplace

harassment, or workplace bullying or bullying workplace we mean the same phenomenon.

Types and behaviors of Workplace Harassment – Bullying

Many researchers have dealt with the categorization and types of work bullying. Rayner and Hoel grouped workplace bullying into following types:

- a) Threat to the professional profile (depreciation of the opinion, public humiliation of workplace and blame for lack of effort).
- b) Threat to personal status (depreciation with reference to age, personal complaints and underestimation).
- c) Isolation (withholding information, physical or social isolation and prevention access to opportunities).
- d) Workload (time unattainable deadlines and undue pressure).
- e) Decoordination (inability to yield time credit for secondary tasks, repeated hints and reminders of mistakes and abdication). Other forms that harassment can take in the workplace according to Leymann (1996) are as follows:
 - a) Lack of communication with the person who is being harassed (e.g. verbal attack related to work tasks, insufficient ability to communicate, verbal threats).
 - b) Humiliation, in which the victim cannot maintain his dignity, mocking comments about some disadvantage of the victim, as well as spreading rumours.
 - c) Zero assignment of job responsibilities or assignment of trivial tasks.
 - d) Isolation of the victim from the rest of his colleagues and lack of social skills relationships.
 - e) Assignment of work hazardous to physical health or physical threats.

Bullying behaviors in the workplace are usually defined as inappropriate or irrational (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Gorman, 1999; Hoel & Cooper, 2001; McCarthy, 1996; McCarthy, Sheehan & Kearns, 1995). Examples of such behaviors include mocking people, watching other people's work, questioning it professional competence, the spreading of damaging rumours, explosive outbursts and threats (Bassman, 1992; Rayner & Hoel, 1997; Zapf & Einarsen, 2001).

The negative and undesirable nature of the behavior used is essential to the concept of bullying. Victims are exposed to persistent insults or offensive comments, persistent personal criticism, or even, in a few cases, physical abuse (Einarsen, 2000b). These behaviors are "used with

a purpose, or at least they are as a result, his constant humiliation, intimidation and fear or punishment victim' (Einarsen, 2000b, p. 8).

The types of various behaviors can take either a physical form, the direct

that is, an attack on the victim, or a psychological form, such as subtle and hidden ones actions, offensive comments or hostile looks (Bentley et al., 2012; Saunders et al., 2007). Bullying behaviors are usually aimed at one or a few people, rather than one wider workplace (Salin, 2003). When people who bully and harass, they make an effort for aggression against others, then they seek to maximize damage to their target and minimize risk to self (Bjorkqvist, Osterman & Lagerspetz, 1994). For this reason, abusers often prefer covert forms of aggression in the workplace to harm the target, while make it very difficult to identify them as the source of such damage (Baron & Neuman, 1998).

Researchers recognize that actions such as verbal aggression, spreading rumours, etc social isolation, withholding work-related information from a person and the unrealistic deadlines are behaviors associated with bullying (Rayner & Cooper, 2006; Zapf et al., 2011).

Causes of Workplace Harassment - Bullying

Research that has taken place on the causes of bullying at work has mainly addresses two issues: the role of the individual's personality and his rolepsychosocial work environment (Einarsen 1999). The victims of bullying in work have been described as conscientious, as people who carry out their duties against letter and somewhat as not pretentious, being over the top with an unrealistic view of both themselves as well as their situation (Brodsky, 1976). In a study among 2,200 members of six Norwegian Trade Unions (Einarsen et al, 1994), victims of workplace bullying showed lower self-esteem and were more anxious in social settings than their colleagues who were not bullied. Such features may make them easy target of aggression, suitable scapegoat, as well as vulnerable when they face interpersonal aggression and conflict. However, one problem with this of the kind of research is that these observed characteristics of the victims can actually be a consequence of the victimization experienced. Leymann & Gustaffson (1996) argue that any personality disorder in the victim should be considered as an indication of destruction of the victim's personality, which is caused by bullying.

Leymann (1992), on the other hand, emphasizes that personality factors do not are related to the study of bullying and that working

conditions alone are the main cause of such behaviors and experiences. Matthiesen & Einarsen (2000), found that there can be three groups of victims. Those who are depressed and suspect in social settings as a result of continued exposure to bullying, those with generally low social competence and various psychological pre-morbidities problems and finally, those who do not depict any personality traits above average.

As for the perpetrators, we know less about their personalities. A team of many employees who admitted in a survey that they had bullied others described a personality very consistent with that of the victims' characteristics. However, apart from being anxious in social settings and low in social competence, they also described themselves as highly aggressive individuals (Einarsen et al., 1994). THE American psychiatrist, Brodsky (1976) has claimed that harassment occurs when a "evil bully" meets a humorless victim.

However, the causal model of bullying and harassment at work that has attract the most attention of the public in Scandinavia, emphasizes its quality working environment of organizations as the main determining factor of such inappropriate behavior. According to this view, harassment is primarily caused from problems in both the work and social environment within the organization.

Based on case studies, Leymann (1993) claims that four factors are important in causing workplace bullying: (1) deficiencies in its design; work, (2) deficiencies in leadership behavior, (3) a socially exposed position victimization and (4) low morale in the work department.

Einarsen, Raknes & Matthiesen (1994) showed that the occurrence of bullying and harassment significantly correlates with various aspects of organizational and social work environment, especially leadership, role conflict, and job control. Work environments where bullying was observed, there were employees who reported increased level of role conflict and who were dissatisfied with their social climate, the leadership behavior of their superiors and the possibility of self-control to work.

Both the victims of bullying and its observers were faced with an inappropriate workplace. In a study among male industrial workers, there was strong correlation between exposure to bullying and job dissatisfaction pressure, the social climate at work, the leadership practice of supervisors and the lack of stimulating and challenging work (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). A team German victims of bullying reported that they had little control over their time and had high

cooperation demands (Zapf, Knorz & Kulla, 1996). A situation where people they are forced to work closely together and are very interdependent, he offers more chance of collisions. As a consequence of the limited control of people in their own time, unresolved conflicts can escalate into harassment, especially if the climate of the work group is characterized by "bad humor" (Brodsky, 1976).

Role conflict and lack work control can also be related to bullying and harassment through of creating increased tension, stress and frustration in the work group. Yet, a high degree of ambiguity or incompatible requirements and expectations about them roles, duties and responsibilities may have created a high level conflicts within the work group, especially in relation to rights, obligations, privileges and positions. This situation can then act as a precursor conflicts and poor relations between employees (Einarsen, 2000). Zapf (1999) argues that the organization, the social system, a particular perpetrator and the victim should be considered as potential causes of workplace bullying. In support of it, Einarsen (1999) has identified the important roles (i) of his personality victim and (ii) psychosocial factors. For example, Björkqvist, Österman & Hjelt-Bäck (1994) identified (i) competition about status and positions; work, (ii) envy and (iii) the attacker being unsure of himself as causal factors of workplace bullying incidents.

Consequences - Effects of Workplace Harassment

Harassment targets suffer from anxiety, sleep disorders, depression and may even show suicidal tendencies (Hoel et al., 2004; Kivimäki et al., 2003; McTernan et al., 2013). Workplace harassment has undeniably harmful effects on physical health (Rospenda et al., 2005), mental health (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005; Tepper, 2000; Verkuil, Atasayi & Molendijk, 2015) and work performance (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Johnson & Indvik, 2000). Other labor incidents mistreatment in the workplace, such as late payments, threats of such delays, unpaid overtime, withholding of part or all of the salary and physical abuse have also been reported by workers (Arnold Shih, 2010; Brown, Dehejia & Robertson, 2014b; Pike & Godfrey, 2014; Record, Kuttner & Phouxay, 2014). The negative consequences are particularly evident in terms of their health individuals (Niedl, 1996; O'Moore et al., 1998), as well as in the level of satisfaction with their work (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997).

Brodsky (1976) alerted us to the fact that "the effects of harassment to its victims they can be

devastating' (p. 38). As a serious source of social stress, exposure to workplace bullying has been shown to be associated with reduced health and well-being; as well as with a reduction in positive attitudes towards work and life (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Breen & McNamara, 2004; Brodsky, 1976; Einarsen, 2000; Einarsen, Matthiesen & Skogstad, 1998? Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen & Hellesøy, 1996; Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Lynch & O'Moore, 2004; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; O'Moore et al., 1998; Quine, 1999; Thylefors, 1987; Voss, Floderus & Diderich al., 1996). Indeed, while Kivimäki and colleagues (2003) and Voss and colleagues (2001) report that workplace bullying work has been associated with a 25% to 90% increased risk of recorded absence due to illness, Leymann (1990a, 1992) claimed that workplace harassment is a leading cause of suicide. Thus, in conjunction with the evaluation of the potential role that can to have the psychosocial work environment in the bullying process, is also necessary to assess the attitude related to the work and life of the victims such behaviors.

Overall, studies have proven that exposure to workplace bullying causes long-term negative impact on mental health (Finne, Knardahl & Lau, 2011; Kivimäki et al., 2003; Rugulies et al., 2012), suicidal tendencies (Nielsen, Einarsen, Notelaers & Nielsen, 2016? Nielsen, Nielsen, Notelaers & Einarsen, 2015), headaches (Tynes, Johannessen & Sterud, 2013), chronic neck pain (Kääriä, Laaksonen, Rahkonen, Leino-Arjaas, 2012), fibromyalgia (back pain etc.) (Kivimäki et al., 2004), sleep difficulties (Hansen, Høgh, Garde & Persson, 2014), work-related stress (Hoobler, Rospenda, Lemmon & Rosa, 2010), job insecurity and intention to leave work (Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland & Einarsen, 2014), leaving and returning to work (Høgh, Hoel & Carneiro, 2011), recorded absences due to illness (Ortega, Christensen, Høgh, Rugulies & Borg, 2011; Suadicani, Olesen, Bonde & Gyntelberg, 2014) and the risk involved someone to become a recipient of early retirement due to disability (Berthelsen, Skogstad, Lau & Einarsen, 2011).

In their research investigating the role of the "work environment hypothesis" in process of bullying, McGuckin and colleagues (2013) also investigated whether the experience of workplace bullying was predictive of self-reported attitudes towards various aspects of work and personal life (i.e. satisfaction with work, organizational commitment, interpersonal trust at work, involvement in work, intrinsic work motivation, staying, self-rated stress, job satisfaction Zoe). The

results of their research demonstrated its overwhelming effects workplace bullying in relation to 'Work Engagement', 'Intrinsic Motivation work', 'Life satisfaction', 'Interpersonal trust at work', the "Self-assessed stress", "Job satisfaction" and "Interpersonal confidence at work" (Mc Guckin et al., 2013).

Targets of severe bullying are likely to take their experiences home them, affecting family and social relationships. For example, the goals that suffer from clinical depression due to bullying, they may be consumed by bot their own situations, resulting in them devoting less attention to emotional ones needs of their children (Yamanda, 2008). In terms of psychology, the common effects include anxiety, depression, mood swings, sleep loss (and the subsequent fatigue), as well as feelings of shame, embarrassment, guilt and low self-esteem. Some targets have developed symptoms consistent with the Disorder Post-Traumatic Stress. Common physical effects include headaches from stress, high blood pressure, digestive problems, increased cardiovascular risk diseases and weakened immune system (Yamanda, 2008). The workers who subject to harassment are not the only ones negatively affected by this mistreatment. Colleagues who witness or learn this behavior can also be bullied, resulting in them feeling anxious, thus affecting her quality of their professional life.

Costs for organizations are related to absenteeism (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006), loss of qualified staff (Rayner and Hoel, 1997) and sick leave for illnesses that related to stress (Quinlan et al., 2019). Additionally, research has highlighted the negative effects on organizations caused by bullying in the workplace of work: for example, higher absenteeism, higher turnover, greater intention to leave and early retirements (Leymann, 1996; Rayner, 1997).

Measures and interventions against Labor Harassment

Since bullying is a form of workplace aggression, it probably leads to negative consequences for targets, organizations and for society, a key question is how to deal with these problems (Hodgins et al., 2014; Salin, 2008a, 2009). Interventions are an important topic for investigation, as research has reveal that few or none of the general interpersonal management strategies of conflict, available to those who are bullied, appear to be effective in preventing and stopping a bullying situation (Zapf & Gross, 2001). Therefore, organizational and administrative interventions are absolutely necessary (Salin,

2008b). However, although interventions against workplace harassment hold an important role at the practical level, research has lagged behind in this important theme (Escartin, 2016; Saam, 2009). In the studies that do exist, the general focus has been on approaches for the classification of intervention strategies, in its appropriateness mediation as an intervention strategy, as well as studies of how they respond different organizations in workplace bullying (Saam, 2009). So, with exceptions of some correlational studies, most studies have focused on secondary and tertiary interventions rather than effective primary intervention strategies, (Bond, Tuckey & Dollard, 2010; Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande & Nielsen, 2016; Law, Dollard, Tuckey & Dormann, 2011).

Interventions or initiatives are actions taken by an organization to prevention, reduction or management of bullying (Di Martino et al., 2003; Vartia & Leka, 2011). As it is the duty of the employer to provide a safe working environment, the interventions are in his area of responsibility (Catanzariti & Byrnes, 2006). There are different types of interventions and initiatives, with primary, secondary and tertiary stages that can be directed at the organization or employee level. That's all are used either to prevent an issue from escalating further, or at least to reduce its impact (Hoel, Rayner & Cooper, 1999; Rayner 1999; Vartia & Leka, 2011). Salin (2003) argued that in work environments where no there are anti-bullying policies and there is no monitoring or punishment of bullies they can engage in these negative actions more as they will be lower the costs and risks they will face.

According to Vartia & Leka (2011) as we mentioned above there are three stages interventions:

Interventions are preventive in nature and aim to prevent of harmful phenomena or effects that appear initially, reducing them their risks (primary stage).

Interventions aim to reverse, reduce or slow progression of the situation to stop the event from happening again and/or increase individuals' resources to cope with the situation (secondary stage).

Interventions are restorative in nature, with the aim of reducing negative effects caused by different professional risks and the restoration of the health and well-being of employees, as well and the restoration of a safe and healthy workplace (tertiary stage).

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