



Identify the training needs in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective in delegates of prevention

Necesidades de formación en seguridad y salud en el trabajo con perspectiva de género en delegadas y delegados de prevención

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to identify the training needs in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective to Prevention Delegates, in the Municipality of Páez, Portuguesa State, Venezuela. In order to exercise their role, it is important to understand their daily environment in the workplace in relationship to the occupational safety and health training contents available; in addition to verifying whether they receive gender-oriented information in the regular Training Programs available to them in the companies. A qualitative research is carried out, of the interpretative hermeneutic - phenomenological model, with a gender focus, with intentional sampling, involving eight prevention male and female Delegates from eight different work centers. The technique used for data collection was the semi-structured interview to Prevention Delegates by means of open-type questions and observation, to determine the level of education received in the workplace, and their overall knowledge about the workplace; as well as it their relations and perceptions regarding the risks. As results it has been determined that sexual division at the workplace persists, the Delegates of Prevention do not have the necessary education to exercise their functions, or to perceive the risks at the workplace and its health effects; there is discrimination against women and they have difficulties in reconciling the work - health - family relationship.

Keywords: Education, Gender and Health, Occupational Health, Personal Development.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo tuvo como propósito identificar las necesidades de formación en seguridad y salud en el trabajo con perspectiva de género en Delegadas y Delegados de Prevención, Municipio Páez, Estado Portuguesa, Venezuela. Para ejercer su rol es importante conocer la realidad laboral que viven en su centro de trabajo con relación a los contenidos de formación en seguridad y salud en el trabajo, si perciben las diferencias en el trabajo y las repercusiones en la salud, según género; además de verificar si en los Programas de Formación que reciben está presente contenidos de género. Se realiza una investigación cualitativa, del modelo interpretativo hermenéutica - fenomenológica, con enfoque de género, con muestreo intencional, participando ocho Delegados y Delegadas de Prevención de ocho centros de trabajo. La técnica de recolección de datos fue la entrevista semi-estructurada, mediante el guion de preguntas de tipo abiertas, de observación, para determinar cómo ha sido esa formación, y el conocimiento de su centro de trabajo, sus relaciones y percepciones en cuanto a los riesgos. Como resultados tenemos que persiste la división sexual del trabajo, no cuentan con la formación necesaria para ejercer sus funciones, ni percibir los riesgos y los efectos a la salud, existe discriminación de la mujer y tienen dificultades para la conciliación de la relación trabajo - salud - familia.

Palabras clave: Formación, Salud y Género, Salud Laboral, Desarrollo de Personal.

INTRODUCTION

The feminine and the masculine are constituted through a mutual, cultural, and historical relationship; gender is a category of analysis that seeks to make visible unequal relations based on the biological and physiological characteristics that differentiate men from women, constructed on the basis of cultural models according to sex, socially established norms, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers proper to men or women; as Acevedo rightly notes, “Currently, we observe a universal pattern of segmentation and segregation of the labor force according to sex” (1). (p. 7).

Men and women throughout the world experience different realities at work and in the risks to which they are exposed, in their work and family relationships, within their communities, and even culturally, given that, most of the time, women tend to be at a disadvantage compared with men; despite the countless advances in legislation enacted in defense of human rights, occupational safety and health, the various forms of identity construction between men and women, the differences that lead to inequalities and discrimination remain almost immovable, and they still affect women’s work development and health, equity, and gender equality.

Broadly speaking, it could be accepted that all those reflections made throughout history on the consequences and meanings of belonging to each of the sexes constitute reflections on gender, and breaking with these social paradigms have represented struggles of many working women over the years, research by women and men dedicated to industrial health and safety, legal and political sciences, such as the English writer Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir, the case of the Father of Occupational Health, Dr. Bernardo Ramazzini, Dr. Oscar Betancourt, and Dr. Yohama Caraballo, to mention a few, for example.

In this same line of thought, Salas (2) points out that it was not until the end of the decade of 1970 and the beginning of the decade of 1980 that gender as a category of analysis began to be used in historical research on work and women. Furthermore, the implementation of the “Gender Perspective” analysis and the need for awareness-raising have made it possible to define and demonstrate that unequal gender relations have their effects in the production and reproduction of discrimination, taking concrete expressions in all spheres of life: work, family, politics, organizations, art, business, health, science, sexuality, history.

The foregoing demonstrates that women workers are the precursors called to generate changes, as has been demonstrated in history. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has signed and ratified international conventions and treaties that have been implemented and strengthened, as described by Acevedo (3), the most relevant being: a) Cairo (1994): International Conference on Population and Development. Improvement of the Status of Women. Reproductive Rights. b) Inter-American Convention of Belem Do Pará (1994): For the Eradication of Violence against Women. c) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995): Equality between Men and Women for the XXI Century. d) CEDAW (1979): United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (p. 1). e) United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, where it was agreed to achieve by 2015, the 8 Millennium Development Goals.(4), and through continuous training in gender perspective.

Thus, Acevedo mentions that, due to the differential assignment of occupations and productive tasks to men and women, based on their natural (biological) and cultural (social) attributes, traditionally, the male sex has been identified with physical strength, security, and authority; and the female sex with docility, delicacy, protection, and fertility, which is nothing other than the sexual division of labor. (5) Therefore, knowledge and continuous training are essential to work on the realities that mark differences in labor relations, exposure to risk factors and how to identify them, the double presence (work–home) of female workers, gender-differentiated training and jobs by roles, the right to maternity and breastfeeding, inequality in job opportunities based on age, and discrimination based on sex, skin color, and sexuality.

Therefore, the powers and attributions of the Prevention Delegates are the starting point of the will of the workers, and to exercise these functions, they must not only “know”, but also “know how to do” and “want to do”. These 3 processes (knowledge, skills, attitudes) make up the aptitude necessary for the optimal performance of their tasks, and arise from the dimension of training with a gender perspective; paraphrasing the argument of Colás and Jiménez, awareness easily leads to reflection without action. (...), but critical awareness facilitates a contextualized analysis of problematic situations, which allows people to transform that reality (6) (p. 423). That is, in other words, transformation, therefore, comes from a critical perspective, and it has been demonstrated that training with a gender perspective achieves this.

This research describes the working reality experienced by female and male prevention de-

legates regarding training content, with the aims of understanding their perceptions of health repercussions in their workplace, exploring the existence of gender-perspective content in the training received, and identifying training content in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective that they propose. This is important because, through training in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective, they will be able to understand and recognize social relations of work, identity, and sexual orientation; the productive–reproductive work relationship; the sexual division of labor; cases of discrimination; and the virilization of women in jobs.

The realities of achieving greater gender equity through better economic and social participation of women, reducing the wage gap (man–woman), increasing women's participation at decision-making levels within public and private institutions, improving the health and quality of life of women and men, and developing family and working life go hand in hand with the existence of an institutional structure with management capacity and the development of gender awareness through training in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective for prevention delegates; this represents a fundamental preliminary step to critically analyze reality.

Therefore, for female and male prevention delegates to recognize their workplace realities, the existing legal structure, the regulatory and institutional procedures that are available, the different forms of work organization and division of labor, the occupational risks and health hazards of the means and processes of production, possible occupational diseases and/or accidents, and to exercise their rights to work, reproductive health, and non-discrimination, critical awareness is necessary to foster their own gender awareness and, at the same time, to commit themselves as active agents in the transformation of social norms through continuous training with a gender perspective.

Within this entire framework that gives rise to the author's interest in exploring the training needs in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective among female and male prevention delegates in Páez Municipality, Portuguesa State, Venezuela, 2024, as envisaged in this article, a systematic review is carried out with the aim of identifying existing elements and thereby considering the most effective actions to achieve improvements in work environments, thus recognizing the impact that gender-perspective training generates on workers.

METHODS

Through qualitative research and the interpretive model of hermeneutic-phenomenology with a gender approach, the analysis of the interviewees' experiences is carried out in order to identify training needs in occupational safety and health with a gender perspective among female and male Prevention Delegates in Páez Municipality, Portuguesa State, Venezuela.

Methodological Construction Procedure

As a data collection technique, the semi-structured interview was used, with a script of open-ended guiding questions as the instrument, allowing the informant the flexibility to recount, in the most comfortable manner, their experience regarding the reality of their workplace through guidance on the researched topic. The interview was divided into 3 phases to establish the preamble and build trust. First, the employer and the Occupational Safety and Health Committee of the Work Centers that were convened and visited were verbally informed of the reason for and purpose of conducting this research and of the request for the participation of the male and female Prevention Delegates; the interview was intentionally oriented around 8 questions. Second, a representative of the employer introduced the interviewer, and each informant was given the informed consent form, which they read in detail and were asked to freely sign in order to continue with the research process and data collection. There were 8 participants (4 male Prevention Delegates and 4 female Prevention Delegates); then, the dates and times were set to conduct the interviews, which lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes each.

After the audio information was obtained, a smartphone was used, and the third point was addressed: transcription, cleaning, and sweeping of the discourses; ordering of the transcriptions; categorization and coding of the discourse; and analysis and final summary to capture the realities experienced by prevention delegates in their workplaces, the training activities received, the perception of health repercussions in their workplaces, and gender-perspective content in the Training Programs.

The analysis is conducted under the strategy of methodological triangulation, where, upon obtaining categories and subcategories, the theoretical bases will be compared with the contributions made by the informants and the author's interpretation; conclusions and recommendations

are presented.

Selection of Informants

Using purposive sampling, a verbal invitation was extended to the male and female prevention delegates of 15 workplaces in various production areas within Páez Municipality, Portuguesa State, Venezuela, for 2024. These companies were selected by the researcher with prior knowledge that registered female prevention delegates existed, but only 8 of these workplaces responded to the invitation. Thus, it was possible to secure the participation of 8 informants, whose inclusion criterion was sex, comprising 4 male prevention delegates and 4 female prevention delegates, in addition to the signing of the Informed Consent as a confirmation element, so that the information provided by male and female participants was collected under equal conditions.

Information Recording

For information collection and recording, an audio recorder is used to record the informants' experiences, along with the signing of informed consent. Participants are informed about the purpose of the research, the researcher's identity, the procedures to be carried out, the duration of participation, the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the fact that no monetary benefits would be granted for such participation. Confidentiality of their contributions is guaranteed at all times to avoid harm or risks for the participant and/or society; also guaranteed are their right to know the results of the research and to request a copy of them, and the mechanisms for contacting the researcher in case of any doubt in this regard. A space is provided for the participant to place their signature and fingerprints voluntarily and without coercion, stating that they agreed to participate in this process and have understood the purpose of the research, in accordance with the principles of autonomy, non-maleficence, responsibility, justice, and those set forth in the FO-NACIT Bioethics and Biosafety Code (7); subsequently, the information is transcribed and cleaned.

For the editorial preparation of this manuscript, a large-scale language model (artificial intelligence) was used as an assistance tool in converting citations and references to Vancouver style and in standardizing the tables. The author reviewed, verified, and validated the entirety of the content and assumes full responsibility for the integrity of the data, the interpretation, and the conclusions of the research.

RESULTS

Demographic description of the participants

8 male and female prevention delegates from 8 work centers in Páez Municipality, Portuguesa State, Venezuela, participated, as shown in Table 1: 4 with male sex identity and 4 with female sex identity; notably, 2 of them reported a homosexual orientation during the interviews.

Occupational health and safety is a discipline that encompasses multiple specialized topics for addressing the relationship between work and health and preventing the negative consequences of work. Gender is conceptually the social construction of the masculine and the feminine, and today it even encompasses sex-diverse expressions. In this regard, Acevedo states:

"A gender perspective in occupational health and safety contributes to broadening and deepening the characterization of the human factor of work by recognizing its sexed character, its psychobiological, social, and cultural differences and needs, and their implications for work organization, work activity, the social relations between the sexes established in the work process, the health consequences for female and male workers, and safety management (1)". (p.1).

The prevention delegates are elected by their coworkers, but they often do not know how to carry out their functions, attributions, and powers; when these legally granted tools are not recognized, the benefits of the entire legal system that has advanced women's rights and gender equality are left as a dead letter, and participation in decision-making roles, participation in training, and social change are relegated. Likewise, the prevention delegate, within the androcentric structure in which the division of labor by sex still prevails, reflects the limited recognition of the productive and reproductive work of working women, equality of opportunities in training, and discrimination by sex and in masculinized sectors.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

Workplace activity	Time as Delegate	Name awarded	Position	Gender	
				M	F
Mechanical workshop	6 months	Emilia	Administrative and accounting assistant		X
Marketing company	3 months	Freddy	Administrative assistant	X	
Warehousing company	1 year	Yohana	Secretary		X
Carbonera	8 years (repeated periods)	Amabilis	Warehouse assistant	X	
Rubber sales	1.5 years	Marlene	Warehouse assistant		X
Distribuidora Diesel	8 months	Carolina	Administrative assistant		X
Agroindustry	2.5 years (repeated periods)	Yampier	Warehouse assistant	X	
Rice cooker	7 years (repeated periods)	Carlos	Bagging worker	X	
Total				4	4

Source: own elaboration (2024).

The connection between the script structure established by the author to address the research objectives, the participants' discourses, and their spontaneity allowed the discovery of a differentiated perception of working realities, consistent with the observation carried out and the non-verbal expressions of the female and male prevention delegates. Notably, 2 of them reported a homosexual orientation and referred to occupying feminized or masculinized job positions, evidencing gender bias at work and attentiveness to how discrimination is expressed based on the social structure of work—a situation that, moreover, has changed little in our society.

Based on the narratives provided by the participants, a gender distinction is made to stratify their discourses; categories and subcategories emerged, and in some cases particular expressions were evidenced. A summary of this is shown in the following table:

The interpretation of the results of this research was contrasted with contributions from gender perspective theory and occupational health and safety, previous studies (i.e., the research background), and key informants. In this way, the present account is organized according to the operationalization of the categories identified in the research objectives.

Training: decision-making for learning in being, knowledge, and doing.

Table 2. Expressions of the subcategories derived from the interviews.

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	EXPRESSIONS OF THE SUBCATEGORIES	
		FEMALE DELEGATES	MALE DELEGATES
Training	Types of Training	.- What I have heard!	.- Courses with Firefighters .- Fire Extinguishing
Sexual Division of Labor	Discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation, race	.- Dealing with male bosses.	.- There is a hierarchy of positions .- mutual respect.
	Productive–reproductive work relationship	.- not a woman, not young, because for that position one needs to be.	.- women can do it too
	Gender relations	.- work is also done at home.	.- They help with household chores.
Gender and Occupational Health	Gender bias at work	.- they perceive that it is by consensus .- Lack of awareness of risks .- Work-related stress	.- general knowledge emphasizes psychosocial factors. .- lack of concentration due to tone of voice
	Perception of differentiated occupational risks	.- Job demands	
	Virilization of risks	.- if they hire a woman, and a young one at that, she may become pregnant. .- height. Sexuality.	.- support for female coworkers
Occupational Safety and Health Program	Male and Female Prevention Delegate Knowledge of gender perspective	.- Lack of knowledge and/or insufficient training to perform their duties.	.- Moderate knowledge, due to the years of experience as a delegate.
	Participation in programs with gender-related content	.- I have not participated; it does not exist. - I think it is going to help all of us, not only women, everyone.	.- Working groups, worker participation. - I have heard little. - I think it is a matter of mindset.

Source: own elaboration based on the interviews (2024).

In the academic and professional world, it has been considered a factor that determines changes in the structures where it is applied, and it is known as “Training”, understood as the consistent and planned effort to transform or develop knowledge (Buckley and Caple (8)), skills and actions through learning (Del Pozo Delgado (9)), and to achieve adequate performance of an individual or group in an activity or range of activities in their environment (Vargas Zúñiga (10)).

Types of Training

Conceptually, Training is the term most used in most organizations, regardless of their type; its use implies that, in addition to affecting technical aspects (skills and knowledge) and influencing attitudes, which must be shared by all members of the organization, it is not limited to the level of knowing and knowing how to do. Vargas Zúñiga (10) defines it as a proactive, systematic, humanistic, dialectical, and participatory process through which the individuals involved directly and indirectly construct, acquire, and expand knowledge, develop skills, and improve attitudes, in order to perform successfully as a mature personality, not only in the present and future job position but also in the remaining spheres of their circle of relationships as a social being. In this regard, the participants reported the types of training received as follows:

“Little training, on a single occasion, on occupational risks and the use of personal protective equipment, ... but that was as far as it went; they did not give us further information and to date we have not had more training in that area” (Emilia)

“No, to be honest with you, no.” (Yohana)

“There was a topic that we covered on how to use helmets, what helmets are for, what safety glasses are for, what gloves are for, and we also did a firefighter course, which was excellent, because we mostly work with the issue of flammables, and it is, for us, it is a course that truly is, for us, an experience” (Marlene)

“We had a fire prevention course... more than anything, that has been the first talk we have had” (Carolina).

The female Prevention Delegates report training in the form of industrial safety talks, but they do not identify the risks within their workplace, and training in this regard is characterized as precarious, with an absence of concern regarding knowledge management. On the other hand, the male Prevention Delegates state the following with greater certainty:

“No. Not because of time” (Freddy)

“Yes, ... among them was the use of fire extinguishers, ... handling, how to do it, how at the time of any emergency, they know what to do, and it was extremely important, they gave it to us ... the Firefighters. Another that was excellent ... was the session on unsafe conditions in enclosed spaces and how to avoid them, ...” (Amabilis)

“In the years that I have been in my position, only on a single occasion ... they gave us the instructions, we had half an hour ..., an hour of talk ..., about how the process was, ... they covered the most essential points, both as prevention delegate and the duties that must be performed, what should be done, ... what should not be done, ... but inductions when staff join are not provided” (Yampier)

“I took industrial safety courses, a fire control and extinguishing course, at the fire department, a training course as a prevention delegate, and if you ... try to ... you train yourself to train them” (Carlos)

For its part, the Organic Law of Labour, Workers and Working Women (11) establishes that Training is:

“Article 294: For the purposes of this Law, the collective, comprehensive, continuous, and permanent training carried out by male and female workers in the social process of work is conceived as such, comprehensively developing cognitive, affective, and practical aspects, overcoming the fragmentation of knowing, knowledge, and the division between manual and intellectual activities.”

That is why a gender perspective and training in occupational health and safety help to extend and deepen recognition of the human factor in work, by being consistent with its sexed form, making visible its particular psychological and biological differences and needs, as well as social and cultural ones, and also make visible their implications for the organization and activity of work, the social relations between men and women that are established in the work process, the consequences for the health of women and men workers, and safety management.

Sexual Division of Labour

The differential assignment of occupations emerged from the multiple narratives of the participants, referring to responsibilities and tasks according to people's sex, arguing natural attri-

butes and limitations for being a man or a woman. The prevention delegates express themselves as follows:

"... I get along well with each of my coworkers, ... with bosses, you always have the occasional difference, but you put up with them." (Emilia)

"... actually I am the only woman in the group, I have 4 bosses and my colleague is recently joining the team, and well, ... sometimes it leaves me at a bit of a disadvantage ..." (Carolina)

"Exactly, excellent, I would say, the relationship with my coworkers... then I take all those comments, well, in writing, to the meetings I have with the employer side; in a certain way, they are very collaborative with us" (Amabilis).

"...with my colleagues, good, the best, and with my superiors, it is mutual respect" (Carlos).

Gender relations are shaped by the fact that women's access to certain jobs has been restricted; however, history has shown that women have performed jobs traditionally assigned to men and vice versa, owing to conjunctural productive needs, as evidenced in the discourses of female workers:

"Well, I was hired for the administrative assistant position" (Freddy).

"Right now, my duties are, at this moment, at the transport level: keeping an eye on the trucks" (Marlene).

Age/sexual orientation/political/racial discrimination: known realities

Discrimination occurs when people are treated unequally according to their gender, age, political inclination, or race; therefore, in this research, the informants stated that they had not suffered gender discrimination at certain stages of their working life, but they did report knowledge of third-party experiences, and these have been expressed in different forms, which are described below:

"...I have heard that they do not hire women of a certain age, for example, from 20 to 30, 35... who are in the process of getting married or have a partner, because the tendency is for them to become pregnant; if it happens, they have made them sign their resignation so that the company does not have to comply with what is required by law, which is post- and pre-natal leave..." and "... but I have realized that managerial positions are occupied by men, not women..." (Carolina).

"...look, here we have one lesbian person working, and no, there isn't; for her it is the same respect; we treat her the same as everyone" (Yohana).

"...I had to talk about it because truly... for being Black, for being Black, no! I think that Black man has his name." Other cases, such as "discrimination due to pregnancy (owing to pre- and post-natal leaves)." "Could it be that a document must be submitted saying that I'm not going to have any more children..." "Legal protection has affected women... ...I witnessed that they look for homosexual women who —supposedly— would not get pregnant." "They neither discriminate against me nor do I discriminate against them... ...you have to listen to the worker" (Marlene).

"...that mostly happens when elections come, presidential ones, that the boss wants so-and-so to win... no... you vote for so-and-so because I'm from such-and-such and I don't want you to vote for... because if not, I'll fire you" (Carlos)

The Organic Law Against Racial Discrimination, published in the Official Gazette on December 19, 2011(12), promulgated with the aim of establishing adequate mechanisms to prevent, address, eradicate and punish racial discrimination in any of its manifestations, guaranteeing all persons and groups of persons the enjoyment and exercise of their rights and duties enshrined in the Constitution (13) (...), addressing discrimination on the basis of gender, age, political or sexual orientation that arise from the differences between men and women that are constructed at the social level, which restrict the human and civil rights of workers, to the development of their capacities based on their knowledge and attitudes and not on the basis of their age or family burden.

Productive–reproductive work relationship: applies to both

The predominant patriarchal culture assigns the great majority of women to family responsibilities, even when they have work responsibilities that occupy a large part of the day; they also perform domestic tasks, receive no help from family or other members, and men's participation is not very noticeable, as expressed by the prevention delegates and some delegates who, in this sense, state that they participate with their partner in household tasks:

"At home I have work and plenty of it, because many times I tell them: but help me!!! Because I get tired" (Emilia).

"Super exhausted. Of course. I am a very active person because I spend my life in a gym; for that reason, to release stress, but, of course, I keep working. I leave my job, but I keep working at

home”; “sometimes and reluctantly, but I do everything myself” (Yohana)¹

“I had periods when I had to work; I had a partner and um... I also tried to study, so I had to drop out of school because I can't do all the little things from 6 to 9 at night; I don't have enough time to do them all”; “Men come to be attended to.” (Carolina)

“We were 4 brothers with a machista upbringing. ... but I wipe, I wash, etc.” (Amabilis)

Measures to reconcile work and family responsibilities help prevent conflicts and avoid consequences for the worker's health or their exclusion from employment. Thus, in Convention 156 on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities (14), the States Parties recognize that, to achieve full equality between men and women, it is necessary to modify the traditional role of both men and women in society and in the family.

Gender relations

Conflict resolution is an important contribution to every relationship. Although there are physical differences between men and women, there must also be recognition of different ways of thinking, communicating, and acting with the same purpose: harmony and respect, as expressed by the male and female prevention delegates:

“There must be respect and collaboration between men and women” (Marlene)

“Everyone must contribute to solving the problems” (Freddy)

Gender and Occupational Health:

The introduction of the gender perspective in occupational safety and health implies, as Lamas (15) cites, “...recognizing that sexual difference is distinct from the attributions, ideas, representations, and social prescriptions that are constructed taking that sexual difference as a reference. It is evident that this difference constitutes the beginning of the complements that society needs; therefore, Dejours, cited by Acevedo (5), emphasizes the importance of gender relations at work as a component interacting with objective factors (the reality of the task) and subjective aspects (the reality of the unconscious). From the participants' discourse, the following subcategories emerged.

Gender bias at work

Biological differences between men and women will always exist, but they do not limit the skills and abilities of the individual as such, nor the real possibilities of carrying out any work activity, since there are tools and mechanisms that make it possible to complement that realization. This is how the male and female prevention delegates express it:

“Well, they don't see a woman in that field (Administrator) as able to defend herself in those environments, and so then, in that company they always hired men.” The reality is different. “A woman is more detail-oriented.... She doesn't leave loose ends” (Carolina)

“There are only two women in the office, and in the operator [role], all are men” (Yohana)

“At the plant, there are only men... There are no women at the plant, only in administration” (Amabilis)

“There are seven men in operations and three in administration” (Yampier)

“There are no women in my department... I work in the warehouse” (Marlene)

Perception of differentiated occupational risks: What do we protect ourselves from?

Not knowing or knowing little has the same impact: both affect the health of female and male prevention delegates. When workloads and the risks to which they are exposed—such as physical, chemical, ergonomic, and psychosocial risks—are evaluated, these risks may be as dangerous as those from which they are excluded by underestimating or overestimating them, resulting in expressions such as the following:

“...because of my height, they have told me: don't climb on the chair when fixing the bulletin board... I can be at risk when I plug in the computers because I unplug them every day; they make sparks, they tell me...” (Yohana).

“A culture of prevention and gender equality has been developed thanks to the new laws” (Carolina)

“...among the most important would be psychosocial risk, ... Another would also be commuting risk, but it would not be so important, as it is not very risky in their company because they have assigned transportation” (Freddy)

"...It has been useful to me for facing risk situations, the use of machinery, for example, the hammer mill, since it did not have a belt guard ... he was almost hit by the mill belt ... an accident is avoided" (Yampier)

Virilization of risks

Productive work is considered a matter of men, of the public domains that entail physical effort, challenges, courage, and aggressiveness—characteristics culturally identified with masculinity—but society continues to categorize men by strength and women by docility and weakness; thus, we find expressions such as:

"Women can indeed work here, ... but they have not come to look for work (charcoal maker)... because both women and men can do it; there is no strength, we do not lift weights, we do not do anything, what is needed there is skill, knowledge, and mentality; both women and men have it" (Amabilis)

"...or that she did not feel capable of handling it.... You know that being an administrator or administration manager in a company implies taking the lead..." (Carolina)

At present, for women, the very fact of going to work already entails a challenge: breaking with the rule of the male figure who provides, representations that have been social labels of roles in highly differentiated spheres (home and work), with a multiplicity of physical, emotional, and psychological demands.

Occupational Health and Safety Program

According to the Technical Standard of the Safety and Health Program (NT-01-2008)(16), this is a tool that enables the description of work processes, whether production or service; the identification and assessment of risks and hazardous processes; and work plans to address existing risks and hazardous processes. In the in-depth examination of the elements of Participation - Application that safeguard the exercise of the powers and attributions of the delegate and the female delegate for prevention, the participants' discourses evidenced that in their workplaces these elements had not been constructed, while others stated that they were in the process of construction.

Female and Male Prevention Delegates: Knowledge about Powers and Attributions

In the discourse of the Prevention Delegates, there is evidence of a strong weakness in the knowledge of their powers and attributions, despite the fact that the Organic Law on Prevention, Working Conditions and Environment (LOPCYMAT)(17), which was promulgated in 1986, and with the accentuated State policies of the Government of President Hugo Chávez, has been able to promote progress in human, social and labour matters, since May 2002. Subsequently, the new law was amended and published in Official Gazette No. 38.236 of 26 July 2005, which introduced important changes such as: inclusion as occupational accidents those that occur on the way to work and the applicability to the services of residential workers, and one of the main axes is: election of Prevention Delegates.

The activities and decisions that may be carried out in matters of occupational risk prevention are achieved through the exercise of this right; for it to be effective, it must be channeled through Prevention Delegates, as a collective right of all workers; it is a right, not an obligation, to be so. It emerges from the information provided by the female prevention delegates regarding their experiences in the exercise that they do not possess knowledge of the powers and their attributions; a delegate was doubtful when asked the question, and the others express themselves as follows:

"I have been a delegate for a year, everything is handled perfectly." (Yohana)

"I have been a delegate for 2 years,... well, excellent, because when the voting took place, ..., we were 4 people, among whom there were 4 men and a woman—me. And despite everything, I was the person they voted for; they did not vote for the men." (Marlene)

"...I have been a delegate for 8 months; as this is recent, we are just starting out in what the role of delegate is going to be, preparing ourselves according to the courses that the delegate training is coordinating for us, and yet, yes, I see myself at a relatively good beginning for what this role is going to be" (Carolina)

On the other hand, the prevention delegates described themselves as somewhat more informed and aware of the task that their colleagues assigned to them upon being elected:

"...I have been a delegate for 3 months, and well, so far it has been little because of the time I have" (Freddy).

"I have been a delegate for 8 years; I have repeated... I would like all workers to have some responsibility or ... knowledge of what prevention delegates are and what Inpsasel regulations are,

because that way they know more calmly how to carry out their work, ..., how to carry out production in a safe way, and how to avoid unsafe conditions..." (Amabilis)

"I have approximately 2 and a half years as a delegate... we are creating and organizing another committee because the employer delegate retired..." (Yampier).

"I have 8 years as a prevention delegate... they have been good, trying to balance everything for the benefit of the worker, prevent accidents, and hold talks with workers to maintain harmony in the work environment" (Carlos).

Gender perspective training: an unfinished process

A gender-sensitive approach recognizes that, because men and women perform different work, play different roles in society, and have different expectations and responsibilities, women and men may be exposed to physical and psychological risks that in certain cases require different control and prevention measures. This approach also improves understanding of how the gender-based division of labor, biological differences, employment patterns, social roles, and social structures together contribute to gender-specific occupational risks.

For occupational safety and health policies and strategies to be effective for both women and men, this dimension must be taken into account, and such policies must be based on more detailed information on the relationship between occupational health and gender roles.

Knowledge of the Gender Perspective in Occupational Health and Safety

Female and male prevention delegates are the protagonists of social changes in the field of occupational safety and health, and the search for gender balance and equality lies in their knowledge; therefore, it arises as an emerging category to which they respond as follows:

"I think that the gender perspective is the equality of men and women at work" (Emilia)

"The gender perspective refers to equality between men and women" (Yohana)

"...does not understand what gender perspective is" (Marlene)

"I think it is gender equality, that is, that every man and every woman can perform any type of function regardless of whether they are a man or a woman" (Freddy)

"...I have heard the gender perspective in courses and on social media" (Amabilis)

"I had not heard the term gender perspective" (Yampier)

"I do not know about gender perspective" (Carlos)

"...I have heard very little, right... the little I have read and seen on television on the occasion of Women's Day..." (Carolina)

Based on the informants' testimonies, it became evident that there is a historical lack of awareness of the achievements women have made regarding the recognition of their rights, the legislation that has been enacted, and the mechanisms to enforce them.

Programs with gender content as a tool

This arises from the researcher's intention to learn about the interviewees' assessment regarding the incorporation of a gender perspective into the training they receive at their workplaces, yielding the following:

"...we must open up meaning for men so that they help us" (Emilia)

"The gender perspective must be incorporated into training for a change in the employer's awareness... with this we are also going to complement that part where there are many failures in our country, ah that we are still in diapers with respect to this issue" (Carolina)

"Well, no, I think that is already a mindset... Men and women have the same capacity to perform at work" (Freddy)

"The gender perspective is a tool for respect and trust towards workers without distinction" (Yampier)

"Women can perform in a job better than a man ... I am a feminist... of course, discrimination per se based on the so-called weaker sex would be greatly avoided, which is supposedly what women are called, and that should not be the case; it would be in a positive way." (Carlos)

"...of course yes, there is no question about it, there is no discussion, ... because a male worker or a female worker, with a gender perspective, in a company, as long as a relationship exists, communication between them, as long as equality exists, they are calm, ... both in the family, at home and at work, and I think it must exist at all levels... (.)" (Amabilis)

The incorporation of a gender perspective into occupational health and safety training for prevention delegates can achieve the reconciliation of work, personal life, and family if it is addressed at all levels as a response to a new social reality and to the incorporation of women into the

workforce. Therefore, it is necessary to address this issue in compliance with the regulations and legislative reforms enacted for this purpose.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research show the persistence of a marked sexual division of labor, expressed in the differentiated assignment of positions, the feminization and masculinization of certain jobs, and the virilization of risks. This result is consistent with what is proposed by Acevedo (18), who argues that labor flexibilization deepens the segmentation of work according to sex and its consequences for the health of female workers. Along the same lines, Acevedo (5) describes the sexual division of labor as the assignment of occupations and tasks based on biological and cultural attributes, while Lamas (15) warns that sexual difference is distinct from the social attributions constructed from it. The discourses of the female and male prevention delegates confirm that these constructions continue to operate in the workplaces studied.

Regarding training, the results show that prevention delegates receive precarious, sporadic training focused on operational aspects of industrial safety, insufficient for the full exercise of their powers and duties. This evidence contrasts with the conception of training as a systematic, humanistic, and permanent process proposed by Vargas Zúñiga (10), Buckley and Caple (8), and Del Pozo Delgado (9). In this regard, the International Labour Organization (19) emphasizes that trade union training with a gender perspective is an indispensable tool for women and men workers to recognize differentiated risks and transform their working conditions.

A particularly relevant finding is the lack of awareness that female delegates express regarding their faculties and attributions, in contrast to male delegates, who appeared to be somewhat better informed. This pattern is consistent with Chourio (20), who demonstrated the low participation and representation of women in the management of Venezuelan trade union organizations, which relegates their involvement in decision-making spaces. Such inequality limits the transformative potential that the figure of the male and female prevention delegate holds within the occupational health and safety system.

In the gender and occupational health dimension, participants showed a differentiated and often underestimated perception of risks, as well as scarce recognition of their repercussions on health. Similar results were reported by Pérez (21) in his study on the gender perspective in the knowledge and practices of female and male occupational health specialists, where gender bias conditions the identification and assessment of risks. This confirms that the invisibilization of risks associated with female work and the overestimation of those linked to male work constitute barriers to equitable prevention.

The data also reveal a widespread lack of knowledge of the concept of gender perspective and the absence of gender content in the training programs developed in workplaces. In response, Seda (22) demonstrated that the incorporation of gender training improves attitudes and capacity to address inequalities, which supports the need to integrate these contents into programs aimed at prevention delegates. Accordingly, Colás and Jiménez (6) point out that critical gender awareness is what facilitates the contextualized analysis of situations and the transformation of reality.

Finally, the difficulties of reconciling the work-health-family relationship, expressed primarily by the female delegates through double presence, point to the need to mainstream the gender perspective in occupational safety and health policies. Stiegler (23) defines this strategy—gender mainstreaming—as the systematic incorporation of the conditions and needs of women and men in all decisions, while Convention 156 of the International Labour Organization (14) recognizes family co-responsibility as a condition for equality. The awareness-raising proposed by Salas (2) and the gender perspective in occupational health and safety set out by Acevedo (1) therefore constitute the path for female and male prevention delegates to fully exercise their transformative role.

CONCLUSIONS

After conducting the research and applying the interview script, the information provided by the participants revealed that training programs developed in workplaces do not include a gender perspective that allows the work activities of male and female workers to be visualized under equal conditions.

In order to exercise the powers and faculties that the Organic Law on Prevention, Working Conditions and Environment (Lopcyamat)(17) and its Partial Regulation establish for workers' re-

presentatives, it is necessary to reveal those differences marked within the organization of work in society.

The influence of the activity carried out by male workers on that carried out by female workers is verified, and there is also greater demand and high responsibility among the latter due to the role of double presence; the repercussions on health are not yet perceived beyond what is socially imposed and what should really be considered dangerous for both men and women: the risks to which they are exposed and how work processes affect health.

Unfortunately, there is a marked sexual division of labor, as well as a lack of awareness on the part of female workers regarding their potential as Delegates to actively participate in the change fostered by the role they must exercise; this is why the content proposed by male and female Delegates aimed at developing training with a gender perspective is not evident.

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