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## PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT AT WORK (MOBBING) AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CLIMATE AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN TEACHERS OF THE PUBLIC SYSTEM TEACHING OF THE SOUTHERN AREA OF PUERTO RICO

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**Abstract:** This research aimed to find how changes in the organizational climate exacerbate behaviors of harassment of teachers in two municipalities in the southern area of Puerto Rico. It was examined how the Puerto Rican Department of Education manages situations of labour harassment and how mobbing has affected teacher performance. A sample of 202 teachers in the public education system was used. An intentional non-probabilistic sampling was performed. The following questionnaires were used: (A) Alamo Questionnaire on Labour Abuse (2006) and (B) Organizational Climate Questionnaire of the Department of Health of Lima, Peru (Ugarte et al, 2009). The objectives of the study were achieved. The results and conclusions show us: (i) teachers affected by harassment will tend to perceive their work performance decreases; (ii) negative organizational climate makes greater predisposition to harassment and work

performance decreases; (iii) there is no protocol in the Department of Education to manage harassment situations; (iv) teachers reflected an equivalent proportion between subjecting or confronting the bullying; (v) the largest number of participants identified the stalker as their immediate boss; (vi) the consequences of psychological harassment at work manifest at physical level (cardiovascular disorders) and psychological (stress and depression). The study's recommendations are as follows: legal counselling for teachers and guidance for school directors. Further investigations on the subject are expected to be continued and the adoption of the Law in Puerto Rico.

**Keywords:** teachers, Department of Education of Puerto Rico, psychological work harassment, organizational climate, work performance.

## **ACOSO PSICOLÓGICO LABORAL (MOBBING) Y SU IMPACTO EN EL CLIMA Y DESEMPEÑO LABORAL EN MAESTROS DEL SISTEMA PÚBLICO DE ENSEÑANZA DEL ÁREA SUR DE PUERTO RICO**

**Resumen:** Esta investigación pretendió hallar como los cambios en el clima organizacional exacerba conductas de acoso hacia el maestro en dos municipios del área sur de Puerto Rico. Se indagó cómo el Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico maneja las situaciones de acoso laboral y cómo el mobbing ha afectado el rendimiento laboral del maestro. Se utilizó una muestra de 202 maestros del sistema de educación pública. Se realizó un muestreo no probabilístico de tipo intencional. Se utilizaron los siguientes cuestionarios: (A) Cuestionario del Álamo sobre Maltrato Laboral (2006) y (B) Cuestionario de Clima Organizacional del Departamento de Salud de Lima, Perú (Ugarte et al, 2009). Los objetivos del estudio fueron logrados. Los resultados y las conclusiones nos muestran: i) los maestros afectados por el acoso tenderán a percibir que su rendimiento laboral disminuye; ii) el clima organizacional negativo hace que sea mayor la predisposición al acoso y que el rendimiento laboral disminuya; iii) no existe un protocolo en el Departamento de Educación para manejar situaciones de acoso; iv) los maestros reflejaron una proporción equivalente entre someterse o enfrentarse al acosador; v) la mayor cantidad de participantes identificaron al acosador como su jefe inmediato; vi) las consecuencias del acoso psicológico en el trabajo se manifiestan a nivel físico (trastornos cardiovasculares) y psicológico (estrés y depresión). Las recomendaciones del estudio son las siguientes: asesoramiento legal para los maestros y orientación a directores escolares. Se espera que se continúen nuevas investigaciones sobre el tema y que se apruebe la Ley en Puerto Rico.

**Palabras clave:** maestros, Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico, acoso psicológico laboral, clima organizacional, rendimiento laboral.

### **Introduction**

During the last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century there has been an increase in cases of psychological mistreatment, verbal and physical violence in the work environment (Guevara, 2006; cited by Soto, 2006; Castro and Sanchez, 2009). Between 2017 and 2018, 51.8% of employees in Puerto Rico experienced workplace bullying (Rivera, 2020). Piñuel and Oñate (2002) point out that these cases arise because of organizational changes. Werther and Davis (2008) explain how organizational

changes (e.g., performing additional tasks to the job) adversely affect the emotional state of workers.

Since the mid-1950s, Puerto Rico has legislated to protect the constitutional rights of employees. In 1959, the first law aimed at protecting employees from employment discrimination went into effect. Since then, a series of laws have emerged to safeguard the labor rights of Puerto Ricans (Rivera, 2020).

In Puerto Rico, the studies of Martínez et al, 2005 frame the concept of *mobbing* as psychological harassment. What is certain is that whether *mobbing* or psychological harassment or moral harassment exists everywhere, what can differentiate them is how it occurs in different contexts and in different cultures.

Senate Bill 1008 (2005, October 7) initially established the legal definition of mobbing in Puerto Rico. That definition was used to submit House Bill 3898 (2012, June 12), which would establish the Law against Psychological Violence in the Workplace in Puerto Rico:

"labor harassment in the workplace constitutes that abusive verbal, written, or physical conduct in a repeated manner by the employer, its agents, supervisors, or employees, unrelated to the legitimate interests of the employer's business, unwanted by the person, which violates his constitutionally protected rights, such as the inviolability of the dignity of the person, protection against abusive attacks on his honor, reputation and private or family life, and protection against risks to his health or personal integrity in his work or employment. This harassing conduct creates an intimidating, humiliating, hostile, or offensive working environment, unsuitable for any person (p. 2)".

The truth is that both the reaction and the consequences of mobbing vary according to the individual's coping capacity, personal characteristics, and social support (Vélez, 2006). According to Martínez (2009), the consequences of mobbing are registered at four levels: (a) for the victim, (b) for the organization (company), (c) for the family, and (d) for the broader society. Ventín (2011b) insists that mobbing is not a pathology, but a series of hostile behaviors that make a worker ill. Therefore, health services will be the first door to which they will turn for external help since they cannot find it within the company (the company ignores it, colleagues avoid it). The repercussions for the family and the social support network translate into aspects such as neglect of family roles and responsibilities, family and couple arguments, loss of consortium projects, divorce, poor school performance of children, loss of friends, avoidance of social contact, and difficulties in the family economy due to possible medical expenses or loss of income due to absence from work. The family is really the faceless victim of mobbing (Ahumada, 2010; Martínez, 2009, Sanz and Rodríguez, 2011).

In the company, the consequences are loss of productivity, increased economic expenditure due to disability retirements and/or early retirements, demands on workers to increase their productivity, violence in the workplace, and poor organization in the workplace that influences both the health and behavior of the worker (Ahumada, 2010; Martínez, 2009; Peralta, 2004).

*Mobbing* can cause severe occupational illnesses and incapacity to generate income and can lead to social isolation. There may be cases of suicidal ideas, which in extreme

situations may be put into practice (Leymann, 1996). Frequently, *mobbing* generates combined physical and mental disorders that incapacitate the person who suffers it (Zapf and Einarsen, 2003).

The model on which the present research is based is that of Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993) who proposed a model of job performance that provides a more detailed view of job performance and helps to separate factors that are under the direct control of the worker from those that are not. Based on extensive research with Army personnel, Campbell developed a hierarchical model of job performance (Campbell, 1990; Campbell, McHenry, & Wise, 1990; Landy & Conte, 2005). He proposed three direct determinants of job performance: declarative knowledge (CD), skills and procedural knowledge (HCP), and motivation (M). By determinants, the author means the basic building blocks or causes of performance.

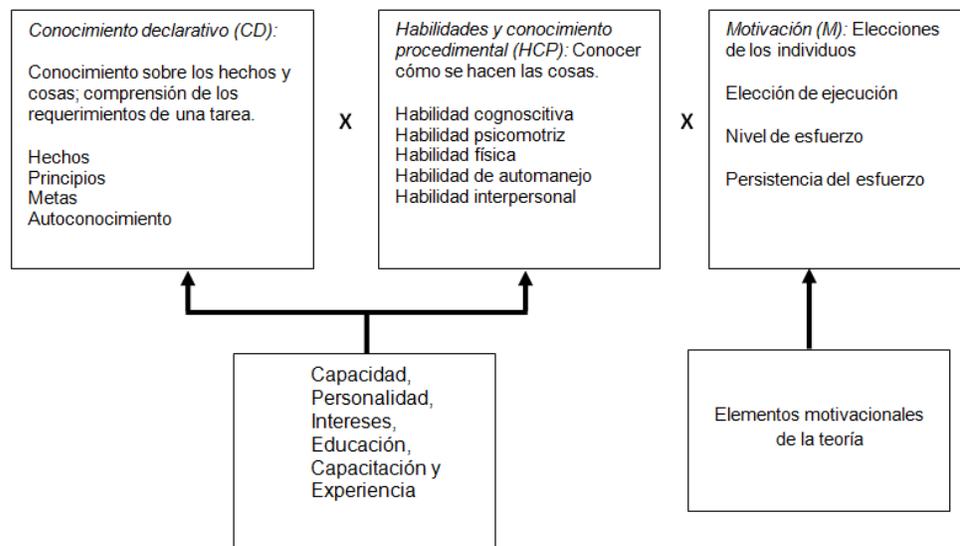


Figure 1. Determinants of Job Performance from Campbell et al (1993).

Jasén (2010) also proposes that many of the variables such as ability, personality, interest, training, experience, and motivators have an *indirect* effect on performance, as can be seen in Figure 1. These variables can affect performance by simply changing the level of declarative knowledge (CD), skills and procedural knowledge (HCP), or motivation (M). For example, increased training or experience will affect performance by increasing declarative knowledge, skill and procedural knowledge; incentives will affect performance by increasing motivation (inducing a person to perform at a high level or over a long period) (Campbell et al., 1993; Landy and Conte, 2005).

There is another important aspect to Campbell's Model: the components of actual performance. Declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skill, and motivation are determinants of performance, not behaviors (not performance per se). Campbell et al.'s (1993) research identified at least eight basic components of performance, some of which can be found in any job. When the eight components are combined with the three determinants and the various indirect determinants of performance, an extensive model is

obtained as presented in Figure 2. Although eight performance components are specified, not all will appear in every job. However, the model allows performance to be analyzed in all or parts of such components. Campbell et al. (1993) assert that three of the components: skill in the main task, demonstrated effort, and maintenance of personal discipline are essential at some level of any job.

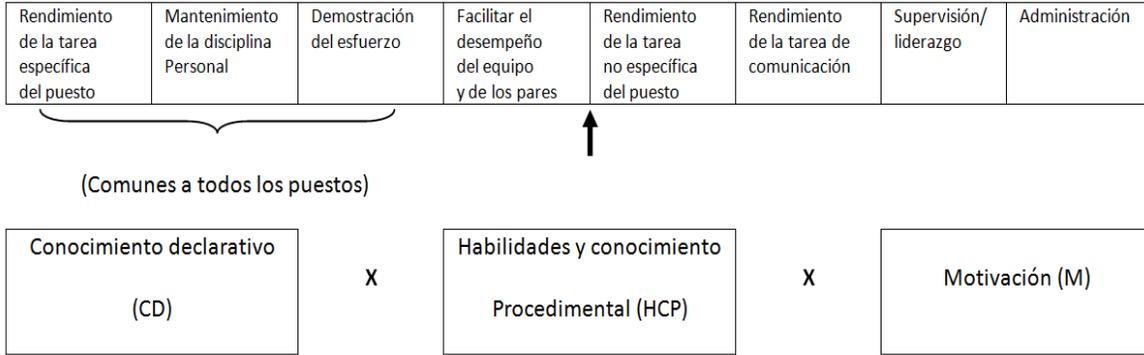


Figure 2. The Campbell et al. model (1993)

Other authors (Jasen, 2010), point out that it should not be forgotten that Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993) rightly state that the consequences and results at work are not under the total and exclusive control of the employee, but that there may be many other causes of poor performance that do not depend on the worker himself, such as, for example:

- Organizational practices: poor internal communication, poor training, inappropriate assignment, lack of attention to employee needs, unclear work guidelines, among other factors.
- Job-related concerns: changing or unclear requirements, boredom or excessive workload, lack of development opportunities, problems with colleagues, lack of resources, lack of job skills, among others.
- Personal problems: family, economic, emotional instability, problems in reconciling work and family, among others.
- External factors: highly competitive industry, conflict between the employee's ethical values and the demands of the position, conflicts between unions and management, among others.

The main *objective* of this research was to find motivational and environmental factors (organizational climate) that exacerbate bullying behaviors towards teachers in two municipalities in the southern area of Puerto Rico. We inquired from the teacher's perspective how the Puerto Rico Department of Education handles situations of workplace harassment and, in cases where *mobbing* exists, how it has affected the teacher's job performance in these municipalities. In order to find answers to the objectives, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: The teacher affected by *mobbing* will have a decrease in job performance in his or her work area.

Hypothesis 2: A tense or negative organizational climate predisposes to psychological harassment at work.

Hypothesis 3: The healthier the organizational climate in the workplace, the lower the teacher's perception of decreased job performance.

Hypothesis 4: Lack of knowledge about the protocol for psychological harassment at work prevents the teacher from facing a harassment situation that will affect his or her work performance.

### Method

The research *design* was carried out using a non-probability purposive sampling because the questionnaires were administered by school social workers who knew the teachers affected by the bullying and applying the Code of Ethics for Social Work Professionals of Puerto Rico (canon III, article 1: confidentiality). They were provided confidentiality of the process through informed consent.

The *participants* in this study were teachers in the public school system of Puerto Rico. A representative sample of 202 teachers was used.

The used measuring *instruments* were as follows:

- *Del Álamo Questionnaire on Workplace Bullying* (Del Álamo, 2006). It evaluates psychological harassment at work. It is composed of the following items: (1) the first part is composed of forty-three items answered on a scale of 0 to 2 points and (2) the second part of the questionnaire consists of ten open-ended questions that the participant would answer, if these applied to his or her situation of harassment. Finally, (3) a final question was included to assess the effect of *mobbing* on the teacher's job performance. For this question measuring *job performance* (hypothesis 4) the same rating scale of the first 43 items was used.

- *Organizational Climate Questionnaire* obtained from the Health Department of Lima, Peru (Ugarte, Melitón, Clendenes, and García, 2009). It contains 53 items that are answered on a Likert scale from 0 to 4 points. This questionnaire measures the dimensions of organizational climate (communication, conflict and cooperation, comfort, structure, identity, identity, innovation, leadership, motivation, reward, remuneration, and decision making).

The reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for the sample used were as follows: 0.97 for the Del Álamo Questionnaire and 0.98 for the Organizational Climate Questionnaire. These questionnaires were provided during October 2012 to May 2013 and finally achieved authorization as a doctoral thesis by March 2016.

SPSS version 21.0 software was used for *data analysis*. The following analyses of the results were performed: descriptive statistics, summary of case processing, goodness of fit, pseudo R-squared, and parameter estimates. For the analysis of the variables, since the variables do not follow a normal distribution it was not possible to apply Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and the calculation of Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was chosen. This coefficient is a measure of linear association that uses the ranks, order numbers, of each group of subjects and compares these ranks. Spearman's correlation coefficient is governed by the rules of Pearson's simple correlation, and the measurements

of this index correspond from + 1 to - 1, passing through zero, where the latter means no correlation between the variables studied, while the first two extremes denote maximum rank correlation. The equation used in this procedure, when in the ordering of the ranks of the observations there is no tied or linked data, is the following:

$$p = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

Where:

p= Spearman's correlation coefficient.

D<sup>2</sup> = differences between the ranges of the two variables, squared.

N = sample size expressed in pairs of ranges of the variables.

To test the reliability of the scales used, they were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha. The *Alamo Workplace Abuse Questionnaire* yielded 0.97 for the 43 items of the scale and the *Organizational Climate Questionnaire* 0.98 for the 53 items. Additionally, Bartlett's test of Sphericity was performed where both scales yielded a significance level of .000. Finally, the construct validity for both scales was 0.83.

In terms of the sample, there was a predominance of female participation (154 participants/ 76%) versus 24% male participation (48 participants). These data coincide with the findings obtained in the research of Martínez (2006), Rivera (2009), and Velázquez (2002). The 90% of the sample ranged in age from 21-30 years. Of this sample, only 14 participants (7%) claimed to have some type of disability. The majority of the respondents had a high school diploma (64% / 129 participants). The 36% /73 participants had completed a master's degree and only 1% (2 participants) a doctorate. This is indispensable to reach the highest economic income reflected in the salaries of teachers who apply to the Teacher Career Law (Velázquez, 2002). The 44% (89 participants) had 11 years of experience in the Department of Education and finally 23% /46 participants with 0-10 years of experience.

## **Results**

Since the variables do not follow a normal distribution, it is not possible to apply Pearson's correlation coefficient and we opted for the calculation of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. This coefficient is a measure of linear association that uses the ranks, order numbers of each group of subjects and compares these ranks. Spearman's correlation coefficient is governed by the rules of Pearson's simple correlation, and the measurements of this index correspond from + 1 to - 1, passing through zero, where the latter means no correlation between the variables studied, while the first two extremes denote maximum rank correlation. Starting with the variable Mobbing (Mobb1) according to the histogram plot and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors correction (Table 1), there is a negative skewness, as the data are clustered to the left of the mean (Figure 3). The distribution of the *mobbing* variable is not normal because the significance level is less

than 0.05. The results of the basic statistics indicate that 17 participants (8%) of the sample had a moderate degree of *mobbing* and 28 participants (14%) of the sample had a mild degree of *mobbing*. No participant according to the Del Álamo Scale experienced severe *mobbing*.

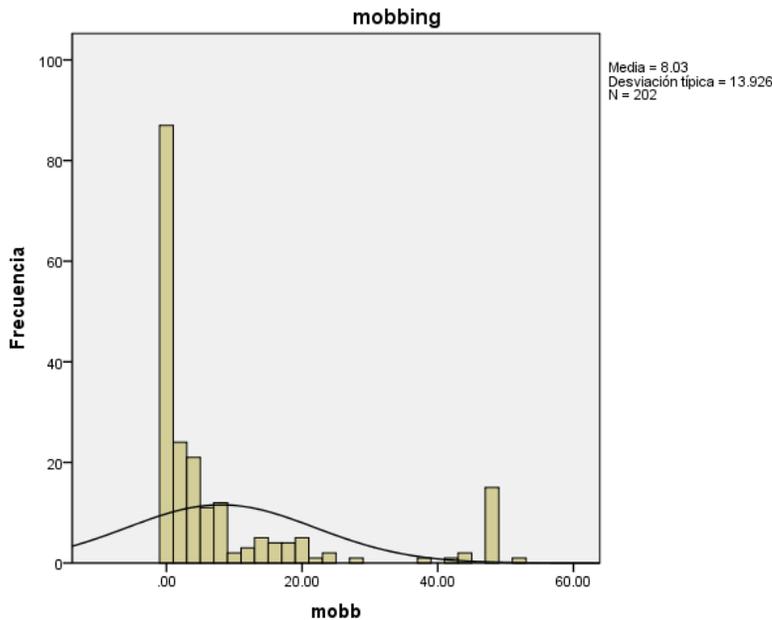


Figure 3. Histogram plot for the variable *Mobbing*.

Table 1  
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test for the following variables

	Normality test					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistician	gl	Sig.	Statistician	gl	Sig.
Mobb1	,282	202	,000	,616	202	,000
Rdto1	,451	202	,000	,574	202	,000
Climate1	,067	202	,026	,964	202	,000

Note: a. Lilliefors' significance correction

In the results of the histogram plot and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with the Lilliefors correction (Table 1) on the variable Job Performance (Rdto1), they determine that the variable shows a negative skewness (the data are clustered to the left of the mean) and the distribution is not normal because, again, the significance level is less than 0.05 (Figure 4).

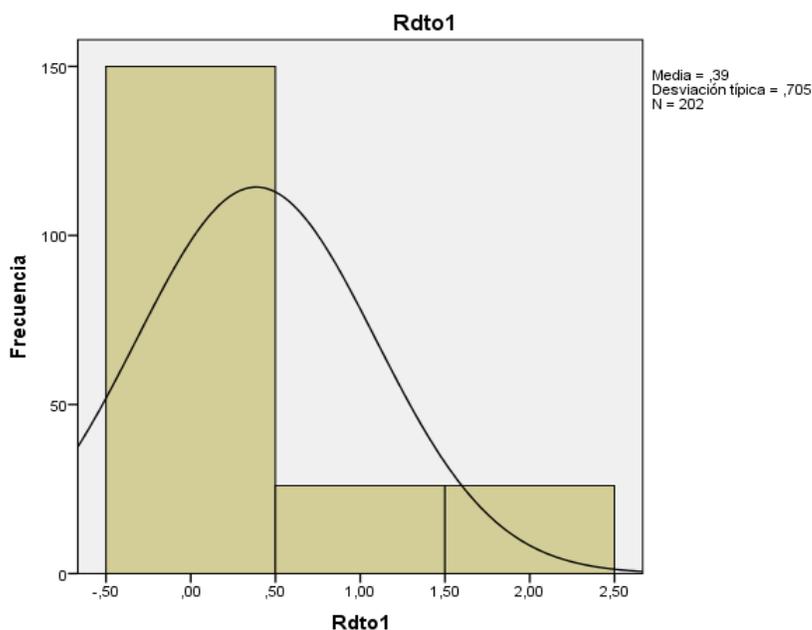


Figure 4. Histogram plot for the Labor Performance variable.

The basic statistics of the variable are shown in the following table:

Table 3  
*Descriptive statistics of the variables*

		Rdto1	Climate1	Mobb1
N	Valid	202	202	202
	Lost	0	0	0
Media		,3861	138,9158	8,0347
Standard deviation.		,70493	42,03786	13,92638

The variable has a standard deviation of 0.70 and a mean (average) of 0.39 (Table 3). The graphs show us that most educators do not perceive that their job performance decreases because they are victims of *mobbing*.

Table 4  
 Frequency distribution of the Labor Performance variable (Rdto1)

		Labor Performance (Rdto1)			
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid	Cumulative
				percentage	percentage
Valid	,00	150	74,3	74,3	74,3
	1,00	26	12,9	12,9	87,1
	2,00	26	12,9	12,9	100,0
	Total	202	100,0	100,0	

The results of the frequency distribution show that only 25.8% of the respondents perceive some type of decrease in their performance and of this total, half say that their decrease is severe (Table 4). In this sense, the mean of the variable has a value of 0.39. Bearing in mind that the scale scores are from 0 to 2, the value obtained is closer to the lower limit. In view of this information, we could affirm that teachers in the municipality do not perceive a lower professional performance.

For the Organizational Climate variable (Climate 1), the results of the histogram plot determine a bell shape (Figure 5), but the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with the Lilliefors correction (Table 1), determines that this variable is not normal either ( $p < 0.05$ ).

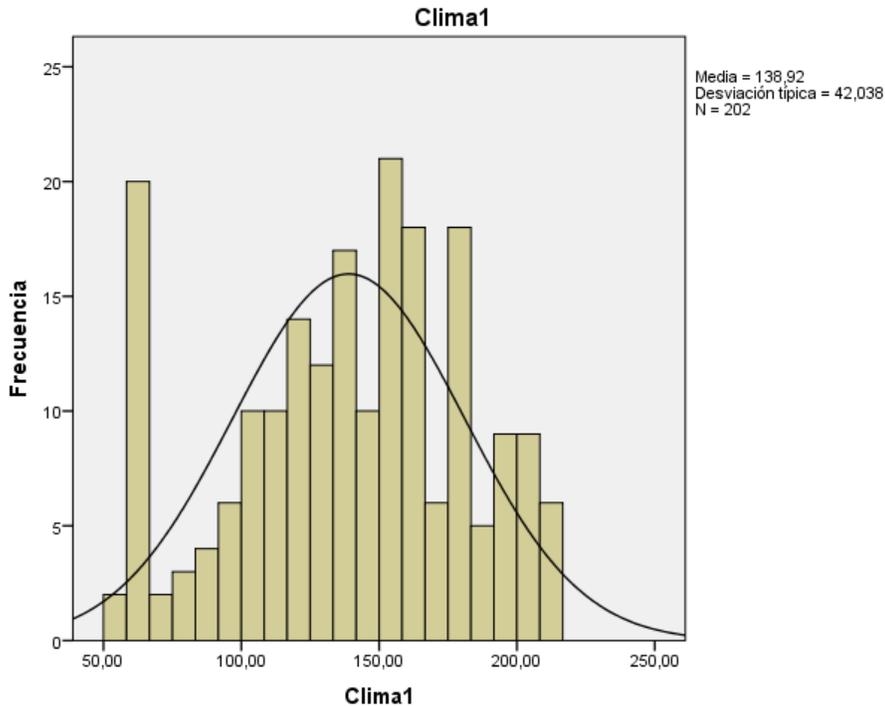


Figure 5. Histogram plot for the Organizational Climate variable (Climate1).

The variable has a standard deviation of 42.03 and a mean of 138.91 (Table 3). The results show that most educators do not consider that there is a negative or tense organizational climate. The sample score on climate tells us that out of a maximum of 212 (53 items multiplied by the maximum score of each item which is 4 = 212), 138.91 points were obtained, which indicates that most of the participants answered that there is an organizational climate to be improved.

In line with the previous results, the majority of educators do not consider that there is a very negative or unhealthy organizational climate, but there is a large group that considers that it should be improved. If the variable is analyzed by quartiles, the results are as follows:

- The 25% of the respondents consider the Organizational Climate to be unhealthy, obtaining a maximum value in the stratum of 110.75 (110.75; 55-128).
- Half of the sample considers that the climate in which they carry out their activity is at least improvable (142; 129-202).
- Finally, the remaining 25% consider the environment in which they work to be suitable and healthy.

As a final analysis, in the individual treatment of the variables, a table summarizing the frequencies of the responses is provided (Table 5) to try to establish an overview of the results. As a preliminary clarification, it is established that the Organizational Climate variable will be treated differently from the previous case. For this analysis, the results have been ordered inversely to their original definition in order to be able to study the quartiles in a consistent manner.

Table 5  
*Summary of the frequencies of the research variables*

		Mobbing	Job Performance	Organizational Climate
<b>Quartiles</b>	25	0	0	110.75
	50	1	0	142
	75	7,25	1	171

In conclusion, 75% of the sample believe that their level of *Mobbing* is minimal (7.25; 0-31), that their work performance has decreased moderately (1), and that their Organizational Climate should be better (171; 129-202). These results will be completed with the joint analysis of the variables that will allow us to verify or not the research hypotheses.

The results of the four hypotheses proposed for the research were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: It is accepted, the teacher affected by psychological harassment at work (*mobbing*) will have a decrease in job performance in their work area.

Hypothesis 2: It is accepted, a tense or negative organizational climate predisposes to psychological harassment at work.

Hypothesis 3: It is accepted, the healthier the organizational climate in the workplace, the lower the teacher's perception of decreased job performance.

Hypothesis 4: This hypothesis is rejected, according to which the lack of knowledge about the protocol for psychological harassment at work prevents the teacher from facing a situation of harassment that will affect his or her work performance. The results reflected that being a victim of workplace bullying (and/or the alleged lack of knowledge) did not prevent the participant from seeking help in any way (friends, family, therapeutic, and legal).

The interpretation of hypothesis 4 was carried out qualitatively through a descriptive analysis of the answers provided by the participants to the open-ended questions. Only 60 (30%) participants of the total sample (n=202) answered the open-ended questions (10 questions) of the Del Álamo Questionnaire on Workplace Abuse.

The results were interpreted in the light of the model proposed by Campbell et al. (1993). Among the most relevant results, the following stand out:

- Teachers were harassed by their school principals (66.6%/40 participants), senior government managers (8.3%/5), and co-workers (28.3%/17).
- In the *second* open-ended question they were asked to quantify how many times they suffered *mobbing*, dividing the answer between: daily, weekly, or monthly. The results obtained were as follows: 43.3% (26) of the teachers answered that they were subjected to mobbing daily, 15% (9) expressed that they were victims of mobbing monthly, and 11.6% (7) were victims occasionally.
- *Third*, they were asked to specify how long ago the mistreatment began and what were its first manifestations. These were their responses: 28% (16 participants) of the teachers were victims of bullying for 3 consecutive years, 13.3% (8 participants) were victims for 1 to 2 years, and 6.6% (4 participants) were victims for 1 to 11 months.
- Among the manifestations of *mobbing* were: poor performance evaluations, forcing them to perform tasks, refusing to provide health accommodations, intimidation, withholding information from the teacher, avoiding meetings, absenting themselves from meetings and discussing important issues in the teacher's absence, classroom discipline situations with students with oppositional defiant disorder that went unattended, name calling in front of other teachers, criticizing the teacher's clothing, insulting the teacher when the principal was asked about financial management, arguments in meetings, and preference for some employees.
- In the *fourth* question, they were asked to state how long they had been working for time the intensity of the *mobbing* had become unbearable: 19 participants (31.6%) stated that the mobbing had become unbearable in the last 2 years, 6 participants (10%) stated that they could not bear it for 1 year, 5 participants (8.3%) stated that they had suffered it for 3 months or less, 3 participants (5%) surprisingly rated it as unbearable for the last 10, 20 and 21 years each, 3 other participants (5%) stated that they had endured it for up to 6 years.
- The *fifth* question asked them to identify whether or not there was a triggering event for the *mobbing*: 28 participants (46.6%) answered that they did not identify any

triggering event and 16 participants (26.6%) answered that there were triggering events.

- Among the situations they experienced that triggered harassment (*question six*), they stated hiding information from the teacher, not attending situations of aggression, avoiding attending meetings, calls for attention, criticizing and insulting the teacher in front of others, discussions in faculty meetings, and preference for specific employees.
- In *question seven*, participants were asked whether bullying increased or decreased over the years: 4 participants (6.6%) identified that the mistreatment went less over the years, 26 (43.3%) identified that the mistreatment was greater over the years, and 30 (50%) identified that the mistreatment varied or stayed the same as the years went by.
- *Question eight* was presented to probe the participant's reaction to the harassment. The question was asked: What do you do in the face of mistreatment at work (what do you say or do, do you submit or not, do you confront or not), etc.? Twenty-six participants (43.3%) submitted to the harassment, that is, they said they did not do or say anything, 26 (43.3%) confronted the harasser and filed complaints, 2 (3.3%) said they took the situation to the last consequences and defended their rights.
- As for the negative consequences of mobbing, 17 (28.3%) participants said that mobbing had affected them greatly in the work area: 9 (15%) said they only performed the necessary tasks, 7 (11.6%) said they did not want to come to work, 5 (8.3%) said their motivation decreased, 2 (3.3%) said they felt dissatisfied, and 2 (3.3%) said their work performance decreased. Overall, about 42 participants (70%) of the educators said that being *mobbed* did affect their job performance in some way.
- With respect to personal consequences, the psychological and emotional manifestations manifested among the victims of harassment were depression, stress, discomfort, insomnia, frustration, anxiety, irritability, low esteem, feelings of having studied the wrong profession, sadness and poor memory, having greatly affected their family environment, frequent arguments with their partners, divorce, decreased sexual desire, discouragement, rumors reaching their children that affected them emotionally, distancing from friends, not engaging in recreational activities, decreased performance as an athlete. Among the physical manifestations manifested by the participants were high blood pressure and muscular pain.
- Other data reflected that 23 (38.3%) participants expressed that their quality of life had decreased a lot or they rated it as poor.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Because of the analysis of the results obtained in this research work, some theoretical and methodological implications linked to the research objectives that seek to find motivational and environmental factors that trigger *mobbing* and how the teacher handles situations of mobbing can be deduced.

The objectives that framed this research and that served as a frame of reference for the development of the thesis, related to the teachers of two towns in the southern area of Puerto Rico, were achieved. The following is a breakdown of the fundamental conclusions reached in this research work. Thus, the results obtained show us that:

1. Teachers affected by psychological harassment at work will tend to perceive that their job performance decreases, as formulated in the first hypothesis. In the qualitative domain, 70% (42 participants) of the educators stated that suffering from *mobbing* has influenced their work performance in some way.

2. The environmental factors that influence workplace bullying were investigated, and it was concluded that a negative or tense organizational climate increases the predisposition to psychological workplace bullying among teachers. This result is in line with the findings of the literature cited.

3. Job performance also decreases when the organizational climate is tense or negative. On the contrary, the healthier the climate, the lower the educator's perception of decreased performance. In light of the results obtained in this research, it is clear that the majority of teachers in the public school system in two towns in the southern area of Puerto Rico do not report a decrease in their professional performance.

4. Among the qualitative findings, it also stands out that the victims of *mobbing* suffered harassment episodes with a frequency of one to two times per week. The length of time that the mobbing lasted was variable, ranging from only once to 20 years. Thus, participants identified that workplace bullying remained the same over the years or increased and that there were initial triggering events for the bullying. The longest number of years experiencing *mobbing* prevailed in 16 participants (28.3%) who were affected for 3 years. These data are consistent with those found by Di Martino, Hoel, and Cooper (2003), Einarsen, et al (2003), Hoel and Cooper (2001), Hoel, Rayner, and Cooper (1999), and Velez (2006).

5. We investigated how the Puerto Rico Department of Education handled bullying situations according to the teachers' perspective. From the qualitative data, it was found that 59 participants (98.33%) know the protocol to follow in case of harassment. In addition, it was found that there are still teachers who do not know where to go to seek help (less than 1%), get oriented about *mobbing*, and the rights that cover them to defend themselves (Huertas, 2008, Lexjuris, 2013). It should be noted that the process used until 2018 to handle harassment situations was neither detailed nor written in a formal protocol nor published by the Department of Education since there was no mobbing law in Puerto Rico (*Senate Bill 1008*; 2005, October 7). It was not until August 7, 2020 that the Law to prohibit and prevent mobbing in Puerto Rico was signed (Rivera, 2020). Guidance based on the bills drafted by the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources was found for May 8, 2019 (Department of Labor and Human Resources, 2019).

6. How teachers handle workplace bullying situations was studied. Surprisingly, the data reflected an equal proportion between submitting to and confronting the bully among the 60 participants who answered the qualitative questions of the Del Álamo questionnaire (23/ 38.3% submitted to and 26/ 43.3% confronted the bully). These data coincide with those found by Rosado (2006), Topa, Depelo and Morales (2007).

7. The largest number of participants, 40 (66.6%) of the qualitative responses identified the bully as their immediate boss (school principal), 17 participants (28.3%) identified their coworkers and an important data was that 5 participants (8.3%) identified high level bosses (school superintendents). These data coincide with those found by Lebrón (2007), Martínez (2006), Rodríguez (2007).

8. The consequences of psychological harassment at work are manifested at the physical (cardiovascular disorders) and psychological (stress and depression) levels (Colunga et al, 2012; Ventín, 2011a).

9. An important contribution of this part of the work is that part of the data and results obtained could constitute a predictive tool that could be used in decision making in the organization, in which according to the calculation of probabilities and knowing the levels of *Mobbing* suffered by a given worker and the degree of goodness of his Organizational Climate, it could be estimated whether his work performance has decreased or not (Morales, 2020).

Among the limitations of this research, we highlight (1) that although Campbell's extended model has a great deal of intuition as well as research support (McCloy et al, 1994), it considers performance as a unitary entity or as a broad individual factor [which contradicts what is observed daily in the work area] and an equally ineffective view that holds that each job is different and there can be no general understanding of job performance beyond the particular job under consideration (Campbell et al., 1993; cited by Landy and Conte, 2005). (2) Low sample participation in the qualitative area of the Del Alamo Questionnaire on Workplace Abuse, which consisted of 10 open-ended questions. (3) The need to carry out future studies in Puerto Rico to study this issue in depth with the law already passed is highlighted. (4) Finally, the age of the study is recognized as a limitation since the questionnaires were submitted between 2012-2013. However, we consider that the situation of mobbing in Puerto Rico has not improved in recent years.

The legislative bodies of Puerto Rico approved the Bill against Workplace Harassment on May 5, 2014 (Bauzá, 2014), House Bill 306 was approved on July 24, 2020 (Colón, 2020) and finally, on August 7, 2020, the Law to Prohibit and Prevent Workplace Harassment in Puerto Rico was approved (Rivera, 2020). According to the results and conclusions of this study, the recommendations that emerge are the following: it is imperative to act by implementing prevention strategies as indicated by the law in Puerto Rico (Rivera, 2020). Teachers must be empowered with effective strategies for legal advice (in the form of information campaigns and through the sole legal representative of teachers, as is the Teachers Association of Puerto Rico), search for information, and psychological help for them and their families. It is vital to bring to the schools and their principals the legal implications of continuing with this unhealthy organizational climate. Finally, it is hoped that further research on this topic will continue, expanding the sample in Puerto Rico.

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