

BREAKING THE SILENCE: WORKPLACE ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN IN COLOMBIA

Rompiendo el silencio: Maltrato laboral hacia la mujer en Colombia

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Workplace abuse, women, gender-based violence, work environment, mental health, equity.

Workplace mistreatment of women has become one of the most persistent and normalized forms of structural violence within the Colombian corporate environment. This article presents the findings of a study conducted in a specific business setting in the city of Bogotá, aimed at identifying, characterizing, and proposing intervention strategies to address this issue.

Through the application of information-gathering tools on a representative sample of female workers from various sectors, and using comparative data analysis, the study reveals multiple forms of workplace mistreatment. These include psychological harassment, gender discrimination, work overload, the invisibilization of achievements, and exclusion from promotion opportunities. Such forms of violence directly affect women's dignity, mental health, and productivity, perpetuating conditions of inequality and vulnerability in the workplace.

The study's findings indicate a high prevalence of workplace mistreatment of women in the analyzed contexts, highlighting the urgent need to design and implement clear institutional policies against harassment and gender-based violence. Proposed strategies include the creation of effective reporting and sanctioning mechanisms, gender-sensitive training programs -especially for managerial and leadership personnel- wage audits to promote economic equity, and the strengthening of psychosocial and legal support services for victims.

This article seeks to contribute to the understanding of workplace violence dynamics faced by women in Colombia and proposes concrete actions to transform workplaces into safe, equitable, and respectful environments. Eradicating workplace mistreatment is not only a matter of social justice but also a fundamental condition for the ethical and sustainable development of organizations and society as a whole.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:

maltrato laboral, mujeres, violencia de género, entorno laboral, salud mental, equidad.

El maltrato laboral hacia la mujer se ha convertido en una de las formas más persistentes y normalizadas de violencia estructural dentro del entorno empresarial colombiano. Este artículo recopila los resultados de la investigación desarrollada en un determinado entorno empresarial de la ciudad de Bogotá, con el objetivo de identificar, caracterizar y proponer estrategias de intervención frente a esta problemática, a través de la aplicación de instrumentos de recolección de información en una muestra representativa de trabajadoras en distintos sectores, mediante el análisis comparativo de datos, donde se evidencian múltiples manifestaciones de maltrato laboral, tales como el acoso psicológico, la discriminación de género, la sobrecarga de tareas, la invisibilización de logros y la exclusión de oportunidades de ascenso. Estas formas de violencia impactan directamente en la dignidad, la salud mental y la productividad de las mujeres, perpetuando condiciones de desigualdad y vulnerabilidad en el ámbito laboral.

Los hallazgos del estudio revelan una alta prevalencia de maltrato laboral hacia las mujeres en los contextos analizados, lo que pone en evidencia la necesidad urgente de diseñar e implementar políticas institucionales claras contra el acoso y la violencia de género. Entre las estrategias propuestas se incluyen la creación de rutas efectivas de denuncia y sanción, programas de capacitación con enfoque de género dirigidos especialmente a personal directivo y de jefatura, auditorías salariales que promuevan la equidad económica y el fortalecimiento de servicios de acompañamiento psicosocial y jurídico para las víctimas.

Este artículo busca aportar al entendimiento de las dinámicas de violencia laboral que enfrentan las mujeres en Colombia y propone acciones concretas para la transformación de los entornos laborales en espacios seguros, equitativos y respetuosos. Erradicar el maltrato laboral no solo constituye un imperativo de justicia social, sino también una condición indispensable para el desarrollo ético y sostenible de las organizaciones y de la sociedad en su conjunt.

Introduction

Abuse of women in the workplace is a structural problem that transcends the boundaries of organizational spaces, affecting not only the workers directly involved, but also the social and economic fabric of the countries where these dynamics of inequality persist. In the Colombian case, this situation manifests itself in various forms of symbolic and material violence, which are deeply rooted in cultural practices, power hierarchies and traditional gender schemes that still permeate many work environments. Despite legislative advances in gender equity and labor rights, many women continue to be victims of harassment, discrimination, exclusion from leadership opportunities and micromachismos that deteriorate their quality of life, reducing their possibilities for professional development and generating long-term psychosocial consequences (Jiménez Solarte & Zurita Patrón, n.d.).

The persistence of mistreatment of women in the workplace can be interpreted as a reflection of the structural gaps that still exist in the world of work, especially in contexts where informality, precarious employment and the weak implementation of equality policies prevent the full exercise of labor rights. In Colombia, this phenomenon is aggravated by the lack of effective institutional mechanisms for prevention, attention and punishment of these practices (Ministry of Justice and Law, n.d.), as well as by the lack of visibility of the experiences of women workers in different economic sectors. The situation becomes even more critical when it comes to young women, with temporary contracts or in the early stages of their professional lives, who face greater barriers to reporting for fear of reprisals or because of the naturalization of violent behavior disguised as “cultural norms” within the organizational environment.

Several national and international studies have shown that labor abuse practices not only violate the individual rights of female workers, but also have a negative impact on the work environment, business productivity, turnover levels and organizational cohesion (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, 2022). Furthermore, a strong relationship has been identified between these dynamics and the deterioration of physical and mental health, increased absenteeism and decreased motivation, which is not only an ethical problem, but also an economic and social one. However, there is still a significant lack of studies that analyze this phenomenon in depth from the current Colombian context, especially with empirical data that allow us to understand its complexity and propose contextualized intervention strategies.

Within this framework, this article arises as an academic response to the need to make visible and analyze labor mistreatment of women from a critical, intersectional perspective, with emphasis on the national reality. Labor mistreatment has been recognized as a form of structural violence that violates the fundamental rights of women in the Colombian business environment (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, 2019). The research was developed by the research group of the Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios - UNIMINUTO, and focused on the experience of female workers in service sector companies in the city of Bogotá, also including the view of university students as future actors in the labor market. The main objective was to identify the most common forms of mistreatment of women in the workplace, to investigate their underlying causes and to propose institutional strategies aimed at building fairer, more respectful and inclusive workplaces.

This study, of a mixed nature, combines quantitative data with qualitative analysis to offer a broad and in-depth look at the phenomenon. Through structured surveys, semi-structured interviews and discussion spaces, we were able to capture both the frequency of these practices and their subjective, emotional and symbolic dimension. The results are expected to provide significant inputs for the formulation of organizational policies with a gender perspective, strengthen institutional capacities to respond to labor mistreatment and contribute to the cultural change necessary to achieve true equity in the world of work in Colombia.

Method

The research adopted a mixed methodological approach, which made it possible to combine quantitative and qualitative tools, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the manifestations of labor abuse and possible strategies for its prevention and eradication. In the quantitative phase, a data collection instrument was designed and applied in the form of a structured survey, developed by the members of the seedbed. This instrument was applied to a purposive sample of female workers in the service sector, specifically in call centers. A total of 102 working women between the ages of 20 and 38, with an average length of service between 1 and 3 years, participated in the study. This sample made it possible to identify recurrent patterns of mistreatment, such as gender discrimination, micromachismos, and psychological harassment behaviors.

Additionally, the scope of the study was expanded to include a second sample from another company in the same sector, where approximately 60 people -both men and women- participated in the data collection, with ages ranging from 20 to 45 years old. This age diversity made it possible to contrast perceptions and experiences about work and gender dynamics within the organizational environment.

On the other hand, the perspective of university students was incorporated through semi-structured interviews and discussion forums. Most of these students had an average age of 24 years, and their contributions were fundamental to understand how they perceive labor mistreatment from an early stage of insertion in the labor market, as well as their expectations regarding equitable treatment in the professional environment.

Finally, the qualitative component included the content analysis of the discourses obtained through the interviews and open-ended questionnaires. This stage made it possible to identify emerging categories such as the fear of reporting, the naturalization of symbolic violence and the lack of effective internal policies to prevent workplace abuse. Based on these findings, recommendations were made to strengthen organizational practices, foster a culture of respect and equity, and promote more inclusive and safe work environments for women.

Results

This research, focused on analyzing the different forms of labor mistreatment of women in the Colombian context, had as its central purpose not only to quantify the incidence of these practices in real work environments, but also to understand their most frequent manifestations, their normalization and the institutional gaps that allow their perpetuation. For this purpose, empirical data were collected in three different contexts: a multinational company in the call center services sector, a courier and logistics company and an academic institution (UNIMINUTO). Through surveys applied to students, results were obtained that allow us to draw a revealing picture of the current state of labor mistreatment of women in Colombia.

To meet this objective, a descriptive quantitative methodology was designed, based on the collection of empirical data through structured surveys, which were applied to women directly or indirectly linked to the company.

The inclusion of these three sectors responds to the intention of capturing the diversity of women's work experiences in different organizational dynamics, hierarchical levels and institutional cultures.

In the case of the academic institution, we surveyed female university students who have had or have had work experiences in different environments, also inquiring about their positions, their ages and the consequences that this has brought to their work environment, which allowed us to enrich the analysis with testimonies covering multiple economic sectors. The results obtained reveal common patterns of mistreatment ranging from verbal harassment and subtle discrimination to exclusion from opportunities and devaluation of female capabilities. This approach allows us to draw a revealing picture of the current state of labor mistreatment

of women in Colombia, highlighting the urgent need for transformation in organizational environments.

The results of the application of the data collection tools are presented below.

Figure 1

Applied instrument business sector 1

Mistreatment or harassment they have experienced

¿Qué tipo de maltrato o acoso ha experimentado o presenciado? (Puede seleccionar más de una opción)

121 respuestas

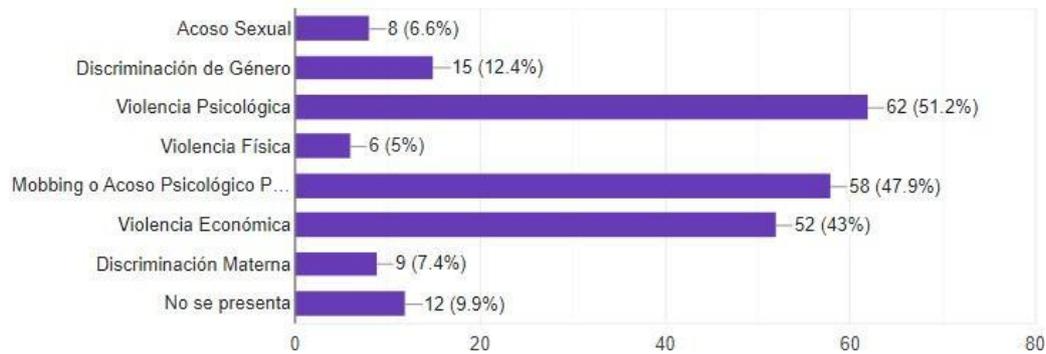


Table 1

Mistreatment or harassment they have experienced

Response options	Response number	Percentage
Sexual Harassment	8	6.6%
Gender Discrimination	15	12.4%
Psychological Violence	62	51.2%
Physical Violence	6	5%
Mobbing or Prolonged Psychological Harassment	58	47.9%
Economic Violence	52	43%
Maternal Discrimination	9	7.4%
Not presented	12	9.9%
Total	121	183,4%

The company, known for its high hiring of young personnel in customer service and call center areas, was one of the most revealing scenarios of the research. According to the data collected, 121 people were surveyed, of whom a significant proportion reported having experienced or witnessed different types of labor mistreatment.

The results indicate that psychological violence is the most common form of abuse, reported by 51.2% of the participants. This form of violence is manifested in behaviors such as humiliation, disqualifications, emotional harassment, unjustified overloading of tasks or systematic invalidation of the work performed. The fact that more than half of the respondents have been

victims of this type of aggression is evidence of a structural problem in the organizational culture, where hierarchical relationships may be marked by the abuse of power.

Prolonged mobbing or psychological harassment was reported by 47.9% of respondents. This result is particularly worrisome, since mobbing not only implies episodic mistreatment, but also a systematic strategy of exclusion or attrition of a person, which usually results in severe effects on their mental health and job stability. The frequency of this phenomenon suggests a toxic organizational climate, where harassment actions are not addressed or are even covered up by the hierarchical systems themselves.

In third place, economic violence was reported by 43% of respondents. This category includes situations such as the assignment of unpaid workloads, denial of salary increases due to gender, precariousness in contracts or indirect economic punishments (such as the exclusion of bonuses). This form of violence, often invisible, represents one of the most common forms of structural discrimination against women, especially in sectors such as services, where labor ties are often weak and opportunities for advancement are limited.

Other forms of mistreatment were also present in the results, although to a lesser extent: gender discrimination (12.4%), sexual harassment (6.6%), maternal discrimination (7.4%) and physical violence (5%). It is striking that only 9.9% of the participants stated that they had not experienced any type of mistreatment, which reinforces the hypothesis that harassment and violence are widely normalized in these environments.

These results reflect the urgency of implementing clear reporting protocols, confidential channels of attention and training in gender perspective for managers and collaborators. They also reveal the need to promote a profound change in organizational culture, moving from a logic of extreme productivity to one that places the dignity and well-being of workers at the center.

Figure 2

Applied instrument business sector 1

¿Cómo ha impactado el maltrato o acoso su desempeño y productividad laboral?

121 respuestas

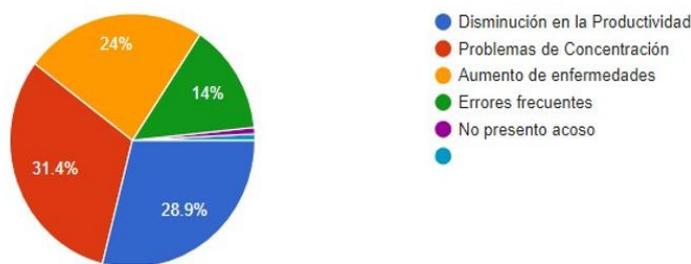


Table 2

Labor impact

Response options	Response number	Percentage
Decrease in productivity	35	28.9%
Concentration problems	38	31.4%
Increase in diseases	29	24.0%
Frequent errors	17	14.0%
No harassment	2	1.7%

Total	121	100%
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The results obtained in Table 2 show the significant impact that workplace mistreatment has on women workers in different organizational contexts. Of the 121 responses analyzed, 31.4% of the participants reported having experienced concentration problems, which indicates a direct impact on their cognitive capacity, attention and daily performance. This situation has repercussions on decision making, task fulfillment and the quality of the work performed, essential factors for individual and collective productivity.

Secondly, 28.9% reported a decrease in productivity, which reflects a deterioration in motivation, commitment to the organization and sense of belonging. This drop in work performance is often associated with constant emotional exhaustion, a hostile environment and lack of recognition, elements that characterize work environments where harassment or gender discrimination is prevalent.

Twenty-four percent reported an increase in illnesses, which shows that workplace abuse not only has emotional but also physical consequences. Workers may develop symptoms such as headaches, sleep disorders, digestive disorders and psychosomatic illnesses, resulting from chronic stress and the continuous tension in the work environment. This relationship between mistreatment and health has been widely documented in the literature, and constitutes a warning about the risks associated with the naturalization of these practices.

On the other hand, 14% of the respondents mentioned the presence of frequent errors in the performance of their duties. This result can be understood as a direct consequence of the loss of concentration, the constant fear of retaliation or criticism, and the accumulated emotional burden, which compromises the efficiency of daily work.

It is especially noteworthy that only 1.7% stated that they had not experienced harassment or the consequences of harassment, which suggests an alarming prevalence of workplace mistreatment among the women surveyed. This data reinforces the hypothesis that harassment at work is not an isolated event, but a structural and widely normalized phenomenon in certain productive sectors.

Figure 3

Applied instrument business sector 2

¿Qué tipo de maltrato o acoso ha experimentado o presenciado? (Puede seleccionar más de una opción)

58 responses

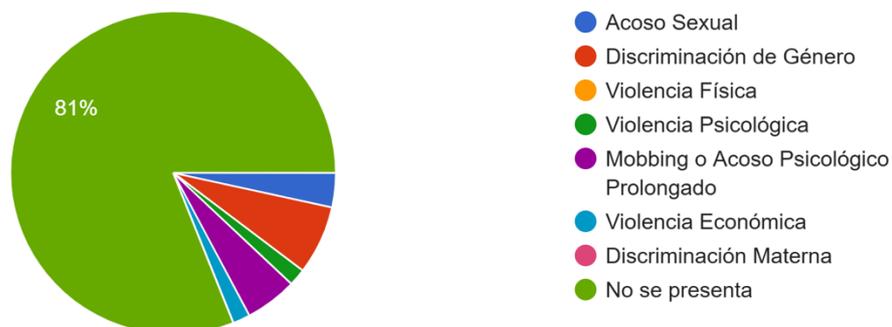


Table 3
Mistreatment or harassment they have experienced

Response options	Number of responses	Percentage
Sexual Harassment	1	1.7%
Gender Discrimination	1	1.7%
Physical Violence	0	0%
Psychological Violence	5	8.6%
Mobbing or Prolonged Psychological Harassment	1	1.7%
Economic Violence	2	3.4%
Maternal Discrimination	1	1.7%
Not presented	47	81%
Not applicable	0	0%
Total	58	100%

The study applied in this company made it possible to contrast the above findings with those of a logistics company with more robust organizational structures. In this context, the results offered a different panorama, although not free of relevant problems.

According to the data obtained, 81% of the people surveyed stated that they had not experienced or witnessed mistreatment at work. This figure contrasts significantly with the results obtained in call centers, which could be explained by several factors: the existence of clearer internal policies, a different corporate culture or even the fear of expressing harassment situations in an environment where there may not be institutional trust.

However, there were cases of psychological violence, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, although in smaller proportions. The research identified that these practices tend to go unnoticed or unrecognized as forms of violence due to their subtlety or frequent naturalization. For example, sexist comments, exclusion of women in relevant decisions or offensive jokes may be seen as normal, even by the victims themselves.

Of particular concern is the detection of cases of mobbing, although not quantified in this part of the study. It is said that this phenomenon is usually silent, prolonged in time and difficult to report, suggesting the existence of covert dynamics of harassment in the workplace. The invisibility of mobbing reveals an institutional weakness that can lead to serious consequences, such as demotivation of female employees, the loss of female talent or even mental health problems.

These findings demonstrate that, although reporting levels of maltreatment are lower, it cannot be assumed that the problem does not exist. On the contrary, it is necessary to strengthen the channels of feedback and denunciation, train personnel in the recognition of symbolic violence and generate an environment of trust where women workers can express themselves without fear of reprisals.

Figure 4
Applied instrument business sector 2

¿Cómo ha impactado el maltrato o acoso su desempeño y productividad laboral?

57 respuestas

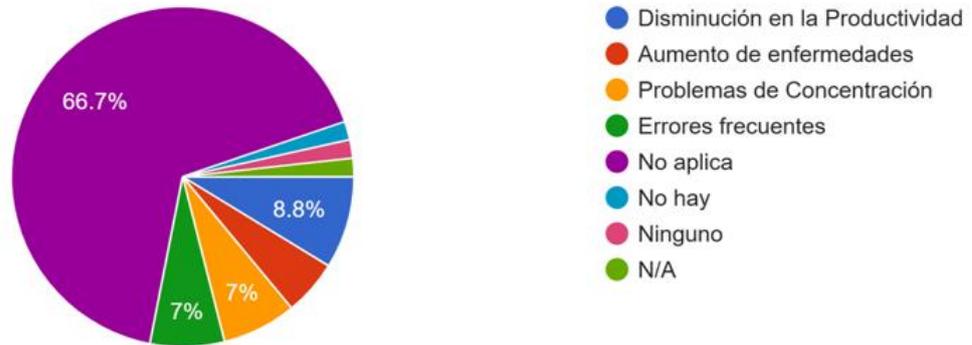


Table 4
Labor impact

Response options	Number of responses	Percentage
Decrease in productivity	5	8.8%
Increase in diseases	4	7.0%
Concentration problems	4	7.0%
Frequent errors	4	7.0%
Not applicable	1	1.8%
There is no	1	1.8%
None	38	66.7%
Total	57	100%

The results reflected in Table 3 show a substantial difference in the perception of mistreatment or harassment at work compared to other business contexts evaluated. Of the 57 people surveyed, 66.7% indicated that they had not experienced any type of mistreatment or harassment, which is a significant finding, as it contrasts with the high rates of workplace violence recorded in other sectors, such as call centers.

This result could be associated with several factors. First, the organizational culture of the company in question could have more effective prevention protocols, better working conditions, greater contractual stability or more reliable whistleblower channels. There may also be greater institutional awareness of gender equity and respect for labor rights, which contributes to the perception of a healthier and safer environment.

However, despite this encouraging data, the remaining 33.3% of the responses reveal that there are indeed manifestations of affectation associated with maltreatment.

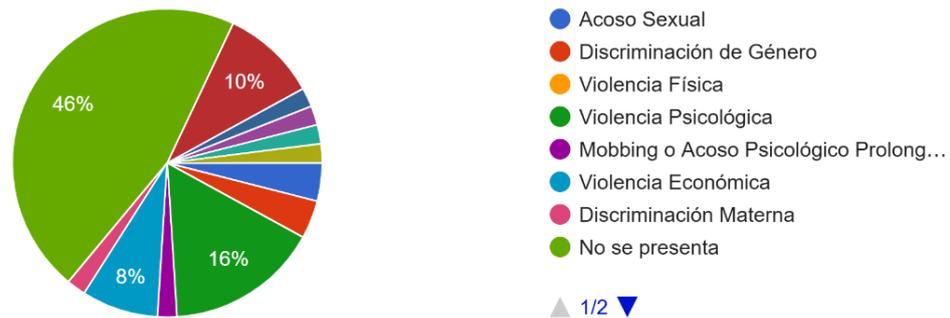
These responses indicate that, although to a lesser extent, work dynamics persist that generate physical, mental or functional consequences for workers. The presence of symptoms such as errors, illnesses or decreased performance may be indicative of environments with moderate levels of stress, emotional charge or symbolic microviolence, often not formally recognized as harassment, but still affecting the well-being of workers.

Another important aspect is that a small percentage (1.8%) selected the options “None” or “Not applicable”, which could be interpreted as conceptual confusion regarding the questions, or as an indication that some people do not identify certain behaviors as workplace violence due to their naturalization within the organizational environment.

Figure 5*Applied instrument university sector 3*

¿Qué tipo de maltrato o acoso ha experimentado o presenciado? (Puede seleccionar más de una opción)

50 respuestas

**Table 5***Mistreatment or harassment they have experienced*

Response options	Response number	Percentage
Sexual Harassment	2	4.1%
Gender Discrimination	2	4.1%
Physical Violence	0	0%
Psychological Violence	8	16.3%
Mobbing or Prolonged Psychological Harassment	1	2%
Economic Violence	4	8.2%
Maternal Discrimination	1	2%
Not presented	22	44.9%
Not applicable	5	19.2%
Total	50	100%

The third scenario of analysis was developed in female university students with previous or current work experience in different business sectors. This sample allows us to approach the perception of the new generations about labor mistreatment, as well as their expectations regarding the work environment.

The results show that 44.9% of the people surveyed have not experienced or witnessed any form of labor mistreatment. However, 16.3% reported having suffered psychological violence, which confirms that this is the most persistent form of violence in the workplace, even for those in the early stages of their professional careers. This type of mistreatment can arise in professional practices, informal or part-time jobs, where precarious conditions and lack of ethical supervision are frequent.

Economic violence was reported by 8.2%, while sexual harassment and gender discrimination were reported by 4.1% respectively. We also identified 2% of cases of mobbing and another 2% of cases of maternal discrimination. Although these numbers seem low, it is necessary to

consider that many female students may not have an extensive work history or may have naturalized certain abusive practices as part of “adapting” to the work environment. A relevant fact is that 19.2% of the women surveyed selected the option “Not applicable”, which could indicate that they have not yet formally entered the world of work. This group represents a key opportunity for training in labor rights, gender perspective and violence prevention, since these future professionals will be able to build more equitable labor relations if they have the conceptual and practical tools to identify abusive situations.

Figure 6
Applied instrument business sector 3

¿Cómo ha impactado el maltrato o acoso su desempeño y productividad laboral?
50 respuestas

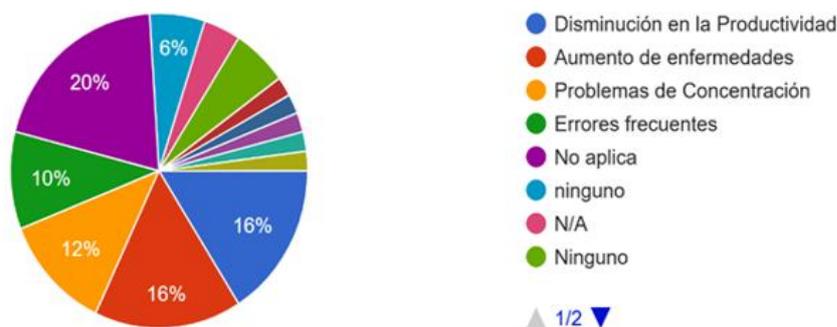


Table 6
Labor impact

Response options	Number of responses	Percentage
Decrease in productivity	8	15%
Increase in diseases	8	15%
Concentration problems	6	12%
Frequent errors	5	10%
Not applicable	3	20%
There is no	4	8%
None	10	20%
N/A	6	12%
Total	50	100%

The results reflected in Table 4 show a more balanced distribution in the perception of the impact of mistreatment or harassment at work among respondents, compared to other contexts previously analyzed. Of the 50 responses collected, 80% of people reported having experienced some type of negative effect, which evidences a significant presence of disruptive work dynamics in the workspaces evaluated.

The two most frequent categories were “decrease in productivity” (16%) and “increase in illness” (16%), indicating that labor mistreatment not only compromises the efficiency in the performance of tasks, but also the physical and mental health of the workers. These data are

consistent with previous research findings that associate bullying and symbolic violence with the development of stress, anxiety, chronic fatigue and other psychosomatic illnesses.

It is also noteworthy that 12% reported concentration problems, which can be interpreted as a symptom of emotional exhaustion, psychological pressure or hostile environments that hinder focus and cognitive performance. This type of affectation has a direct impact on the quality of the work performed and can lead to errors or interpersonal conflicts within the organizations. In this regard, 10% of respondents reported frequent errors, a figure that, although lower, reflects a direct consequence of the pressure and lack of safe conditions. These errors can be interpreted as indicators of deterioration of labor welfare and should be addressed with preventive actions by companies.

On the other hand, 20% of people stated that they had not experienced any form of harassment or mistreatment, while other categories such as “not applicable” (6%), “none” (8%) and “N/A” (12%) were also selected. These figures could suggest that some personnel do not feel directly affected, although it is also worth considering that some people may not identify certain practices as workplace violence due to their naturalization.

Comparison

When comparing the three contexts investigated on labor mistreatment of women in Colombia, it is possible to identify several worrying situations that are repeated and that show the depth of the problem. The first thing that jumps out is that psychological violence is the most common form of abuse. This includes shouting, humiliation, scorn, mockery and other forms of cruel treatment that are often seen as “normal” in the workplace, and therefore go unreported. This form of violence is so prevalent in different environments that it seems to have become part of everyday working life, which makes it more difficult to combat.

Another very frequent form of mistreatment is mobbing or constant and systematic harassment. This is especially true in companies such as call centers, where it was reported that almost half of the cases included this type of mistreatment. Affected workers mentioned that they were ignored, ridiculed or burdened with excessive tasks for no reason, which made them feel useless, lonely and emotionally worn out. This type of harassment is not casual, but shows that within some companies there are no clear rules or real protection to prevent a person from being repeatedly mistreated.

It was also found that, although to a lesser extent, cases of sexual harassment and physical violence continue to occur. These range from unwanted sexual comments to touching and in some cases even assault. Although they are not as frequent as other types of mistreatment, their mere presence in a workplace is already very serious. These are acts that deeply affect women, generating fear, mistrust and even trauma. Furthermore, these are crimes that must be punished, and it is unacceptable that they continue to occur in workplaces without clear consequences.

Another important aspect observed was discrimination against women because of their gender or because they are mothers. Although these cases were less reported, they reflect barriers that prevent them from advancing in their careers or having a level playing field. In many areas, women continue to have fewer opportunities for advancement, are excluded from important decisions or are restricted because they are mothers or of childbearing age. This affects their economic independence and limits their ability to lead and grow professionally.

Finally, something of great concern that appeared in all three contexts is that a high percentage of women do not report these situations, even when they are serious. This does not mean that everything is fine in these places, but that many times the workers are afraid to speak up. They fear losing their jobs, being judged or not being believed. In addition, they do not trust internal whistleblowing channels because they have seen that nothing happens when someone dares to

speak up. This forced silence shows that there is still a long way to go to create safe working environments where women can express what they experience without fear of punishment.

In summary, the mistreatment of women in the workplace in Colombia is a critical and profound problem that goes beyond isolated cases. There are common patterns that show a work culture that often allows or ignores mistreatment. To change this reality, it is not enough to have written rules: we need a real commitment from companies, leaders sensitive to the issue, and spaces where women can tell what they experience and receive real support. This is the only way to move towards a fair, safe and respectful work environment for all.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study allow us to affirm that labor mistreatment of women continues to be an invisible and normalized problem in the Colombian business context. The lack of institutional care routes, the absence of clear equity policies and the scarce training with a gender perspective make up an alarming panorama that requires urgent intervention on multiple fronts.

Organizations need to adopt internal protocols against harassment, ensure transparent processes for reporting and sanctioning, and promote an organizational culture based on equal opportunities. It is also recommended to implement periodic salary audits, sensitization programs and psychosocial and legal support for victims.

The eradication of labor mistreatment of women is not only an ethical imperative, but an indispensable condition for the sustainable and fair development of organizations. Future studies may delve deeper into specific sectoral analyses or include mixed methodologies that integrate qualitative perspectives.

Finally, the conclusions of the article will be presented in a last section, followed by the main conclusions. Where appropriate, limitations and proposals for continuity will be included.

The results of this research confirm that mistreatment of women in the workplace is a structural and persistent problem in the Colombian business environment, particularly in the city of Bogotá. The high prevalence of harassment, wage discrimination, invisibilization and micro-aggressions highlights the urgent need to transform organizational cultures to ensure safe, respectful and equitable work environments.

It was identified that a large number of women are unaware of or do not have effective access to institutional mechanisms for reporting these situations, which perpetuates the silence and normalization of mistreatment. Likewise, the lack of training with a gender focus in companies limits the awareness needed to eradicate these practices and promote an organizational culture based on equality.

Wage gaps and barriers to access leadership positions reinforce structural gender inequalities, affecting not only social justice but also the sustainable and ethical development of organizations. Thus, it is concluded that the eradication of mistreatment of women in the workplace is not only an ethical imperative, but an indispensable condition for the integral progress of society.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations include the non-probabilistic sample size and type, which restricts the generalization of the results to other contexts or regions of the country. In addition, the quantitative-descriptive approach limits the depth of understanding of individual experiences and emotional dynamics associated with workplace abuse.

Likewise, survey data collection may be subject to social desirability bias or reluctance to report sensitive situations, which may underestimate the true magnitude of the problem.

Continuity Proposals

Based on the findings obtained in this research, it is considered essential to continue to deepen the phenomenon of labor mistreatment of women in Colombia, not only as a manifestation of structural inequity in the world of work, but also as a problem of public health, social justice and organizational development. In this sense, several lines of action and recommendations are proposed that can be addressed by academia, companies, social organizations and governmental entities, in an articulated effort to build fairer, safer and more equitable work environments.

In the first place, it is proposed that studies with a broader geographic and sectoral scope be carried out to expand the sample to a national level and include different economic sectors - industry, education, health, technology, commerce, among others- in order to collect representative and diverse data. This would facilitate the development of comprehensive diagnoses on the forms, causes and consequences of labor mistreatment of women, and would provide valuable empirical inputs for the formulation of more effective public policies, institutional action plans and regulatory frameworks.

It is also recommended to maintain the mixed methodological approach, integrating qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, narrative analysis and participatory observation. These tools allow access to the subjective experiences of women workers, making visible aspects that are often invisible in quantitative studies, such as symbolic violence, daily micromachismos, institutional silence in the face of complaints, and the social and economic barriers that prevent victims from accessing labor justice.

At the organizational level, we suggest the design and implementation of continuous training programs with a gender perspective, aimed at all hierarchical levels of the companies, from top management to operational personnel. These programs should address issues such as harassment prevention, non-sexist communication, labor conflict resolution with an inclusive perspective, and female leadership. In addition, it is crucial to establish clear, transparent and accessible protocols for the reporting, attention and follow-up of cases of abuse, guaranteeing respect for the rights of the victims, the confidentiality of the process and the effective punishment of those responsible.

On the other hand, it is considered pertinent to promote the periodic performance of salary audits with a gender perspective, which will make it possible to identify and correct gaps in income, promotion processes and access to leadership positions between men and women. These audits should be accompanied by institutional plans for labor equity, with goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms, promoting a structural transformation of hiring practices, performance evaluation and internal promotion.

Likewise, the importance of creating institutionalized spaces for psychosocial and legal support for female workers who have been victims of labor mistreatment is also highlighted. These spaces must have trained personnel, integrated care routes, coordination with state entities and civil society organizations, and guarantees of protection against possible reprisals or revictimization. Mental health care, legal counseling and women's empowerment are key components to achieve comprehensive reparations and avoid the repetition of these events.

Finally, it is hoped that this study will not only contribute to the academic production on labor mistreatment with a gender perspective, but will also serve as a tool for raising awareness and social transformation. Making visible the dynamics of labor violence faced by women in Colombia is the first step to denaturalize them and generate collective awareness of the need to eradicate them. Institutions, companies and academic communities are called upon to continue working together to build dignified, inclusive, egalitarian and violence-free work environments, where all people, regardless of gender, can fully develop.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article explicitly declare that there are no financial, personal, academic or institutional conflicts of interest that have influenced the design, execution, analysis, interpretation or writing of the results presented. The research was developed independently, with full academic autonomy, and with the ethical commitment to guarantee the scientific integrity of the research process. All methodological and analytical decisions were made objectively, oriented exclusively to the fulfillment of the objectives of the study and to the rigorous contribution to the knowledge on labor mistreatment of women in Colombia.

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