RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mobbing on University Staff: a Systematic Review

El Mobbing en trabajadores universitarios: Una revisión sistemática

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Summary

A great variety of studies on workplace harassment has been approached by different working groups because they show organizational and individual conditions that facilitate the development of this problem; for that reason the present study carries out a systematic review of scientific research on mobbing on university staff, using the following databases as a collection tool: La Referencia, EBSCO, Web of Science, Scielo and SCOPUS. The study included research published in the period between the years2000 and 2019. The approach of the studies analyzed was quantitative and mixed, with a non-experimental and cross-sectional design, and a correlational and descriptive scope. With respect to the instruments used, the importance of theoretical updating and validation is highlighted, as well as the need to implement and create new instruments to measure this phenomenon. In the same way, research about mobbing on university staff in the workplace is encouraged, considering the analysis of sex differences and harassment behaviors.

Keywords: Labor Relations; Peer Relationship, Universities, Harassment, Systematic Review.

Resumen

Una gran variedad de estudios sobre acoso laboral han abordado diversos grupos laborales debido a que cada uno de ellos presenta condiciones organizacionales e individuales que facilita el desarrollo de esta problemática, por ello el presente trabajo realiza una revisión sistemática de investigaciones científicas sobre el acoso laboral en trabajadores universitarios, ocupando como herramienta de recolección las bases de datos; La Referencia, EBSCO, Web of Science, Scielo y SCOPUS considerando la información publicada en el periodo compuesto entre los años 2000 a 2019. Los estudios analizados fueron de enfoque cuantitativo y mixto, con diseño no experimental y transversal con un alcance correlacional y descriptivo. Con respecto a los instrumentos se resalta la importancia de la actualización teórica y de la validación, así como la necesidad de implementar y crear nuevos instrumentos para la medición de este fenómeno, del mismo modo se invita a realizar investigaciones del acoso laboral en trabajadores universitarios, considerando el análisis de diferencia por sexo y las conductas de acoso.

Palabras clave: Relaciones laborales; Relaciones entre pares; Universidad; Acoso; Revisión sistemática.

Introduction

Human relations are based on a set of norms and behaviors accepted by the society in which they develop. It is in this sense that the working environment can be understood as the set of characteristics and properties (temporary or permanent) that influence behavior, performance and job satisfaction (Nareset al., 2014). Overall, compliance with these conditions facilitates the development of a healthy working environment, which, in proportion, increases the productivity and welfare of the employees involved (Barrios &Paravic, 2006). It is for this reason that social relations acquire importance within the work space, due to the fact that they constitute the public sphere, which differs from others, such as the domestic sphere, because its members share common objectives and tasks (Tonon, 2012). This interpersonal interaction makes use of a communication principle which consists in the transmission of consequent ideas (Nares, García, Arvizu&Olimón, 2014).

Thus, a healthy work environment favors the productivity and coexistence of workers, and, at the same time, improves the well-being of its collaborators and their interpersonal relations (Barrios &Paravic, 2006). On the other hand, the workplace that does not comply with these characteristics favors the accumulation of stress on those involved, with further consequences on their health (Gómez, 2009; Mihyun, Sung-Hyun&Hyun-ja, 2014).

The most common symptom of a harmful work environment is the presence of stress; this can be understood as a response to a set of hostile stimuli, in which an attitude of harassment or mobbing can be generated (Gómez, 2009). More specifically, harassment has characteristics that vary according to the individuals involved in such relationship, which make it difficult to establish a precise definition of the environment (Bowling &Beehr, 2006). In this way, a harmful work environment favors the deterioration of working conditions that generally tend to be expressed as psychological discomfort, harassing behaviors and/or psychosomatic manifestations (Anjum, Ming, Siddiqi,&Rasool, 2018; Gómez, 2009).

In relation to the university environment, the presence of this phenomenon generates a decline in work performance among teaching and administrative staff (teachers, coordinators, prefects), as well as the academic staff concerning students (Balducci, Cecchin&Fraccaroli, 2012; Bheenuck, Miers&Pollard, 2007).

Delimitation of the harassment/mobbing phenomenon

The concept of workplace harassment is defined as any interpersonal behavior intended to attack or harm the physical or psychological integrity of any employee (Henninget al., 2017). It is though necessary to point out that each work environment determines the conditions under which an action is regarded as harassment (Trujillo, Valderrabano& Hernández, 2007).

Hostile behavior towards the staff is a phenomenon known as mobbing, a term coined by Heinz Leymann in the early 1980's (Romero-Pérez, 2006). However, it was Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2003, p. 15) that referred to the act of harassing, offending, socially excluding or negatively affecting the tasks/work of an individual, making it the objective of negative social acts in a systematic way.

Added to this, at the time of this review there was no definition of violence or harassment in the workplace univocally shared among experts, since in different countries a variety of terms are used to refer to the same phenomenon (Tomei, 2018).

Just like for the general definition of workplace harassment, the term *mobbing* is subject to the contextualization of the environment in which it manifests itself, and therefore lacks a precise definition (Trujillo et al, 2007); there is, however, a set of characteristics that encompass this behavior, which are: exercising a power, legal and/or physical, by means of an intimidating force; harming the physical and/or mental integrity. Its intention is to denigrate or offend the victim and, to a greater extent, this set of behaviors deteriorates the working environment (Romero-Pérez, 2006).

The criterion for considering aggression as *mobbing* is that it must occur repeatedly and regularly over a prolonged period of time in which only one person dominates the act (Einarsenet al., 2003). Contrary to popular belief, workplace harassment is not exercised by a unique type of power (Henninget al., 2017). Thus it is understandable that only empirical generalizations are available regarding this phenomenon, that is, propositions of different authors that have been proven in most of the investigations carried out (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014).

Incidence of harassment/mobbing

Manifestations of *mobbing* vary with respect to the disposition of working conditions; likewise, the most common behaviors include a range of conducts that can be: yelling, discrimination, direct insults, obscene signs and looks, and in cases of greater intensity, serious physical assaults. In extreme cases even a homicide could happen (Bowling &Beehr, 2006). The incidence of this phenomenon, as well as its consequences, is linked to different factors (Einarsen&Hauge, 2006).

Different studies reveal that the most common practice of harassment is sexual in nature, this involves all inappropriate conduct involving harassment and hostile behavior (Asquith,

Ferfolia, Brady &Hanckel, 2018; Marshet al., 2009) that threatens the sexual integrity of the victim (Eaton, 2004; O'Hare&O'Donohue, 1998; Ohse&Stockdale, 2008).

With respect to harassment within university staff, it is understood that every educational institution represents a space in which interactions influence the work performance and well-being of those involved (Moreno, Sepúlveda&Restrepo, 2012). The development of healthy relationships promotes productivity in the school environment for employees, staff and students (López-Cabarcos, Picón-Prado &Vázquez-Rodríguez, 2008; Nareset al., 2014). In this case, the incidences of workplace harassment do not show a significant difference compared to other institutions (Henninget al., 2017).

The research done by Parra & Acosta (2010) concludes that the working context at the university presents individual and organizational conditions that favor the possible development of psychological harassment and it is not limited to particular groups since it affects everyone equally (Piñuel, 2001).

In Latin America, the prevalence of workplace harassment is estimated to be between 3.5% and 25.37% (Pando, Aranda& Olivares, 2012), while the Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions conducted in 2005 by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2006) indicates that the prevalence in the European sector is at 5%, though it is estimated that the percentages could exceed the average and range between 2% and 17%.

Consequences of harassment/*mobbing*

Workplace harassment can generate physical alterations such as feelings of suffocation, palpitations, tiredness, panic, insecurity, distrust, neglect, memory loss or hyper caution, as the most frequent psychological repercussions (Trujillo et al., 2007). Likewise, hostile behavior towards staff increases stress levels while producing a decline in the work performance and emotional well-being of the victims (Rospenda, Richman, Ehmke, &Zlatoper, 2005). The most common psychological consequence is the presence of a major depressive episode or, if regular and constant, the state of dysthymia (Nareset al., 2014; Rospendaet al., 2005).

Along with all this, the victim undergoes significant personality changes due to the gradual loss of confidence and self-esteem that this state causes (Nareset al., 2014; Rospendaet al., 2005; Trujillo et al., 2007).

Method

Consequently, this paper seeks to review the studies carried out regarding the link between workplace harassment (*mobbing*) and its effects on university staff. The literature found in the databases, La referencia, Web of Science, Scielo, Scopus and, in a special case, EBSCO, was used. Systematic and explicit methods were used to locate, select and critically evaluate the relevant research, according to the guidelines derived from the PRISMA Declaration (Hutton, Catalá-López, &Moher, 2016).

The main objective of this study is to explore the state of the matter with respect to workplace harassment among university staff, specifically to describe the prevalence and the main methodological characteristics of the studies carried out on the subject during the information gathering period from 2000 to June 2019. Thus, the aim is to identify the incidence/prevalence and main type of harassment within university staff, as well as the identification of the main methodological aspects of the investigations. It was established as a secondary objective to identify the main characteristics (temporal location and validation) of the instruments used for the investigations carried out that meet the inclusion criteria of this review.

Article selection

For the search in the English language, the terms that were looked up were "*workplace harassment*" and "*university staff*", while in Spanish the terms were "*acosolaboral*" and "*personal*

universitario". In order to guarantee the exhaustiveness of the study, the search string was created by adding the Boolean operator AND and the aforementioned terms. As a result, the resulting search string was "*Workplace harassment*AND "*University staff*". During the search process the research protocol was used on several occasions through different local area networks with Internet access, to ensure the reproducibility of the review.

Access to the corresponding databases was possible thanks to the access granted by the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. In the case of the EBSCO site, an advanced search was carried out using the terms "workplace harassment" AND "university staff"; the option marked was "search all my search terms", followed by selecting the databases Academic Search Complete, eBook Collection (EBSChost), MedicLatina, Newswires, CINAHL with Full Text, Dentistry & Oral Sciences Sources, FuenteAcadémica Premier, MEDLINE Complete and SPORTDiscus with Full Text. Results were limited to full text, in English and Spanish, and a publishing period from 2000 to 2019. The search and data collection period ran from March to May 2019.

Inclusion criteria

The technical criteria for inclusion were: to have the characteristics of an empirical and arbitrated article; revisions, book chapters and master's thesis were discarded. The research was complemented with search filters provided by the online sites of the databases. These filters were: year of publication (2000-2019), full text and language (Spanish and English). Likewise, the articles included have terms and factors associated with work harassment on university staff.

Selection process

As a result of the search 2 results were found in Spanish and 69 in English for the following bases: La Referencia, Web of Science/ complete collection, Scielo and Scopus. In the case of the EBSCO database the results were 59 in English and 6 in Spanish; however, due to the automatic algorithm of this database, they were reduced to 44 in English and 3 in Spanish. All this results in a total of 71 articles for the first databases and 47 for EBSCO, making a total of 118 articles, of which 110 were eliminated after the application of the above mentioned criteria (see Figure 1).

Information obtained

The analysis of the investigations included in the study contemplates the temporal location of the publication, the methodology followed, the instruments used, associated factors and risk factors, findings, limitations, ethical considerations, prevalence and incidence.

The searching process, identifying and selection of the studies was carried out in four phases (See Figure 1):

Phase 1

The general data of the 118 studies found were collected by means of the search criteria. The information obtained from this process was the title of the study, name of the author, date and country of publication, type of publication, DOI and the database in which they were found. Duplicate studies were also identified, as well as those without open access.

Phase 2

Studies with access to the full text were identified through the corresponding database, as well as those obtained through an external source.

Phase 3

Fifty-five articles were discarded, as they did not meet the criteria mentioned in Phases 1 and 2. Sixty-three studies were obtained, out of which eight were identified as reading candidates, following as the main criterion that the sample were part of the university staff.

Phase4

The reading analysis of the 8 articles selected in Phase 3 was carried out. The findings, risk factors, protective factors, limitations, future research lines, ethical considerations and the prevalence/incidence of each study were identified.
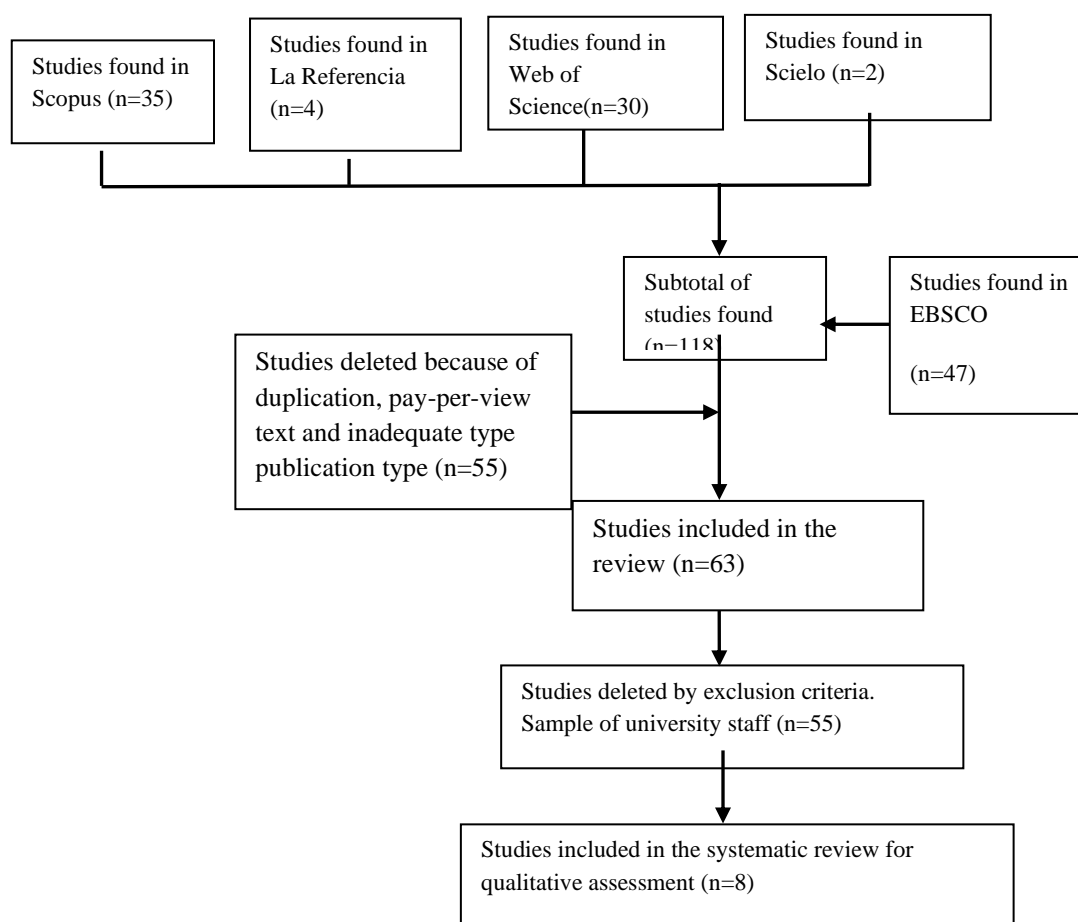
Figura1. PRISMA diagram (Source: self-elaboration)

Results

Table 1 shows that from the empirical works of the period 2000-2004 selected for the analysis, no articles were found; in the period 2005-2009, a 37.5% of the publications done is concentrated; 12.5% in the period 2010-2014, and 50% in the period 2015-2019. This shows that the contribution of scientific knowledge, with respect to the empirical study concerning workplace violence, is quite scarce in Latin America (Ansoleaga, Gómez-Rubio & Mauro, 2015).

Regarding the methodology used by the studies analyzed (see Table 3), it can be observed that the most widely used approach is the quantitative one (87.5%) while only one paper (12.5%) used a mixed approach. All studies included have a cross-sectional design. As far as the scope of

the study is concerned, two of the papers (25%) are descriptive, while five (62.5%) are non-experimental/correlational. On the other hand, there is one case of non-experimental/descriptive scope (12.5%).

Table 1.
Main features of the studies under analysis

Author(s) andYear	Approach/ Design / Scope	Sample	Ethical procedures.
Marsh *et al.*, 2009	Quantitative / non-experimental, transverse / descriptive.	Randomly and significantly selected.	There was informed consent. Anonymity voluntariness and confidentiality were assured. There was an ethics committee.
Coskuner*et al.*, 2017	Quantitative / Non-experimental, transverse / Correlational.	Selected by convenience.	There was informed consent. Anonymity, voluntariness and confidentiality were assured.
Merilainen, Sinkkonen, Puha kka, y Kayhko, 2016	Quantitative / non-experimental, transverse / Descriptive.	Selected by convenience.	Anonymity, voluntariness and confidentiality were assured
Skinner *et al.*, 2015	Quantitative / Non-experimental, transverse / Correlational.	Randomly and significantly selected.	There was informed consent. Anonymity voluntariness and confidentiality were assured. There was an ethics committee.
Kang y Sidhu, 2015	Quantitative / Non-experimental, transverse / Correlational.	Selected by convenience.	Anonymity, voluntariness and confidentiality were assured
Moreno, Sepúlveda y Restrepo, 2012	Mixed / Non-experimental, transverse / Descriptive.	Selected by convenience.	There was informed consent. Anonymity voluntariness and confidentiality were assured.
López-Cabarcos*et al.*, 2008	Quantitative / Non-experimental, transverse / Descriptive.	Selected by convenience.	Anonymity voluntariness and confidentiality were assured
Rospenda*et al.*, 2005	Quantitative / non-experimental, transverse / Descriptive.	Selected by convenience.	There was informed consent. Anonymity voluntariness and confidentiality were assured. Therewasfinancialcompensation

With regard to geographical location (see Table 2), it can be observed that the empirical studies included in the analysis of the period 2000-2019 show a geographical concentration in the continent of America (25%), African (12.5%), Europe (25%), Oceania (12.5%), Asia (12.5%) and

the Europe/Asia (12.5%). This reveals the fact that the contribution of knowledge on this subject comes mainly from the European continent.

Table 2.
Geographical location of the sample

Country of the sample	Continent	Size of the sample	Prevalence /incidence
Ethiopia	África	387	54%
Colombia	America	398	9.60%
The USA	America	2,492	12%
Spain	Europe	321	8.70%
Finland	Europe	114	45%
Turkey	Europe/Asia	152	30%
India	Asia	570	11.60%
Australia	Oceanía	250	31%

Four of the studies (50%) modified an original scale or constructed one based on one or more theories. On the other hand, one of the studies (12.5%) has a mixed and unspecified instrument, while the rest (37.5%) used an unmodified scale (see Table 3).

Workplace harassment exists within the university environment, and the most frequent manifestation is of a sexual nature. The studies included in the analysis have used cross-sectional, quantitative, descriptive and correlational studies.

This research revealed that no studies had been carried out in Mexico until this systematic review was done.

Table3.
Instruments used for the studies included in the analysis

Author(s) and Year	Instrument(s)	Year	Further validation
Marsh *et al.*, 2009	*Generalized Workplace Abuse*	1999	Assessed by Richman *et al.*
Coskuner*et al.*, 2017	*Leymann inventory of psychological terror.*	1996	For Turkey, byErenlerin 2010 For Turkey, by Erenlerin 2010
	Perceived organizational support.	1986	For Turkey, by Güleryüz in 2004
	Organizational identification scale. (Leymann)	1998	
Merilainen, Sinkkonen, Puhakka, y Kayhko, 2016	*Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R)*	2009	Assessed by Einarsen*et al.*
Skinner *et al.*, 2015	*Reported Harassment and Serious Harassment by Staff and University Type*	2012	Assessed by Strachan *et al.*

Kang y Sidhu, 2015	Construction of a self-scale starting out from:		
	The general health scale	1978	Assessed by Goldberg
	An organizational stress screening (ASSET)	2002	Assessed by Cartwright & Cooper
			Assessed by Gmelch
	The Faculty Stress Index (FSI)	1993	Assessed by Kinman y Jones
	Scaleon stress	2003	
Moreno, Sepúlveda y Restrepo, 2012	Mixed, not specified	-	-
López-Cabarcos*et al.*, 2008	Construction of a self-scale starting out from:		
	Definition of Mobbing	1996	Assessed by Leyman
	LIPT-60	2003	Assessed by Gónzalez y Rodríguez
			Assessed by Lazzarri
	Consequences on health	2001	Assessed by Piñuel&Oñate
	The victim's response	2003	
Rospenda*et al.*, 2005	Construction of a self-scale starting out from:		
	Sexual experiences questionnaire	1990	Assessed by Fitzgerald
	The generalized workplace harassment questionnaire	2004	Assessed by Rospenda& Richman
			Assessed by Karasek& Theorell
	The job content questionnaire	1990	

In terms of associated factors, sociocultural aspects were found to be the main influence of harassment at work (see Table 4). Likewise, the risk factors involved in its incidence are mostly oriented towards a general imbalance in the work environment, which produces a decline in the performance of those subjected to harassment, and it involves sociocultural, educational, sexual and labor factors (Einarsenet al., 2003).

On average, the incidence of the phenomenon is 25.23% of the total of the studies analyzed. A quarter of the population included in the research is a victim of harassment at work. Socio-cultural harassment is identified as the main manifestation.

At the same time, 75% of the total number of studies is considered discriminatory. In addition, the working conditions and physical and mental health of the victims have deteriorated. Likewise, this symptomatology varies in relation to the conditions in which harassment takes place; however, the major depressive episode is identified as the main consequence.

Table 4.
Factors identified in the studies analyzed

Author(s) and Year	Influences	Risk factors	Main haassment perceived	Consequences
Marsh *et al.*, 2009	Educational level, religious and socio-cultural affiliation	Mobbing at work and sexual harassment	Sociocultural	Depression symptoms Mood changes, risks to mental health decaying

Coskuner *et al*., 2017	Sociocultural	Relationship between social identity and hierarchy, opportunities for competition and better salaries	Sociocultural Discriminatory	Weakening of the organizational and educational environment, Competence among the members of an institution
Merilainen, Sinkkonen, Puhakka, yKayhko, 2016	Socio-cultural, economic and gender-related	Lack of leadership, competition systems (rewards), status Leadership styles and laissez-faire management	Sociocultural Discriminatory	Psychosomatic effects on the mobbing victims such as the post-traumatic síndrome effect Decline of the working environment and the reduction in the cost-effectiveness of the faculty
Skinner *et al*., 2015	Sociocultural and economic	Establishing hierarchical relations, Regional variation of the English language	Sociocultural Discriminatory	Decline in interpersonal relationships and professional development
Kang ySidhu, 2015	Educational and socio-cultural levels	Imbalance between work and life, Discriminatory behaviour	Sociocultural and economic Of gender	Deterioro del desempeño laboral
Moreno, Sepúlveda y Restrepo, 2012	Sociocultural and economic	Imbalance between work and life. Discriminatory behaviour	Sociocultural Discriminatory	Decline in interpersonal relationships and professional development
López-Cabarcos *et al*., 2008	Sociocultural and economic	Victims point to the main consequences of the mobbing aspects related to psychological and emotional health,	Sociocultural Discriminatory	Degradation of the work environment, aspects related to psychological and emotional health.
Rospenda *et al*., 2005	Sociocultural and economic	Sexual harassment	Sociocultural Discriminatory	Sexual health problems (Anxiety, depression, postraumatic stress disorder, etc.) compensation claims

The main limitation of the studies is the ambiguous nature of the term *mobbing*, therefore, an undesirable result is that research does not clearly identify the factors associated with the phenomenon, and the definition is subject to the contextualization of the environment in which it is presented (see Table 5).

On the other hand, investigations recognize the pertinence of the study and verifying of the casual relations of the phenomenon as a theme of a future research,

On the other hand, research recognizes the relevance of studying and verifying the causal relationships of the phenomenon as a subject for future research. The application of studies with geographical variation is also considered.

Tabla 5.
Findings of the studies analyzed

Author(s) and Year	Findings	Limitations	Further research lines
Marsh *et al.*, 2009	Mobbing in the Workplace is Positively Correlational with Depression Symptoms	Does not refer to protective factors or research techniques	Specify protective factors and intervention techniques
Coskuner*et al.*, 2017	Positive and moderate relationship between organizational indicators and workplace harassment	There is no clear relationship in the variables	Use the same research parameters in different areas
Merilainen, Sinkkonen, Puhakka, y Kayhko, 2016	Inappropriate behaviors influence mainly at the individual level, as affective disorders and as decreased professional self-confidence and job performance	The study recognizes the roles within a harassment situation, however, it does not speak of their origins (genesis).	Identify the causal relationship between workplace harassment and relationships
Skinner *et al.*, 2015	Organizational culture is important for understanding mobbing and work harassment	Summarizes the literature, this hinders the perception of concepts	To determine harassment behaviors and their genesis
Kang y Sidhu, 2015	"sexual harassment incidents in the workplace are on the rise"	Only consider sexual harassment in the workplace	Application in Mexican culture for possible contrasting of results
Moreno, Sepúlveda y Restrepo, 2012	The results allow substantiating the need for administrative and university welfare interventions	The size of the inventory used to measure harassment is limited to establish a relationship	To investigate the existence of sexual and workplace harassment against men
López-Cabarcos*et al.*, 2008	The strategy most used to deal with *mobbing* is passive, i.e. do nothing	Very broad universe of study and aspects analyzed only towards the victims	To analyze aspects of the perpetrator and compare with the victim
Rospenda*et al.*, 2005	Workplace harassment increases the risk of illness, injury or aggression	All surveys resulted in a self-report	Development of outcome measures to establish the relationship of harassment and injuries (direct, indirect and interpersonal)

Confidentiality and anonymity of the data provided by the participants were ensured in all studies, and no compensation of any kind was offered; the sample was selected randomly and representatively. The interaction with the participants was direct in 87.5% of the studies analyzed, while the rest was done by means of a digital platform. The population was involved voluntarily and with knowledge of their participation in the gathering of information, as well as its use.

Discussion

The systematic review carried out in this work revealed that the number of studies developed on the subject of harassment on university staff is still limited, considering the wide range of years that was used to carry out this work. Notwithstanding, a rise can be distinguished in the scientific production of this subject during the last 5 years. With regard to geographical distribution, heterogeneity is inferred with regard to the country of completion.

With regard to the instruments, all of them have been used with a difference of more than 5 years with respect to their date of publication, so that they no longer contemplate, in a theoretical manner, the current social conditions. in addition there is a difficulty in defining the concept of "mobbing", its manifestations and associated factors. This is due to the fact that it is a contextual and multifactorial phenomenon.

In relation to the methodology used, the articles are descriptive and correlational in scope. This can be explained by the nature of the phenomenon, due to the existence of different risk factors and protection in relation to the incidence of the phenomenon.

Similarly, the research corresponding to the topic of harassment at work can continue under the description of the factors mentioned, as well as the possible causal relationship that it sustains with other factors, as has been demonstrated in different previous investigations (Henning, et al., 2017).

It is worth stating that in half of the papers, incidences were found to prove that harassment on the university staff at work was higher than 30%; in the other half of the papers incidences claimed to be lower than the 20% ; the same studies, however, assume that this may be due to multiple causes, such as the fact that the topic is defined in different ways in relation to the context in which it is presented.

Nonetheless, it is assumed that the most frequent manifestations are of a sociocultural nature and, to a lesser extent, sexual; this is in relation to the constant mention of the incidence of sexual aggression and its consequences. Each analyzed study identifies different actions to refer to harassment at the workplace and focuses on the causal motive for them. In addition to this, the analysis of gender differences and harassment behavior could provide more accurate information needed to know how to deal with this problem, given the types of harassment behavior and the hierarchy of the perpetrator or victimizer. However, 75% of the studies included in the analysis do not consider this factor; in all investigations, harassment is identified as any action whose motivation is to harm the physical, moral and/or psychological integrity of the victim.

Added to this, it is pertinent to point out that there is no specific mention within the articles about the ethical considerations applied in their respective research. In addition, there are unclear methodological questions such as obtaining the sample, the period for gathering the information, the procedure or the type of study; that is, if the study is of a pilot type, if it is part of a larger study or a replica of a previous one; so, it is suggested to specify the mentioning of these aspects to facilitate the replication of the study.

In relation to the content of the analyzed works, a conceptual ambiguity is perceived, which in turn hinders the delimitation of the phenomenon and, consequently, its study in terms of associated factors and their consequences.

In summary, the proposal of the present work is the promotion of more studies on workplace harassment in a university environment by Latin American researchers. Likewise, it is necessary to establish a definition corresponding to harassment at work, since it is currently attached to the contextualization of the socio-cultural environment in which it is presented. Besides, the works should be published in the English language for a greater accessibility on the part of the readers. The creation or update of instruments is also recommended for a better identification of *mobbing*. Likewise, the inclusion of current sociocultural characteristics in the formulation of these instruments is also recommended.

One of the limitations of this systematic review was the selection of full texts in Spanish or English, since there may be articles with an English abstract indicating compliance with the characteristics of selection for analysis. A selection is therefore suggested, based on the English abstract and the translation of the content by means of some physical or electronic resource.

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