

Workplace moral harassment and its consequences: A case study in a federal higher education institution

Carmelita Angélica Guimarães

Fundação Pedro Leopoldo – Pedro Leopoldo/MG, Brasil

Vera L. Cançado

Fundação Pedro Leopoldo – Pedro Leopoldo/MG, Brasil

Reginaldo de Jesus Carvalho Lima

Fundação Pedro Leopoldo – Pedro Leopoldo/MG, Brasil

RESUMO

Assédio moral no trabalho e suas consequências: Estudo de caso em instituição federal de ensino superior

Neste artigo, tem-se como objetivo caracterizar um caso de assédio moral ocorrido em uma instituição federal de ensino superior e identificar suas consequências para diferentes atores. Foi realizado um estudo de caso, de natureza descritiva e qualitativa. Os dados foram coletados por meio de pesquisa documental, com a análise do processo administrativo, que traz depoimentos de alguns dos envolvidos no caso, e de entrevista em profundidade com o servidor assediado. Os resultados evidenciaram a ocorrência de assédio moral do tipo vertical descendente, em uma situação caracterizada por abuso de poder, autoritarismo e manipulação perversa, com severas consequências para a saúde física, psíquica e emocional do assediado. Verificou-se que a não atuação da área de Recursos Humanos na intermediação do conflito, a cultura e a estrutura da instituição podem ter favorecido a ocorrência do caso e motivado a impunidade do assediador. Para a organização, as ocorrências geraram degradação do ambiente de trabalho, desmotivação e cisão da equipe, bem como declínio do rendimento e outras perdas financeiras. À sociedade, além das questões financeiras, couberam sérios prejuízos, por tratar-se de uma instituição pública que deveria zelar pelos bens e direitos do cidadão, tanto no âmbito financeiro como no produtivo ou no social. Conclui-se que o assédio moral se trata de um processo multidimensional, que viola as garantias fundamentais do indivíduo e traz severos impactos à sua saúde, além de danos à organização e à sociedade.

Palavras-chave: assédio moral, gestão de pessoas, administração de recursos humanos, instituição federal de ensino superior.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

Received October 29, 2014

Approved August 20, 2015

Evaluation System: Double Blind Review

Editor: Nicolau Reinhard and

Maria Sylvia Macchione Saes

DOI:10.5700/rausp1231

Carmelita Angélica Guimarães, Mestre em Administração pela Fundação Pedro Leopoldo (CEP 33600-000 – Pedro Leopoldo/MG, Brasil).
E-mail: carmel.guimaraes@gmail.com
Address:
Fundação Pedro Leopoldo
Avenida Lincoln Diogo Viana, 830 - Dr. Lund
33600-000 – Pedro Leopoldo, MG – Brasil

Vera L. Cançado, Professora Titular do Mestrado em Administração da Fundação Pedro Leopoldo (CEP 33600-000 – Pedro Leopoldo/MG, Brasil).
E-mail: vera.cançado@fpl.edu.br

Reginaldo de Jesus Carvalho Lima, Professor do Mestrado em Administração da Fundação Pedro Leopoldo (CEP 33600-000 – Pedro Leopoldo/MG, Brasil).
E-mail: reginaldo.lima@fpl.edu.br

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last three decades, studies have proved the increase of psychological violence in the workplace, characterized as bullying or moral harassment (Guimarães & Rimoli, 2006; Hirigoyen, 2010). Several theoretical approaches and significant contributions have been given by different scholars on the subject, such as: i) Hirigoyen (2010, 2011), in France; ii) Leymann (1990, 1996), Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2005), Zapf (1999), in Sweden; iii) Zabala (2003), in Spain; iv) Ege (2000), in Italy, and others. Leymann (1996) says that harassment practices cause stigmatization and deprivation of individuals' fundamental rights. Harassment constitutes a form of psychological terror that generates mental damage, leading to the victim's exclusion from the workplace and even from the labor market. In Brazil, Barreto (2006), Freitas (2001; 2007), Heloani (2003, 2004, 2005) and Soboll (2008a, 2008b) started the discussion about the subject. They aroused academic interest in the topic and they also contributed to debates by the unions and the society in general.

Moral harassment has consequences for the victim, the harasser, the organization and the society, in different forms and intensity (Alkimin, 2012). According to Hirigoyen (2011), the harassment deeply affects the victim's identity by changing its mental functioning. In the organization environment it can cause decline in work quality and productivity, absenteeism, illnesses and accidents, loss of qualified workers. It can also lead to judicial processes and negative impact on the organization's image. Costs of illness, medical expenses and unemployment also impact on society (Barreto, 2009). For public institutions that are financed by citizens to provide good services at reasonable prices, the occurrence of such events doubly penalizes the society. They compromise the quality of work, they cause unproductive or counterproductive efforts, and they also burden the public purse (Scialpi, 2002).

Workplace violence and unethical practices are growing around the world, reaching epidemic levels in some countries. Professionals of education, social services, library services and health care, formerly considered immune, have also become the target of this kind of violence (OIT, 2006). In higher education public institutions in Brazil, there are some specificities of public service that may contribute to violence and moral harassment. The public sector is related to the public good, and its mission is to provide services to the society (Scialpi, 2002). But its environment may encourage moral harassment, because of factors such as political patronage, personal favours and privileges, and influence networks. Those factors work as trade currency or indicators of power and overlap the institutional norms (Carbone, 2000; Pires & Macedo, 2006). Labor relations in the public service are ruled by stability and hierarchy, so they can favour an environment with power struggles, jealousy and greed (Hirigoyen, 2010; Lopes, 2009). Research about moral harassment in the workplace carried out

by Nunes (2011) with teachers and technical-administrative staff at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina found that 47.7% respondents said that moral harassment is common in the university environment.

Concerned about this situation, the *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Instituições Federais de Ensino* (SINDIFES) union has sponsored seminars about moral harassment since 2010. In these seminars studies are presented and discussed with professionals and scholars. According to information from the union, many employees claim to have been harassed but do not take action, either for convenience or fear of exposure. In our conversation, they had mentioned a case of an employee dismissed and subsequently reinstated in the institution during his probation period in a higher education federal institution (*Instituição Federal de Ensino Superior* – IFES). This employee had consented to be interviewed and to provide and clarify data related to the process documentation. The others actors – the harasser, the managers, the team and other employees – could not be interviewed, and their opinions and perceptions were collected from their statements in the process documentation.

The current paper therefore aims to characterize a case of moral harassment in a federal institution of higher education and to identify its consequences for the different actors. We carried out a descriptive and qualitative case study. The data were collected by means of analysis of the case-related administrative process and an in-depth interview with the harassed employee.

This paper contributes on both the organizational and academic level, as studies about moral harassment are relatively new, as pointed out by Lage and Emmendoerfer (2010), Lorentz, Lima, and Maestro Filho (2011), Nunes (2011) and Rodrigues (2010). This study fills the gaps identified by Lima, Bispo, Gonçalves and Coelho (2014), who indicate the need to broaden understanding about the subject, focusing on both the harassed employee's discourses and other aspects surrounding the phenomenon. Paixão, Armond, Souza-Silva and Cerquinho (2013, p. 528) argued that studies could give information and reflection for "more ethical means to defend the rules of social coexistence". Nunes (2011) and Alves (2011) emphasized the importance of focusing the discussion on moral harassment in the public service. This study can fill some of these gaps and enrich theoretical debates, by analyzing the consequences of moral harassment for the different involved actors – the harassed employee, the perpetrator/harasser, the organization and the society.

This paper is organized in five sections. Section 2 provides theoretical references, section 3 the methodology, section 4 presents and discusses the results, and section 5 concludes.

2. THEORETICAL REFERENCES

Leymann's seminal work (1996) refers to mobbing as an extreme social syndrome, triggered by social stressors and with

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1033512>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1033512>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)