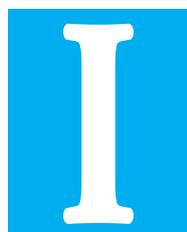




## WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC CRISIS (Part II)

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In this issue of *Papeles del Psicólogo*, we present a second collection of contributions that completes the special issue on work and organizational psychology in times of economic crisis that began in the previous issue. In the eight articles presented in this issue, there is still concern for the welfare of workers in the situations of great uncertainty and resource scarcity typical of the current economic crisis, but this time, the research links well-being at work with the effectiveness of certain HR practices and processes, as well as with the improvement of organizational processes and performance.

In the first article, García-Izquierdo, Meseguer, Soler and Saez (University of Murcia) summarize several recent studies on mobbing or bullying at work. The authors provide data on the prevalence of this phenomenon, the validation of a questionnaire to evaluate it, its main antecedents and consequences, and the role that personal resources play in its development, in Spanish samples of workers in different occupations. In addition to the relationships between bullying and psychosomatic symptoms, burnout, absenteeism and job dissatisfaction, among other variables, the paper indicates antecedents such as inadequate defining of the job role, work overload, lack of interest in workers and inadequate supervision. Finally, the authors emphasize the role of professional self-efficacy in coping with bullying in the workplace.

In the following article, Alcover, Topa and Fernández (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos and the National University of Distance Education, UNED) focus their study on the phenomenon of early retirement and the existence of bridge jobs as an alternative. In a context marked by the progressive aging of the working population and the need to match the cost of retirement pensions to the income available in the social security system, the authors summarize several recent contributions on the subject of workers' perceptions regarding early retirement and the different modes of prolonging working life and their impact on employees. The workers' ability to control the decision whether to continue working or to retire is one of the main factors influencing satisfaction with these types of practice, together with the workers' state of health, the content and conditions of their work and pressures from the companies.

Next, Martínez-Tur, Moliner, Ramos, Luque and Gracia (University of Valencia) relate service climate and organizational justice with service quality and employee well-being. Since delivering quality service is essential for many organizations, it is important to show that this quality can be obtained without compromising the well-being of the employees that are responsible for providing it, even though this often involves a greater effort. As long as organizations provide equity and fairness in the treatment of all employees and the company fosters an environment that aims to promote service quality, service quality and well-being are compatible.

Tabernero, Arenas, Cuadrado and Luque (University of Cordoba and Seville University) focused their study on orientation towards errors in times of crisis. The

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uncertainty inherent in times of crisis interacts with cognitive factors (goal orientation), sociodemographic factors (such as the gender of employees), organizational culture (its orientation towards learning, innovation and creativity) and sociocultural factors (more or less prosocial orientation), determining how errors are communicated and accepted (or not) in the organization. Developing trust and collective efficacy is crucial in dealing with uncertainty during times of crisis.

The article by Díaz-Cabrera, Hernández Fernaud, Isla, Delgado, Díaz Vilela and Rosales (Universidad de La Laguna), highlights the importance of performance evaluation and its particular value in times of crisis to improve the organization and motivate workers. To achieve this, performance evaluation systems must be accurate and reliable, fair and credible evaluations. Therefore, we must recognize the individual goals and motivations involved, provide clear information to participants and enable the participation of reviewers and appraisees in the design of the system.

In the work presented by Munduate, Di Marco, Martínez-Corts, Arenas and Gamero (University of Seville) the emphasis is on inclusive organizations as vital in mitigating the effects of the economic crisis. In difficult times there is a risk that organizations pay less attention to certain people, and their rights and integration at work. Through recent research, the authors emphasize the importance of developing and empowering the workers' representatives to improve labor relations towards better cooperation. They also mention strategies to improve the integration of people with disabilities, to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and promote reconciliation between work and family life as a way of achieving more inclusive organizations and a higher quality of working life.

In parallel, Medina, Elgoibar and Ramírez (University of Sevilla) focus their work on the development of the legal representatives of the workers and the psychological processes underlying the negotiation processes, contrasting situations of increasing resources with those of declining resources (such as economic crises). Through experimental studies and surveys in real environments, the authors analyze aspects such as the prosocial motivation of negotiators, the dynamic nature of negotiation, in contexts of both progressively increasing and diminishing resources, the commitment of workers' representatives to both the company and the trade unions, trust received from peers, similar bargaining strategies of men and women representatives, and the influence of cultural norms in the bargaining process.

Finally, the work presented by Osca, López-Araujo, Bardera, Uríen, Díez and Rubio (UNED, Public University of Navarra and Valencia Polytechnic University) examines the relationship between psychosocial risks and accident rates in different samples of workers (the military, agriculture and the construction sector). In addition to the significance of working conditions (overload, autonomy, responsibility), and exposure to harmful working

conditions in work-related accidents, stress, psychological distress and physical discomfort are also mediators of the relationship between the antecedents of accidents and accident rates. This relationship is particularly important in times of crisis, as there has been an increase in work stressors and "presenteeism" (employees attending work despite not feeling well) as a result of the uncertainty and job insecurity. All of this warns of the possibility of an increase in accident rates. The authors propose a number of initiatives to bear in mind for preventing and reducing work-related accidents.

The broad range of contributions in this special issue and the previous one is a sample of the variety of studies that Spanish researchers in work and organizational psychology have been producing in recent years. Their studies echo the particular conditions being experienced by businesses and workers in our country, and consequently, they have concentrated their efforts on investigating the processes and conditions that contribute to maintaining or improving the well-being of workers and the effectiveness of companies, in spite of the difficulties. The scarcity of resources, the focus of businesses on survival and adaptation to the crisis at the expense of the concerns of workers, and the need to increase productivity with tighter headcounts are elements that, automatically and directly, simply do not contribute to maintaining the quality of working life. The Spanish organizational researchers, in general, have focused their recent lines of research on the analysis of and strategies for improving occupational health in the broad sense, and searching for variables and strategies to promote healthy and sustainable work in adverse conditions. Some psychosocial processes and some variables appear as a common link between the different papers included in this monograph.

Thus, despite the difficulties being experienced by many companies, considering the needs, goals and aspirations of the employees together with the organizational goals is a key aspect in achieving productive and healthy organizations and maintaining the quality of working life. As it has been pointed out, in line with the propositions of Positive Organizational Psychology, we need inclusive organizations that consider the interests of the individuals within them. In this line, a broad spectrum of relevant variables and constructs are addressed. We mention (with no claim of being exhaustive) equity and organizational justice, intrinsic motivation, autonomy and workers' control over their work. Also aspects such as employee participation in organizational processes, self-efficacy, trust and mutual support in the workplace, work climates of cooperation and people's commitment to the organizational objectives through consideration of their own interests are crucial in these times. Tensions, uncertainty and limited resources pose a challenge for researchers in work and organizational psychology who must continue to contribute to informing and making more effective the efforts to promote and ensure the well-being and quality of life of workers in organizations that are productive.