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Gender Microaggressions in the Workplace as an Invisible Psychosocial Risk: Review and Proposal for Preventive Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the phenomenon of gender microaggressions in the workplace as an invisible psychosocial risk that affects women. Through a theoretical and regulatory review, it is argued that these apparently innocuous behaviors have a significant impact on the mental health and professional development of women workers. The article analyzes the Spanish legal framework and proposes a structured methodology for identifying and preventing these behaviors in psychosocial risk assessments. Finally, practical recommendations are provided for integrating this perspective into organizational risk management from a gender-sensitive approach.

Micromachismos en el Ámbito Laboral como Riesgo Psicosocial Invisible: Revisión y Propuesta de Evaluación Preventiva


RESUMEN

Este artículo revisa el fenómeno de los micromachismos en el entorno laboral como un riesgo psicosocial invisible que afecta a las mujeres. A través de una revisión teórica y normativa, argumentamos que estos comportamientos, pese a su aparente inocuidad, tienen un impacto significativo en la salud mental y el desarrollo profesional de las trabajadoras. Analizamos el marco legal español y proponemos una metodología estructurada para su identificación y prevención dentro de los procesos de evaluación psicosocial. Finalmente, ofrecemos recomendaciones prácticas para integrar este enfoque en la gestión de riesgos laborales desde una perspectiva de género.

Palabras clave

Micromachismos
Riesgos psicosociales
Salud laboral
Género
Evaluación organizacional

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Introduction

Unlike more obvious forms of discrimination, gender microaggressions operate through normalization. Their apparent harmlessness means that they often go unnoticed by both those who perpetrate them and those who experience them (Bonino, 2004). However, they have a significant negative impact on the well-being of female workers. Previous studies indicate that gender microaggressions can erode self-esteem, limit professional development (Nadal & Haynes, 2012), and contribute to occupational segregation (Benalcázar-Luna & Venegas, 2017; Ferrer et al., 2008). They also perpetuate structural phenomena such as the glass ceiling and sticky floor (Dueñas & Moreno, 2017; Mor, 2016) and generate stress and emotional exhaustion (Cortina, 2008; Saldaña et al., 2020). By normalizing the undervaluation of women, these microaggressions deteriorate the work environment, reduce motivation, and affect organizational performance (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

The absence of specific methodologies for assessing gender microaggressions is an obstacle to preventive occupational health management and gender equality. Therefore, this study analyzes gender microaggressions as an emerging and invisible psychosocial risk, exploring strategies for their identification, assessment, and prevention, in order to contribute to the design of interventions that promote more equitable and healthy work environments.

Microaggressions as a Psychosocial Risk

The Joint Committee of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (1984) defined psychosocial factors as the conditions present in the work environment that are related to the organization and performance of work and that can affect workers' well-being and health (both physical and mental) as well as their professional development. In the same vein, Cox, Griffiths and Randall (2003) describe these factors as elements of job design and organizational structure that, together with the social environment, have the potential to cause physical and psychological harm.

From this perspective, gender discrimination in the workplace has a direct impact on women's physical, mental, and social health. Continued exposure to gender-based violence has been linked to higher levels of chronic stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, as well as an increase in demand for healthcare due to a perceived deterioration in overall well-being (Cifre et al., 2021; Ruiz-Pérez & Plazaola-Castaño, 2005). Within this framework, gender microaggressions constitute a less visible but particularly harmful form of gender-based violence and discrimination: they are subtle, normalized practices that are difficult to report and progressively deteriorate the emotional state of those who suffer them (Bonino, 2004).

The literature indicates that these everyday manifestations of discrimination are associated with a wide range of psychosocial consequences. These include physical and emotional overload, with persistent feelings of exhaustion and lack of energy to attend to one's own needs (Rosso et al., 2010; Lysova et al., 2019); the inhibition of personal power and the feeling of having to adopt defensive strategies, along with the delegitimization of complaints; cognitive blocks that hinder concentration and decision-making; and a deterioration of self-esteem, expressed in insecurity,

demotivation, and a perception of personal ineffectiveness (Nadal & Haynes, 2012; Oswald et al., 2019). Likewise, generalized distress and constant irritability have been described, which are often internalized as personal failures, increasing the psychological burden and the likelihood of mental health problems (Foley et al., 2005; Szymanski & Mikorski, 2017). Recent studies, such as that by Kim & Meister (2023) with women in the STEM sector in the United States, show that gender microaggressions are associated with emotional exhaustion, rumination, loss of self-esteem, and weakening of professional identity, and may even contribute to job abandonment.

Consequently, gender microaggressions can be considered an "invisible" psychosocial risk factor: their subtlety and social acceptance make them difficult to identify, but this does not diminish their impact on mental health, work engagement, and the quality of workplace relationships (Cifre et al., 2021; Saldaña et al., 2020; UGT, 2018).

Before delving deeper into the assessment of gender microaggressions, it is useful to define three central concepts: gender discrimination, symbolic violence, and microaggressions or microviolence based on gender. By gender discrimination, we mean those practices, norms, and structures that systematically create unequal treatment between women and men in the workplace, either directly or indirectly (Cifre et al., 2020). Symbolic violence refers to forms of domination that operate in such a subtle and normalized way that they go unnoticed, through meanings, expectations, and stereotypes that sustain and reinforce the disadvantaged position of women (Bonino, 2004; Bourdieu, 2000). Finally, in this context, gender microaggression-also called gender microviolence when its mild but persistent violent nature is emphasized-refers to everyday actions, often difficult to identify, that undermine, minimize, or subordinate women's voices and authority (Bonino, 2005; Ferrer et al., 2008).

Throughout this article, we mainly use the term gender microaggressions (and, in some passages, gender microviolence) to refer to these specific behaviors in the workplace, whereas we reserve the term gender discrimination to refer to the structural level of the problem, of which these practices are a concrete manifestation.

Occupational Risk Prevention Law (LPRL) and its Application for the Protection of Workers' Health

Law 31/1995 on Occupational Risk Prevention (LPRL) establishes the obligations of companies to ensure the safety and well-being of workers. According to Article 16, the company must carry out an initial assessment of all risks-including psychosocial ones-and apply the corresponding preventive measures. The Law on Infractions and Sanctions in the Social Order (LISOS, Art. 12.b) considers failure to carry out this assessment a serious offense.

Traditionally, the LPRL has approached equality from a perspective focused on maternity, pregnancy, and breastfeeding, which made it necessary to develop regulations that expanded this framework. Organic Law 3/2007-reinforced by Royal Decree-Law 6/2019, establishing the progressive implementation of Equality Plans-positions these plans as the ideal instrument for identifying, evaluating, and correcting inequalities, including subtle ones such as gender microaggressions. Their evaluation complements diagnoses of the wage gap, occupational segregation, and the glass

ceiling, incorporating psychosocial climate indicators with a gender focus.

This framework is complemented by [Organic Law 10/2022](#), which requires the promotion of working conditions that prevent conduct that violates sexual freedom or moral integrity (Art. 12), including sexual harassment and harassment on grounds of sex. Gender microaggressions can operate as normalized behaviors that encourage tolerance toward these forms of harassment, so their detection and intervention are aligned with preventive obligations of equality and psychosocial health.

Finally, evidence shows that occupational risks affect men and women unequally ([Cifre et al., 2020](#)), so incorporating a gender perspective into prevention is essential in order not to underestimate the risks that particularly impact women's health.

The Relevance of Integrating the Assessment of Gender Microaggressions into the Psychosocial Risk Management Framework

Gender microaggressions occur in the workplace in many ways, from seemingly harmless comments to the exclusion of women from leadership roles and development opportunities. These behaviors, although subtle, can significantly affect female workers' perception of self-worth and productivity, which translates into a cumulative impact on their mental health and job satisfaction ([Algner & Lorenz, 2022](#)).

The main problem with gender microaggressions is that they are difficult to detect, since they are normalized behaviors within society, and neither the person who suffers them nor the person who perpetrates them is fully aware of them ([Dueñas & Moreno, 2017](#)). The benefits of incorporating the assessment of microaggressions go beyond improving individual well-being. Studies such as that by [Basford et al. \(2014\)](#) on gender microaggressions in female employees of US organizations, using a cross-sectional design with samples of female workers from different sectors, showed that microinvalidations affect work commitment and psychological well-being. The study underscores the importance of addressing these behaviors in achieving gender equality and increasing the representation of women in fields where they have historically been underrepresented. Such measures not only reinforce inclusion but also contribute to team cohesion and effectiveness.

Integrating the assessment of gender microaggressions requires a systemic approach in which organizations take proactive measures to identify, assess, and mitigate these behaviors. Implementing assessment tools and training in psychosocial risk management enables companies to create a culture of respect and equality ([Lewis & Neville, 2015](#)). Therefore, assessing these behaviors and taking preventive measures not only fosters an environment of respect and equity, but also responds to the corporate obligation to ensure the overall health of its workforce, as established by the Occupational Risk Prevention Law in Spain (NTP [Technical Prevention Note] 450, NTP 926) ([Figure 1](#)).

Proposal for a Methodology for Evaluating Gender Microaggressions as a Psychosocial Risk for Women

We must spread the idea that gender microaggressions constitute an additional psychosocial risk factor, as they influence the onset of

illnesses such as burnout and stress, which contribute to the development of mental health problems ([Saldaña et al., 2020](#)), due to their negative and sustained impact on the emotional and psychological well-being of those who suffer from them. Gender microaggressions manifest as a form of symbolic violence that affects self-esteem and causes emotional and psychological distress. These cumulative effects can result in chronic stress and emotional exhaustion. This not only negatively affects productivity and the work environment but can also cause symptoms of anxiety (NTP 926).

To determine the phases of a psychosocial risk assessment applied to microaggressions, we refer to [Technical Criterion 104/2021](#) developed by the Directorate of the Labor and Social Security Inspectorate on labor and social security inspection actions in psychosocial risks and to "[Technical Prevention Note \(NTP\) 450: Psychosocial factors: phases for their assessment](#)," which meticulously outlines the steps to be followed and the minimum requirements established.

Likewise, a methodological proposal has been followed that is coherently structured with the phases established for the development and implementation of Equality Plans ([Organic Law 3/2007](#); [Royal Decree-Law 6/2019](#); [Royal Decree 901/2020](#)), so that the assessment of gender microaggressions is integrated into the current regulatory framework and can be incorporated into the diagnoses and equality measures of organizations, which consist of Initial Diagnosis, Prioritization of Areas for Improvement, Design of Measures, Implementation and Awareness-Raising, Monitoring, and Evaluation:

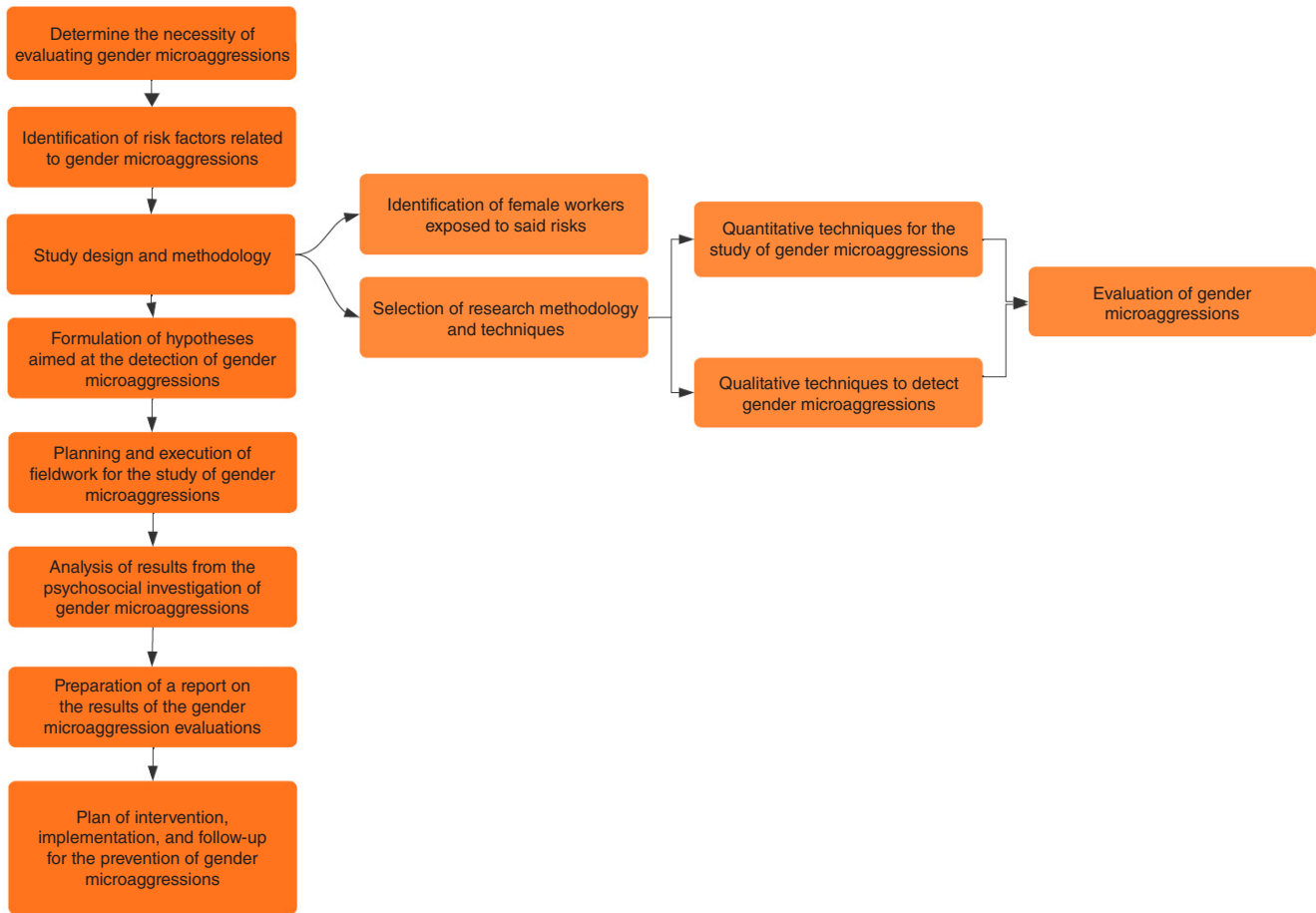
Determining the Need for Assessment of Gender Microaggressions

On this point, the law is ambiguous and does not establish an exact date for carrying out this type of assessment, nor do the "Technical Prevention Notes", [Technical Criterion 104/2021](#), or the law itself set a specific frequency. Instead, Article 16 of the Occupational Risk Prevention Law establishes that a risk assessment in the workplace may be necessary under the following circumstances:

- When a series of "anomalies" or malfunctions are found that suggest the existence of problems of a psychosocial nature. For example, an accumulation of complaints, high absenteeism, low productivity, etc.
- To check the suitability of existing preventive measures, verifying, for example, the effectiveness of actions taken after a risk assessment.
- As a result of a previous overall assessment, in order to more specifically evaluate certain activities, workgroups, or concrete risks.
- When an innovation is introduced in the workplace, such as a new production process, new material or human resources, or changes in the organization of work, which may significantly alter the current situation.

Since studies such as those by [Lewis and Neville \(2015\)](#), conducted with samples of black women in the United States (Study 1: N = 259; Study 2: N = 210), show that gender microaggressions have a significant influence on relational cohesion, group functioning, and psychological well-being, the need for assessment

Figure 1
Flowchart for a Psychosocial Assessment That Includes Gender Microaggressions



Source: Technical Prevention Note (NTP) No. 450 (1995)

tools that explicitly analyze these dynamics in work environments is reinforced.

Identification of Risk Factors Related to Gender Microaggressions

Identifying gender microaggressions as psychosocial risk factors requires an approach that highlights normalized practices of low-intensity discrimination within the organizational culture. These behaviors can manifest themselves in subtle, everyday ways, making it necessary to analyze organizational variables from a gender perspective.

Among the most relevant elements to consider are:

- Gender distribution in positions of responsibility, hierarchies, and decision-making (ONU Mujeres [UN Women], 2017; Dueñas & Moreno, 2017).
- Accounts or perceptions of exclusion, infantilization, or invisibility of women in professional interaction spaces (Saldaña et al., 2020).
- Differences in access to training, promotion, and strategic participation based on gender (UGT, 2018).

- Presence of sexist comments or normalized differential treatment, often not perceived as discriminatory by those who engage in it (Bonino, 2004; Basford et al., 2014).
- Voluntary turnover of female staff or requests for a change of department due to psychological distress, which may be indicative of hostile environments (Szymanski & Mikorski, 2017).

These indicators allow for the detection of relational and structural patterns that create inequality and affect psychosocial health, particularly that of female workers.

Study Design and Methodology

Identification of Female Workers Exposed to Gender Microaggressions

Once the relevant risk factors have been identified, the methodological design of the study should focus on those groups or organizational areas where gender microaggression is most likely to occur. To this end, prioritization criteria based on three dimensions are proposed: (a) differential exposure to risk, understood as the

persistence of structural gender inequalities in certain spaces; (b) the existence of previous indications of distress or complaints related to the treatment received; and (c) the configuration of organizational structures that favor asymmetrical hierarchical relationships, as indicated in Technical Prevention Note 926 and [Technical Criterion 104/2021](#).

Under these guidelines, it is suggested that the assessment focus on the following specific contexts:

1. Teams with low female representation;
2. Departments where informal complaints related to situations of unequal treatment have been recorded;
3. Organizational units characterized by rigid hierarchical structures or predominantly male leadership.

The application of these criteria allows for the identification of priority areas for analysis, facilitating a more accurate and contextualized assessment of gender microaggression. In addition, it contributes to incorporating a perspective that is sensitive to the dynamics of power and inequality that sustain and reproduce these microaggressions in the workplace.

Choice of Research Methodology and Techniques: Tools and Techniques for the Evaluation of Gender Microaggression

The assessment of gender microaggression as a specific form of psychosocial risk requires a methodological approach that allows for the identification of practices of symbolic domination and gender discrimination which, although subtle, have a significant impact on well-being at work. To this end, it is necessary to combine information-gathering strategies that integrate both the objectivity of structured measurement and the depth of qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Techniques for the Study of Gender Microaggression

From a broader methodological perspective, [NTP 702](#) of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health highlights the relevance of quantitative approaches for identifying psychosocial risk indicators, through validated instruments that allow comparisons between organizational contexts. However, in the specific case of gender microaggressions, there is a limited availability of tools designed for their assessment in work environments.

In this regard, one of the tools best suited to this need to assess gender microaggression is the MIMI-16 (Microinvalidation and Microinsult Scale-16), developed by [Algner and Lorenz \(2022\)](#), which aims to identify the presence of microinsults and microinvalidations towards women in the organizational context. The explicit purpose of this scale is to assess microaggressions directed at women in the workplace, understood as contemporary forms of symbolic violence and indirect discrimination. Unlike other tools that address sexism from a general perspective, the MIMI-16 was constructed based on the real experiences of working women, through two independent psychometric studies with samples of 497 and 606 participants, respectively (total N = 1,103).

The MIMI-16 has demonstrated excellent psychometric properties, including high internal reliability, factorial validity, and convergent validity, positioning it as a robust tool for measuring the

prevalence of these subtle forms of gender-based violence in the organizational setting. It is an instrument specifically designed based on the experiences of working women, aimed at measuring gender-based microinsults and microinvalidations in the workplace. Its application provides a solid diagnostic basis for analyzing the relationship between gender microaggressions and psychosocial variables such as occupational stress, demotivation, deterioration of the organizational climate, and staff turnover.

Consequently, although the MIMI-16 is not a legal instrument aimed at detecting sexual harassment or harassment on grounds of sex, it is a valuable quantitative tool for identifying forms of low-intensity symbolic violence. Its integration into equality diagnoses and psychosocial risk assessments allows for a more comprehensive understanding of gender inequalities in the workplace.

Qualitative Techniques for Detecting Gender Microaggressions

The qualitative dimension is key to exploring personal experiences of gender microaggressions in the workplace. Tools such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups provide access to subjective accounts that reveal normalized experiences of exclusion, devaluation, or minimization. These spaces for dialogue facilitate critical reflection and the visibility of behaviors that, due to their repeated and hidden nature, go unnoticed even by those who suffer them.

As pointed out by [Bonino \(2004\)](#) and [Saldaña et al. \(2020\)](#), not only do these spaces for dialogue encourage critical reflection, but they also act as essential diagnostic mechanisms by enabling the detection of systematic behavior patterns that create psychological distress (anxiety, insecurity, emotional exhaustion), even if not always recognized by those who suffer from them.

The combination of the two strategies-standardized questionnaires and experiential accounts-enables robust methodological triangulation ([Denzin, 1978](#)) that enhances the study's ability to comprehensively detect gender microaggressions, which not only improves the accuracy of the organizational diagnosis but also strengthens the foundation for implementing effective interventions aimed at cultural change.

Formulation of Hypotheses Aimed at Detecting Gender Microaggressions

Before beginning the data collection and planning stage, it is crucial to consider the phase of formulating meaningful assumptions in scientific research, as highlighted by [Sellitz et al. \(1980\)](#) and [Sierra \(1998\)](#). Hypotheses are statements that are subjected to empirical testing and represent potential solutions to the identified problem, as they are based on interrelated concepts.

For example, there might be a need to investigate in a specific company whether there is a relationship between "supervisory problems" and "microinvalidations," understood as covert expressions of gender microaggression that disqualify or minimize the experience and competence of women.

Planning and Conducting Fieldwork for the Study of Gender Microaggressions

The main objective of the fieldwork in this study is to identify and understand the manifestations of gender microaggression in

organizational contexts, through a carefully planned and ethical methodological strategy. To this end, it is essential to communicate in advance to the participants the specific objectives focused on the detection of gender microaggression practices, the methodology used (including qualitative and quantitative techniques), and the estimated duration of the evaluation process. This transparency not only allows for informed consent to be obtained, but also encourages thoughtful and committed participation in gender issues.

The suitability of the environment is also crucial. Both the interviews and the questionnaires should be conducted in spaces that guarantee privacy and respect, avoiding interruptions and creating an atmosphere of emotional security that allows personal experiences to be shared without fear of reprisal. This point is especially important when it comes to identifying gender microaggression behaviors that are often not recognized as such in the workplace.

It is also essential that the process be led by facilitators with training in gender perspective and intercultural sensitivity, especially during in-depth interviews and focus groups. Their role is not only technical but also ethical, as they must be able to recognize power dynamics, build trust, and carefully address accounts that could involve experiences of distress, invisibility, or symbolic violence (ONU Mujeres [UN Women], 2015).

Together, these measures reinforce the validity of the study and ensure that the fieldwork contributes directly to the visibility, understanding, and future intervention of gender microaggressions in the workplace, complying with a respectful, ethically responsible, and methodologically sound approach (Flick, 2018).

Analysis of the Results of the Psychosocial Research on Gender Microaggressions

Once the data have been obtained, the analysis focuses on identifying the causes of the problem, i.e., the causes of possible poor psychosocial conditions at work.

This study adopts the theoretical framework of racial microaggressions proposed by Sue (2010), who identifies three main forms: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Although this classification initially emerged in the analysis of racialized dynamics, in 2010 it was extended to other forms of discrimination, including those based on gender. In particular, Chapter 8 of the volume "Sexism and Gender Microaggressions" shows how these subtle forms of interaction contribute to reproducing structural inequalities between women and men, both socially and in the workplace.

- Microaggressions: These are discriminatory behaviors that are carried out consciously and explicitly (either verbally or non-verbally), designed to harm the person receiving them and are comparable to conventional sexism.
- Microinsults: These refer to communications or actions that convey stereotypes without being aware of it and that may be rude and insensitive to a person's gender identity.
- Microinvalidations: These refer to communications that deny or exclude the thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a stigmatized person; this category includes gender blindness and denial of individual discrimination.

Incorporating this framework allows us to understand gender microaggressions in the workplace as a specific form of gender microviolence, in line with the notion of symbolic violence proposed by Bourdieu (2000) and the subtle forms of domination described by Bonino (2004). This conceptual articulation is particularly relevant when analyzing everyday interactions at work, where these practices not only reinforce structural inequalities but also negatively impact women's psychological well-being and professional development.

Assessing the psychosocial risk derived from gender microaggressions in the workplace requires a methodological approach that is sensitive to their subtle and normalized nature. Unlike other more explicit forms of violence, gender microaggression operates systematically through comments, gestures, or attitudes that reinforce gender hierarchies and progressively undermine the emotional well-being of female workers (Bonino, 2004; Dueñas & Moreno, 2017).

In terms of assessment, it is essential to evaluate not only the frequency but also the emotional intensity with which these behaviors are perceived and their long-term effect.

Several studies have shown that continued exposure to this type of symbolic violence is related to increased emotional exhaustion, loss of sense of belonging, and greater perception of organizational injustice. Thus, Ferrer et al. (2008), in a study conducted in Spain with a representative sample of the adult population (N = 1,351), showed that a significant proportion of the population normalizes certain types of microviolence that have a direct impact on psychological well-being. Additionally, Algnier and Lorenz (2022) developed the MIMI-16 from two independent samples of working women in Germany (N = 497 and N = 606), showing that *microinsults* and *microinvalidations* are associated with emotional deterioration and lower work integration. In this regard, it is advisable to incorporate qualitative and quantitative indicators into psychosocial diagnoses, especially those that align with validated measurement scales such as the MIMI-16.

Preparation of the Report on the Results of Gender Microaggression Assessments

The final report must be drafted with technical rigor and ethical sensitivity, bearing in mind that gender microaggressions are a subtle form of symbolic violence, the identification of which may generate resistance or denial within the organization. Therefore, the presentation of the results must balance analytical clarity with careful communication that encourages collective reflection rather than individual blame.

The report should be structured in an accessible manner, including:

- A description of the methodology used (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed).
- A summary of the relevant findings, especially those related to normalized behaviors that reinforce gender inequality.
- The identified impact on the psychosocial health of female workers.
- Specific recommendations aimed at prevention, intervention, and training in this area.

It is advisable to present depersonalized and aggregated examples to illustrate common patterns of gender microaggressions detected, in order to facilitate their recognition by the organization without exposing specific individuals.

The report must be submitted to staff representatives and disseminated in accordance with the principle of information and consultation set out in Article 18 of [Law 31/1995 on Occupational Risk Prevention](#), thus complying with the legal obligation to share the results of psychosocial assessments.

This process not only raises awareness of an issue that is often ignored, but also constitutes the first step towards building more equitable, safe, and respectful work environments.

Intervention, Implementation, and Monitoring Plan for the Prevention of Gender Microaggressions

Once gender microaggressions have been identified in the workplace, it is essential to design and implement an intervention plan that promotes sustained change at both the individual and organizational levels. This plan must go beyond a reactive approach to isolated cases and focus on transforming the structural conditions that allow these forms of symbolic violence to persist.

Awareness-raising is central to this process. As [Bonino \(2004\)](#) argues, it is necessary for both female and male workers to become aware of how gender microaggressions operate covertly in workplace relationships. Training and critical questioning of traditional gender roles make it possible to identify and denaturalize everyday practices that reproduce inequality. These actions must be complemented by clear institutional policies that establish rules of coexistence based on equity and respect, in line with Article 48 of [Organic Law 3/2007](#) for effective equality between women and men.

Organizations such as the [International Labor Organization \(OIT \[ILO\], 2019\)](#) agree that equitable participation in decision-making processes strengthens institutional commitment to social justice. To this end, it is necessary to periodically review the internal rules of organizations, identifying possible biases in the selection, promotion, and assignment of responsibilities processes, as warned by [UN Women \(ONU Mujeres, 2017\)](#).

Furthermore, organizational communication plays a key role in consolidating an inclusive culture. The systematic use of non-sexist language, as recommended by the [European Institute for Gender Equality \(2021\)](#), helps to make all people visible, avoiding stereotypes and promoting equality in everyday interactions. It is also important to have confidential and effective reporting channels in place to ensure that those affected (mostly women) can report gender microaggressive behaviors without fear of reprisals.

The sustainability of the plan requires a rigorous monitoring system, supported by validated indicators. The INSST's Technical Prevention Notes ([NTP 443](#), [NTP 702](#), and [NTP 450](#)) recommend evaluating the effectiveness of interventions using variables such as a decrease in complaints about microaggressions, an improvement in the psychosocial well-being of female workers, a reduction in absenteeism, and greater job satisfaction.

A work environment that recognizes, evaluates, and acts against gender microaggressions not only protects the psychosocial health of its staff, but also improves internal cohesion, reinforces commitment, and projects an institutional image aligned with the values of equity and human rights ([Mor, 2016](#)).

Critical Discussion

Gender microaggressions, despite their subtlety and social normalization, constitute a psychosocial risk with a high impact on the mental and emotional health of female workers. This evidence reinforces the findings of [Cifre et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Saldaña et al. \(2020\)](#), who argue that these forms of symbolic violence affect self-esteem, generate anxiety, and contribute to emotional exhaustion and professional demotivation ([Dardenne et al., 2007](#)). The incorporation of a gender perspective in the assessment of psychosocial risks makes it possible to highlight these differentiated impacts, which until now have been invisible due to traditional prevention strategies with an androcentric bias ([UGT, 2018](#); [Cifre et al., 2021](#)).

As we have seen, there is an obvious difficulty in recognizing gender microaggressions, both on the part of those who experience them and those who perpetrate them. This coincides with the findings of [Bonino \(2004\)](#) and [Basford et al. \(2014\)](#), who warn that the normalization of these behaviors hinders reporting and institutional response, causing a chronic source of psychological distress to become invisible. From a psychosocial perspective, this invisibility reinforces the phenomenon of organizational silence, where female workers are forced to repress their distress for fear of reprisals or due to the absence of reliable institutional channels ([Kim & Meister, 2023](#)). Creating work environments where everyone feels safe and valued not only mitigates this silence, but also strengthens cohesion and talent retention.

In methodological terms, the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative techniques has proven to be key to detecting systematic and relational patterns of gender microaggression. As proposed by [Denzin \(1978\)](#), combining standardized questionnaires with in-depth interviews not only improves data reliability but also allows for contextualizing experiences from the subjective viewpoint of those affected. In this study, the use of the MIMI-16 is proposed to quantify microinsults and microinvalidations at different levels of the organization, while qualitative interviews provide a more accurate understanding of how these practices affect daily well-being. This methodology also contributes to overcoming the invisibility of subtle forms of symbolic violence.

On the other hand, while the data support the existence and impact of gender microaggression, significant challenges remain in its normative and systematic evaluation. The Technical Prevention Notes and [Technical Criterion 104/2021](#) do not yet explicitly address this type of behavior, leaving a regulatory gap that limits preventive action in organizations. The lack of a methodology established by law for this type of assessment reinforces the need for scientifically supported proposals that recommend conducting these diagnoses at least every three years, as suggested by this study.

Conclusions

The integration of a gender perspective into psychosocial risk assessment makes it possible to highlight gender microaggressions as sources of chronic distress that specifically affect female workers. This perspective is essential to overcome the limitations of current regulatory frameworks and promote fairer and more effective intervention strategies.

Only through real institutional commitment-combining public policies, ongoing training, and internal prevention mechanisms-will it be possible to move toward healthy, equal, and sustainable work environments in the long term.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationship that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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