



UNIVERSIDAD METROPOLITANA DE CIENCIAS DE LA  
EDUCACIÓN FACULTAD DE HISTORIA, GEOGRAFÍA Y  
LETRAS  
DEPARTAMENTO DE INGLÉS

VIOLENCIA INVISIBLE: VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO Y SUS MATICES EN LA  
EDUCACIÓN CHILENA

SEMINARIO PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE PROFESOR/A DE INGLÉS

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## **Resumen**

Esta tesis presenta un estudio sobre la violencia de género y sus matices en la educación chilena. Si bien el movimiento feminista desde 2018 ha generado una mayor atención pública sobre la violencia de género en las escuelas, aún queda mucho por aprender sobre los mecanismos subyacentes que permiten que este tipo de violencia persista. En consecuencia, esta investigación tiene como objetivo caracterizar las formas en que este fenómeno se desarrolla y se manifiesta dentro de las instituciones educativas de Santiago de Chile. A través de una investigación cualitativa, y utilizando la metodología de la teoría fundamentada, este estudio busca descubrir las experiencias que a menudo son pasadas por alto o descartadas de educadoras que han enfrentado violencia de género en su entorno laboral. Para ello, se realizaron entrevistas en profundidad a diez profesoras chilenas. En general, los resultados mostraron una fuerte presencia de la violencia de género en la educación chilena, siendo las profesoras un grupo afectado negativamente por ella. Algunas de las consecuencias para las profesoras son el agotamiento emocional y el desánimo profesional. Además, se identificó a los estudiantes y sus tutores como los agentes con mayor probabilidad de ejercer la violencia. Esta tesis y su análisis de las dolorosas experiencias abren camino para futuras investigaciones y acciones en un área clave de la sociedad.

**Palabras clave:** violencia de género, profesoras, violencia en educación.

## **Abstract**

This thesis presents a study of gender-based violence and its nuances in Chilean education. While the feminist movement since 2018 has brought greater public attention to gender violence in schools, there is still much to learn about the underlying mechanisms which allow this type of violence to persist. Accordingly, this research aims to characterize ways in which this phenomenon develops and manifests itself within educational institutions in Santiago, Chile. Through qualitative research, and using the methodology of grounded theory, this study seeks to uncover the often overlooked or dismissed experiences of female educators who have faced gender-based violence in their work environment. For this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted to ten Chilean female teachers. Overall, the results showed a strong presence of gender-based violence in Chilean education, being female teachers a group

negatively affected by it. Some of the consequences for female teachers are emotional exhaustion and professional discouragement. In addition, students and their tutors were identified as the agents most likely to exercise violence. This thesis and its analysis of raw experiences open the way for future research and action in a key area of society.

**Keywords:** gender-based violence, female teachers, violence in education.

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## Chapter 1: Problem Statement

### Research Problem

Historically, women have faced significant challenges across various aspects of their lives because of their gender. This is evident through the persistent stereotypes, limited opportunities, and widespread discrimination encountered by women throughout society. That said, the case of men to this day proves itself completely different, garnering privilege which for the most part goes unrecognized and its existence denied (Bourdieu, 2000). Because of this, feminist scholars have globally examined the many inequalities found in work, wealth, privacy, reproductive rights, and victimization from violence which according to Dowd (2010) are key areas of life where disparity related to gender is to be found. Thus, with professional fields being such an intersectional aspect of life, it becomes evident that they are not immune to this kind of prejudice. Specifically in the field of education, female teachers tend to experience a distinct reality compared to their male counterparts, which hinders the optimal development of their professional and personal life (Eyzaguirre and Vergara, 2023); with the root of these gender differences lying in cultural norms that relegate exclusive responsibility for the education and care of children to women, as stated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023). Similarly, teachers' gender influences their performance in the classroom. In this regard, Imran (2024) stated that while male teachers have historically been considered to have better classroom management skills than their female colleagues, the latter are characterized by being closer as they promote harmonious relationships between students. This comparison shows how gender roles still play a fundamental role and the urgent need to leave them aside in order to build a fairer environment free of discrimination and stereotypes, which, as has been shown, point directly towards women.

Taking the previous into account, even though progress has been made to vindicate women in general aspects of their lives, gender issues are still firmly present in many professional fields, which in turn dictates the necessity of making understanding around this topic as much as research allows. According to UNESCO (2023), efforts are necessary to ensure women's stable roles in their workforce as discrimination is a common reason for them to leave their teaching profession, thus giving more reason to investigate and tackle this concern. In

relation to that, a study carried out by Kreuzfeld and Seibt (2022) showed that when going through complicated situations there is comparable exhaustion among male and female teachers, however it is women who have a greater tendency to be unable to recover. This finding is alarming since, as previously mentioned, it is the female gender that is most exposed to discriminatory acts, which in turn can bring with them numerous direct negative consequences for their general wellbeing. In addition, it is noteworthy that this problem does not only impair women, as it also impacts students, the quality of the educational system, and therefore society at large. Consequently, this investigation focusing on the female teachers of Chile, seeks to contribute new insights into the gender violence phenomenon that affects many educators daily, with the goal of influencing and improving educational practices.

### **Previous Research on the Topic**

Recent data on Chilean school violence indicates that teachers victims of violence -whether through personal insults or physical attacks- are female in great majority (Zurita & Quiroz, 2023). This pattern suggests an issue of gendered violence in Chile as female teachers are disproportionately targeted more within educational settings in comparison to their male counterparts.

In a similar vein, female teachers have been stated to exercise discredited careers, where their professional fields are directly affected by gender discourse of feminine subordination, and administrative preferences for male colleagues (Couceiro, 2018). Authors like Dunne et al. (2006) refer to these implicit actions of gender violence, in schools of the developing world, as constituting institutional practices which in turn create hierarchies. To illustrate, an observational study done in Colombia (Castelao-Huerta, 2020) determined that the lives of female professors have been unavoidably affected by habits of subtle gender violence, adopted by male colleagues, which have stemmed from the implementation of neoliberal policies within the University of Colombia. Also underscoring the need to examine how institutional policies, and administrations, can influence gender violence in educational settings.

Students in this regard have been noted to play socially influenced roles by replicating specific violent behaviors (Jackson et al., 2015), being influenced by social norms attained by

their peers (Jiménez-Moya et al., 2022), and normalizing acts of sexual violence (Leach, 2003). Additionally, parental roles have been highlighted as essential in the moral foundations of adolescents, and in the tackling of moral problems or behaviours found by these students (Daud et al., 2023), specifically from recent generations such as generation Z (Medez & Gayoles, 2021).

In order to address gender violence, research suggests a need for a whole school approach against this phenomenon by implementing laws and policies that understand the contexts at hand (Parkes, 2016), empowering women, strengthening egalitarian masculinities, and bystander training (Prezenszky et al., 2018). Teachers have also been stated in the literature as greatly benefiting from meaningful bonds with their colleagues when the focus is their wellbeing (Maas, et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, previous research regarding the consequences of gender violence in the Chilean context predominantly tends to focus on discrimination between students and the institution. Surveys reveal that 24.7% of students have faced one or more kinds of sexual violence, 34.4% of them feeling discriminated by gender stereotypes, but highlighting staff instead of peers as the main source of discrimination (Vallejos et al., 2018). This creates a notable gap in studies addressing the experiences of female teachers across primary, secondary, and higher education. This lack of insights suggests that nowadays, in a highly dynamic and changing social environment, there is a critical need for research that explores how gender violence affects female educators specifically, what aspects of their lives are affected the most, and what factors they can identify as contributing to this violence.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

A comprehensive understanding of gender violence in educational settings requires an examination of several key concepts, topics, and research surrounding every dimension of the matter. Therefore, this section composes the structure by which analysis and discussion are guided regarding the collected qualitative data of the investigation. The framework begins by examining the topic of violence and its meaning, focusing then on its correlation with power dynamics, gender, and its cultural significance. A closer look is then taken on education, and how gender violence manifests itself and is responded to throughout its many dimensions, from interactions between the community to the very structure of the institution, and policies surrounding the coexistence of its workers. This framework provides a thorough look into the complex institutional, interpersonal, and societal elements which play a role in the execution of gender violence against female teachers, contributing a critical lens through which their experiences can be properly understood.

### **Violence**

Violence is a complex concept that can be understood from several perspectives, encompassing multiple definitions, and levels of interpretation that depend on the morality of its contextual actors. Despite its complexity, the focus of this thesis shifts from a broad understanding of violence to a more specific and refined conceptualization of the topic associated with gender. The first general approach to understanding this subject leads to the stated notion of Hannah Arendt in *On Violence*, relating the concept of power to violence as the substance of a means to an end (1970, p. 4). Violence in this regard is exemplified as a blatant form of power, which she perceives as an instrument to exercise control:

Violence, finally, as I have said, is distinguished by its instrumental character. Phenomenologically, it is close to strength, since the implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it. (Arendt, 1970, p. 46)

Another author, Zizek (2008), addresses the concept of SOS (Subjective violence, Objective violence and Symbolic violence) in order to understand the phenomenon of violence, using terms closely related to the ambits of this investigation. Subjective violence is defined as “...enacted by social agents, evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses, fanatical crowds.” (Zizek, 2008, p. 11). This type of violence is understood as having quiet perpetrators, yet remains the most explicit out of the three. Conversely, objective violence is stated as “...no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their "evil" intentions but is purely "objective," systemic, anonymous” (Zizek, 2008, p. 13), which due to its subtle nature of attribution, it is much more complex to recognize. Furthermore, objective violence is divided by Zisek into symbolic violence and systemic violence, as while systemic violence emerges from the pursuit of efficiency in the ways the system works, symbolic violence can be manifested in language in all of its formats.

In a more pragmatic approach to the phenomenon, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, whether actual or threatened, against an individual, or a group. This action can lead to psychological harm, injury, death, deprivation, or hindered development of a person (2002). The WHO definition states a relationship between the act of exerting violence and the intention of causing damage, while also adding the notion of power, which relates to differences in social influence, or control among the people involved. The concept of power between different people and how this plays a role in the excerpt of violence is a notion present deeper in Arendt and Zizek.

These concepts of violence take the idea of agents exercising violence and categorize it in implicit and explicit ways of manifestation; also characterizing power as a means to execute violence. A portrayal is made in depth and complexity which directly allows a connection to the most prominent concept of this investigation, gender-based violence, allowing to explain how these concepts weave a way for its existence while taking into account factors of great importance for today’s society, such as gender and control. Therefore, it becomes worthwhile to address violence from a gender perspective moving forward. According to the author, Rita Segato (2020), violence against women happens in a structure constituted by two systems, the system of status, and the system of contract where women have a double insertion, as tribute or ally. In this sense, Segato provides a framework for viewing violence as an intricate, systemic phenomenon that perpetuates itself through an unstable dynamic involving both victims - who often occupy double roles - and perpetrators.

## **Gender-Based Violence**

Once examined the various definitions and connotations of violence, the area of focus shifts to gender, where within private and public spheres, this phenomenon can be manifested and perpetuated in several ways. Building on the previously stated topology, these conceptual frameworks are examined in their specific manifestation with gender.

Similarly to the works of Arendt (1970) and Žižek (2008) on violence as a power tool implicitly or explicitly executed, the European Institute for Gender Equality (2024) states that gender-based violence (GBV) can be categorized into many formats of reproduction, including the use of physical force to assault, or deprivation of liberty; sexual acts performed without consent or by force; the use of psychological violence through coercion, defamation, verbal abuse, or harassment; economic control by restricting access to financial resources or education; and emotional abuse, among many others. GBV, in that sense, constitutes a phenomenon of easy reproduction and normalization due to the structural inequalities around women, and the varying ways of its execution.

Krahé (2017) in her article titled *Violence against Women*, defines this type of violence as one based on a societal consensus about roles and rights for men and women. Violence is understood as a social construction where the two prevalent forms against women are physical and sexual victimization, either by intimate partners or outside any kind of relationship. Men engage in these aggressive behaviors at different levels, as a society at the macro-level involving social structure and value systems, at a dyadic micro-level of relationship functioning and situational interactions, and at an individual level shaped by social, economic, and health factors. She concludes her research by stating this is a worldwide problem, one for which scientific evidence is crucial in the development of theory-based, effective measures of prevention and intervention.

Nevertheless, the importance of understanding gender-based violence as a real problem comes from the implications of its existence and the consequences of its execution against women. The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research team (SRH) published a report in 2018, under the supervision of the WHO, regarding global and regional estimates of violence against women, this report highlighted the urgency of the issue as a significant health concern for women as: 38% of all estimated femicides were committed by intimate partners, 35% of

women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non partner sexual violence, and 7% of women have experienced sexual assault by someone other than their partner. The report also emphasizes the consequences of the latter, since victims of sexual assault are 2.3 times more likely to have an alcohol use disorder and 2.6 times more likely to experience depression or anxiety.

### **Structural violence.**

While physical and sexual assaults are the most widely recognized types of violence against women, they often overshadow other equally significant types like psychological violence (Dokkedahl et al., 2019). A type of violence involving behaviors that inflict emotional harm and distress. In Chile, 36% of women report experiencing psychological violence at some point in their lives, while 16% have experienced physical violence, and 7% sexual violence (División Políticas de Igualdad, 2018). These kinds of violence commonly occur in private settings and are considered a type of direct violence (Webel & Galtung, 2007). However, not every kind of harm committed is visible, or directly attributable to one category or another, which is why concepts such as structural violence are important to understand phenomena like discrimination and gender violence.

Throughout many decades, numerous theorists and researchers have inquired into the problem of structural violence. Yet, the first to use the term 55 years ago in his book ‘Violence, Peace, and Peace Research’ was Johan Galtung (1969) who later described it as hidden ‘violent processes’ ingrained in the social system through unequal circumstances exemplified as disparities in the distribution of income, and educational opportunities among other aspects (Webel & Galtung, 2007). Furthermore, structural violence can be harmful to fundamental human rights such as freedom and identity needs, legitimized by different aspects of culture; some in the shape of religion, ideologies, language, and even forms of art leading to problems like indoctrination, repression, and alienation (Webel & Galtung, 2007) arising demoralized people stripped of their dignity. We understand structural violence as the way social structures and institutions create and maintain inequalities and injustices, causing harm to certain groups of people, such as women. This kind of violence is present in different and perhaps unexpected contexts due to an underlying component of transversality, which encompasses many dimensions surrounding an individual to understand why it is that this person is being harmed, discriminated against, or attacked.

These authors offer clarity on the definition of violence and its kinds, yet do not respond to the problematization of the gender component in structural violence needed for this investigation. Weibel and Galtung (2007) position sexism as a violent process right next to matters such as unemployment, racism, injustice, poverty, and others. Hence this perspective restricts sexism only to societal structures.

In previous literature, authors such as Mañeru et al. (1996) have suggested the importance of delving deeper into the significance of being a man or a woman in this (patriarchal) society. In this work, the positioning of gender issues is addressed as being overshadowed by other detrimental social issues instead of being understood from a perspective of intersectional awareness; a conflicting case since the difference of sexes concerns “the mere meaning of existence” (Linze, 1991, as cited in Mañeru et al., 1996). This point of view could be made sense by Eyzaguirre and Vergara (2023), whose work on Chile’s disparity, exhibits a significant gender dimension, with women experiencing greater economic disadvantage compared to men due to lower workforce participation and reduced wages. Thus, as the position of women in different social issues tends to be more precarious than that of men, the matter of gender violence against women can be understood as rooted on a deeper structural level.

Nevertheless, violence against women found deep in societal structures is not new information for the feminist movement. As stated by De Beauvoir (1949) “This world, always belonging to men, still retains the form they have given it.” In other words, despite women's ongoing efforts for equality and the progress they have made over the years, societal structures and positions of power remain predominantly controlled by men. It can be argued that these enduring patriarchal structures continue to shape modern society in ways that subtly limit women's freedom and influence, affecting women in silently unfazed ways while restricting their freedom.

### **Psychological and moral violence.**

As mentioned previously, violence does not have a single way of manifesting itself nor does it solely take place in a specific context. In that sense, contrary to the visibility that characterizes physical violence, psychological violence silently affects women in diverse

aspects of their lives. From that perspective, the feminist anthropologist Rita Segato has greatly contributed to the development of a broad and complex understanding of gender violence, including the psychological aspect of it. In that sense, Segato (2003) coined the concept of moral violence to refer to psychological violence and established that it is subtle in nature, diffuse, and even when in several cases it is neither conscious nor deliberate, involves emotional aggression. In that regard, she describes that this type of violence can be perpetuated without verbal attacks, manifesting itself with gestures, attitudes and looks. Due to all these characteristics, it is established that psychological violence is the aspect least focused on by awareness and prevention campaigns in opposition to violence against women.

In line manner, Segato (2003) explains that husbands, fathers, brothers, teachers, bosses or co-workers usually perpetrate this oppressive behavior. The latter could be related to the theory presented by another Latin American feminist anthropologist, Marcela Lagarde (2005) which establishes that the relationships between men and women are highly aggressive and expressed in different ways by both. On the one hand, men exercise violence, and on the other, women suffer it with obedience and resignation. According to Lagarde (2005), the strength of men and the weakness of women do not come from their bodies but from the place they have in society which is determined by their gender. This reality creates an evident disparity in which it is possible to identify who are the victims and the perpetrators. In that sense, Segato (2016) states that patriarchy, or gender relationship based on inequality, is the oldest and most permanent political structure of humanity. From that point of view, the author also mentions that gender is the elemental historical configuration of all power in the species, and consequently, of all violence.

Closely related to the above, Segato (2003) also stated the eight most common forms of moral violence in Latin America. In the first place, the author mentioned three ways in which control is manifested as a way of violence: economic, social, and movability control. Primarily, it is established that economic control is perpetuated by the coercion of freedom through economic dependence. Similarly, social control is manifested by hindering relationships with friends and family. The last one is movability control, which the author defines as the curtailment of the freedom to leave home or circulate certain physical spaces. On the other hand, contempt is also a common form of violence. In this case, Segato highlights moral, aesthetic, and sexual contempt. In that sense, moral contempt manifests by the use of terms of accusation or suspicion through insults or jokes, as well as inhibiting the

freedom to choose clothing or makeup. Likewise, aesthetic contempt is defined as humiliation because of physical aspects. In line, sexual contempt is the disrespectful attitude or rejection of feminine desire. Finally, Segato (2003) mentions two forms of disqualification: intellectual and professional. When it comes to intellectual disqualification, it is described as the depreciation of women's intellectual capacity. Similarly, professional disqualification was defined as the attribution of inferior capacity and lack of reliability regarding the performance of women in their workplaces.

In relation to the latter, Couceiro (2018) stated that patriarchal tradition tends to discredit professions that are mostly feminized, such as teaching. By the same, it is mentioned that the value of women is not recognized socially to the same extent as that of their male colleagues. From that perspective, Couceiro (2018) also stated that since the incorporation of women into education, they have been influenced by a gender discourse characterized by subordination, docility and care for others. In addition, the author highlighted that although female labor inclusion has grown, it mostly takes place in the sectors that are the lowest paid and most discredited. In that line, it is possible to point out how female teachers are victims of psychological violence in the form of which Segato (2003) defined as intellectual and professional disqualification. When teachers experience violence, they suffer direct negative consequences in several areas of their lives. According to Berlanda et al. (2019), these situations diminish well-being, impacting physical and emotional health. Even though this field is the one of interest for this thesis, it is necessary to mention that this is only one of numerous contexts in which this type of violence against women manifests itself.

### **Symbolic violence.**

Conceptualized as a social phenomenon, and through many forms, violence can profoundly affect victims for reasons often misunderstood when the roles of social actors are overlooked. Understanding these dynamics of violence then becomes essential for characterizing incidents of male-perpetrated abuse. Pierre Bourdieu (2000), describes "male domination" as a form of violence that does not always manifest physically, highlighting an insidious nature of power dynamics often overlooked, in turn allowing insights into underlying structures of abuse.

For Bourdieu, symbolic violence is not something that can be easily observed; rather, it is manifested in the fundamental ways individuals express themselves and their feelings toward

others. It reveals itself through the imposition of one's beliefs and values over others, exerting power or authority in subtle yet profound ways. Which in similar terms to Segato's (2016) notion of gender violence, allows for the attribution of patriarchal morals to symbolic violence endured by women.

Moreover, distinctively exploring aspects of misrecognition, condescension, consent and complicity, Thapar-Björkert et al. (2016) concludes in their research that "...the mechanisms of symbolic violence produce, reproduce and legitimate power relations in everyday practices of agents." Also highlighting the possibility of more tangible forms of violence to take place as a result of these invisible conditions, these authors underscore the critical importance of recognizing and addressing symbolic violence as a precursor to more overt forms of abuse.

In this regard, an article about honour-related killings of women in Europe, using Bourdieu's concept, explains these specific incidents of symbolic violence and masculine domination (Grzyb, 2016). These killings are characterized as occurring at the hands of male individuals seeking to protect an status quo they deem in danger while using lethal physical violence. The author concludes that the existence of violence against women has become a manifestation of a different crisis regarding traditional masculine values, as "Patriarchal ideology in the mindsets of men is perceived as endangered when the surrounding social reality no longer corresponds and the dominated group have access to more social, economical and symbolic resources/capital."

On education, literature has also been written in this matter. Such as, on exploring the disciplinary practices and symbolic violence used on pre-service teachers in their training, and how this mirrors their relationship with students, where Toshalis (2009) uncovers a direct link between the formation of pre-service teachers and their mechanisms of discipline employed. The study concludes that due to constraints around the development of teachers, and a lack of opportunities to find alternatives, they become increasingly obsessed overtime with the necessity to maintain class control instead of inspiring achievement; reproducing now in their classrooms the symbolic violence previously endured through their years of schooling.

In a related study of symbolic violence in education, Loulou & Selatnia (2023) examine the levels of this enacted phenomenon at a secondary school in Ain Sennour, Souk Ahras,

specifically related to gender. Using three dimensions of study reading symbols, signs, and meanings in student speech, their findings indicate a high level of symbolic violence based on gender. The authors highlight the importance of addressing these kinds of hidden violence as their impact for individual development creates a very real problem for women.

Nevertheless, gender and symbolic violence are not a thoroughly explored problem in research, with most studies and investigations focusing on specific aspects of it instead of characterizing a general framework of gender-based symbolic violence. The most relevant recent works surround the female political world (Bardall, 2019), and the dehumanization of migrant women (Hourani et al., 2021), both maintaining a concluding focus on how fundamental rights are denied for women due to hidden processes of discrimination, and the self-perpetuating cycles of violence in structural processes.

The critical duty of understanding symbolic violence in literature, and its elements of male domination, allows insight into what role it plays with gender violence. The characterization of this phenomenon focuses on the hidden implications of its existence for the wellbeing of women, as it perpetuates actions, routines, and structures that when addressed or put under pressure, can sometimes incite cycles of direct physical or psychological violence.

### **Violence in Education**

According to UNESCO school violence refers to all forms of violence in or outside of the classroom, around schools, on the way to or from school, as well as in online and other digital environments. (Safe Learning Environments: Preventing and Addressing Violence in and Around School, 2024). Hughes (2019) mentions that the structure of education, and its various iterations and contexts, create systems that are violent or may lead to some form of violence by the people involved or implied in it. It can be inferred that education may be a setting where violence occurs. School violence may involve students, teachers or others in the school community as perpetrators (UNESCO, 2024). This violence in education manifests itself in various forms from physical attacks, verbal abuse, structural violence, psychological violence and other aggressive behaviors. Research indicates that educators themselves can be both victims and perpetrators of such violence, highlighting the complexity of the issue in school settings.

## **Gender violence in schools.**

It has long been acknowledged that gender violence occurs in educational settings, a fact that has sparked discussions in several research areas. While some individuals claim that it does not exist, others argue that, nowadays, it is more pervasive than ever before. But before examining schools as sites of gender violence, it is essential to consider how they function as gendered institutions, as noted by Dunne, Humphreys, and Leach (2006). From this perspective, it is argued that daily life in schools is influenced by the norms of interpersonal interactions and by both formal and informal rules—unwritten guidelines that shape behavior, as well as the institutional traditions and cultures that arise from the development and reinforcement of these relational rules. These dynamics often do not align completely with official policies and legislation related to education. The authors also, importantly, point out the dynamics of these settings for gender violence by characterizing the institution itself:

The school as a social arena is marked by asymmetrical power relations that are enacted not only through gender but also through age and authority; additional social indicators may be ethnicity, disability and language. All are fundamental to school experiences and the quality of school life. Within the institutional culture of the school, there are norms of interaction and explicit and implicit rules and codes that guide behavior which are reenacted and re-enforced in the everyday life of the school. Within school, the ‘gender regime’ is constructed through everyday, ‘taken for granted’ routine practices (Dunne, Humphreys, Leach, 2003, pp. 3).

Having defined and established the existence of gender violence in schools, the authors delve deeper by categorizing gender-based violence manifestations into two broad categories (Dunne et al., 2003): explicit gender violence, which integrates all forms of sexual violence, and implicit gender violence which includes bullying, corporal punishment, psychological and verbal abuse which hold a gendered dimension. This might happen, for instance, when teachers make fun of girls in front of the class because of the way they sit or the clothes they wear.

In Chile, a study by “Fundación Semilla” (2018) looked into gender violence in schools. It showed that 24.7% of students faced one or more kinds of sexual violence at school; 34.4%

felt discriminated against because of gender stereotypes, and 30% of students in municipal high schools stated not having sexual education. Non-heterosexual students felt more discrimination from school staff than from classmates; while female students experienced gender-stereotypical reinforcement four times more than male students. Only 7.5% of those who faced discrimination sought help from a teacher or counselor, and 52.5% thought that the ways to handle coexistence issues were not effective. All stated data indicates that gender violence still remains a significant and ineffectively addressed issue in the Chilean context.

In the face of all literature indicating a need for addressing the problem of gender violence within education, a descriptive analysis of data emerges regarding gender violence prevention in these contexts, including both Brazilian and international databases. Conclusions reached state that effective measures come from “...working with the whole school community, empowering women and strengthening egalitarian masculinities, bystander training, and implementing laws and policies” (Prezenszky et al., 2018). The proper preparation of teachers and professionals, the implementation of specific laws for specific issues, and the creation of support networks are highlighted as crucial elements to overcome gender-based violence. In that sense, teachers benefit greatly from cultivating strong and meaningful bonds with their colleagues as it fosters better wellbeing (Maas, et al., 2022).

### **Subtle violence in schools.**

In 2006 a literature review which sought to assess current research on gender violence in schools of the developing world, defined implicit gender violence as relating to “...institutional practices that produce a gender separation and hierarchy.” (Dunne et al., 2006); accepted as a normal part of the schooling landscape, while still remaining harmful to female teachers and students. The authors highlight how “...both implicit and explicit gender violence are manifestations of gender/sexual power that need to be explored at a deeper level and within the specific social configurations of local contexts.”

14 years later an observational study done in Colombia, exploring within a specific social context subtle violence experienced by female professors, defined this type of violence as one constituted by “...actions that are difficult to point out as acts that seek to control and/or harm the professors, but have a detrimental effect on their vitality in less obvious ways.”

(Castelao-Huerta, 2020). Emphasizing how this type of violence is often invisible and considered a natural aspect of social relations within the neoliberal context. The institutional practices that facilitate implicit gender violence in this study are explored as what Dunne et al referred to as manifestations of gender power within specific social configurations. To drive this idea further, Castelao-Huerta cites Rita Segato (2003), highlighting the importance of understanding violence as a structural phenomenon embedded in culture, an important perspective that allows the understanding of practices of subtle violence executed within what they refer to as neoliberal culture, one which tends to adopt a meritocratic front to excuse acts of gender violence as simple judgment of effectiveness.

### **Violent practices.**

A recent study published by Colegio de Profesoras y Profesores (2023) reports that most teachers victims of violence in Chilean schools are female; with the most exhibited type of violence in the survey being personal insults and attacks, counting up to 1674 reported only by female teachers. After the publication of said data, La Tercera magazine (Paula, 2023) interviewed a teacher who participated in the survey while working at a public establishment, allowing her to voice how school culture tends to rely respect and order on male authority over female; a problem stemming from the perception of female teachers as being weak and beneath male students, who in large groups adopt misogynistic practices in an effort to control their environment.

These practices of aggression adopted by students within urban schools are analyzed by cross-sectional studies like the one performed by Jackson et al. (2015) in the United States, where it was determined that students benefited socially among their peers when their form of aggressive behavior fit with what was normative in the classroom social context. Similarly, a correlational study conducted by Jiménez-Moya et al. (2022) in Chile using four establishments of diverse social contexts determined that norms expressed by peers hold more meaningful influence on students' beliefs than would norms stated by the establishments themselves; expressing the power of social norms as potential tools for social change that untouched can allow the flourishing of harmful standards among students. Both studies highlight the importance of understanding social norms in the school environment and

their power over students' actions, as these are present in every human dimension and pave the way for what is considered proper behavior (Schultz et al., 2007).

In other parts of the developing world, as is the case of African schools, gender violence can also be seen as a phenomenon that embeds itself deep within the roots of school culture and practices. Leach (2003) explores in a study of African schools how sexual assault and practices of gender violence can be normalized and accepted as part of the school landscape, and potentially due to an absence of educational interventions, in society as a whole. It was determined that, through peer pressure, and misguided tutoring, male students accepted these customs and conformed to them, following stereotypical behaviors of dominance that made girls vulnerable to sexual and psychological violence. It is concluded that the failure to address these issues within African schools "...has allowed antisocial and abusive behavior to flourish unchecked and to be institutionalized.". In order to address this situation, the author points to the necessity of a whole school approach, where teachers need to question their own experiences with these topics before tutoring them in classrooms, proper training on this role is a necessity of the curriculum.

In addition to these practices, and specifically within professional fields, a relevant aspect of gender violence tends to be that of ageism. A survey conducted by Women of influence (2024) determined that this form of discrimination directly impacts the professional development of women, regardless of age, or stage in their career. Being younger than their peers in this case, leads to a scarcity of roles within work, and less professional responsibilities, limiting their success.

Moreover, recent literature indicates negative impacts of similar range to those of ageism but involving motherhood and the bearing of children. Torres et al. (2024) identify a phenomenon of motherhood penalties, which creating concrete barriers to career advancement and leadership, are shown to be highly influenced by masculine models of work. Similarly, employers have been found to discriminate against mothers more often when it comes to administrative jobs where collaboration and time are essential (Ishizuka, 2021). Furthermore, pregnant applicants have been stated to receive lower hiring recommendations from both male and female raters, even when being equally qualified, committed, dependable and fit for a specific role (Cunningham & Macan, 2007). This narrow view of career progression

adopted by professional fields regarding motherhood and pregnancy actively fosters gender stereotypes while limiting the understanding of diverse career trajectories pursued by women.

### ***The institutionalization of violence.***

Turvey (2022) defines institutionalized violence, in his book *Criminal Profiling: An Introduction to Behavioral Evidence Analysis*, as a type of structural violence that occurs when practices, attitudes, beliefs, and policies employed to marginalize a specific vulnerable group are confronted, leading to active repression of any protest addressing these issues. Considering this definition, the un-addressing or acceptance of harmful practices within educational establishments can be said to lead to the institutionalization of these norms in the long term if the explicit rejection is executed against any kind of political agitation seeking to address these issues. An example of this is the narrative analysis of in-depth interviews performed by Monroe et al. (2008), where a type of institutionalized practice was uncovered and defined as “gender devaluation”; referring to “...the subtle process by which women’s work is devalued or minimized, so that work or positions once deemed powerful and conferring high status frequently become devalued as women increasingly take on these roles.” This subtle type of gender violence of devaluating the work of women within the institution is seen as normal, it is not addressed by any administration and is left to bloom by directing penalties at those who voice this issue through public protest, cementing its execution as institutionalized violence.

### ***Parental influence.***

With violent practices reflecting an influence of morals in students, the role of parents and nurture emerges as a relevant topic of discussion. In this regard, a study conducted using mixed methods delves into the topic of morality for generation Z adolescents attempting to pinpoint what role do parents play in influencing them (Medez & Gayoles, 2021). It was determined that the moral development of children is indeed crucially affected by tutors, with some of the most common experiences being that of parents as dispensers of values, how students show concern for others, if they treat everybody equally, and if they listen to peers' opinions. The most significant influence detected being that of the father on the children’s morality.

This formation of morals for students is also studied in journals of education and development, where it is determined that formally or informally, a shared responsibility exists involving every part of society (Daud et al., 2023). With modern developments, social environments play critical roles contributing to the formation of students, including their morality. Nevertheless, parents remain key at dealing with any challenges faced by students, actively cooperating with all parties.

### **Policy enactments on gender violence in schools.**

Parkes (2016) explores the topic of policies and gender violence through an examination of policies and strategies employed since the 2000s addressing school-related gender violence within Brazil, South Africa, and Liberia. It was concluded that despite progress in policy and research, little evidence shows that the enacted policies have reduced gender-based violence in schools within these countries. The reason for this, as stated by the author, is that “The case studies reveal disconnects in the ways violence is conceptualized and acted upon by policy actors, which inhibit effective action.” (Parkes, 2016, p.11). Therefore, policy enactments in these countries of the developing world have been reduced to ineffective attempts at addressing the issue, as proper perspectives stemming from local knowledge were not considered before the creation of said policies.

During the 2000s in Chile, a notable idea of strengthening policies with a gendered focus in order to tackle the national gender gap came from Michelle Bachelet’s gender agenda (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, 2007). Its main source of resolution occurred through reforms and legislation, explicitly stating educational matters as requiring the incorporation of a gender perspective in its regulations. This agenda reflected at the time what many feminist protests claimed was needed, displaying a proper addressing of local experiences that worked in its favor to approach systemic issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

On the 15 of September 2021, law 21.369, regarding sexual harassment, violence, and gender discrimination in higher education (Mineduc, 2022), was officially published and put into effect. Its objective is to promote essential policies which aim to prevent, investigate, and sanction the aforementioned issues. One of the obligatory elements that must be included in

the model of prevention is the incorporation of human rights, violence, and gender discrimination contents in the curriculum of these institutions. The conception of including education as a preventative measure against these issues fulfills the requirement of tackling it within an essential context.

Finally, after seven years of discussion in the Chilean parliament, the integral law of non-sexist education was finally approved in April 2024 (MinMujeryEG) by a decision of the Constitutional Court. The regulatory framework, as established by Mineduc (2023), includes nine laws, and two circulars addressing issues on gender, diversity, and inclusion within educational establishments. Some of its main articles highlight the importance of protecting students' gender identity, and applying measures against any kind of gender discrimination, while guaranteeing equal treatment for all students. If these efforts are to be of any note it can only be told with time.

Recently in Chile, changes to law 21.643, often referred to as Ley Karin (Ministerio del trabajo y previsión social, 2024), state that its first article is to emphasize work relationships being free from violence, aligning with each person's dignity, and incorporating a gender perspective. Moreover, its second article now refers to administrative summaries by stating that all procedures concerning prevention, identification, and sanctions must follow principles of confidentiality, impartiality, conciseness, and again, a gender perspective. The integration of this perspective into law was put into effect in August of 2024, again reflecting the need to incorporate feminist terms into what are highly relevant social issues denounced as lacking proper policies that understand the root of the problem.

Just two months after Ley Karin was put in effect, 1852 psychological treatments and 4820 complaints in both private and public sectors have been reported (Subsecretaría de Previsión Social, 2024). Among the main findings, women have been noted to be the ones who report harassment the most, constituting 68% of the complaints in private sectors, and 77% in public ones. Out of all reported cases, 10% of them come from the educational sector, including schools, universities, and other institutions.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Research Questions**

In order to explore the subject of gender violence and make light of its many factors, the following questions have been formulated. These aim to illustrate, from the teachers' personal experiences, the forms and ways in which gender-based violence has taken place in their lives, the facilitators that may have allowed this violence to happen, and the consequences of these events. The questions formulated are stated below:

1. What types of gender-based violence do female teachers experience in their teaching practice in Chilean schools?
2. How does gender-based violence influence the well-being of female teachers?
3. How does gender-based violence affect the professional and work performance of female teachers?
4. What factors can be facilitators of gender-based violence in educational institutions?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To characterize the phenomenon of gender violence in Chilean educational institutions through the experiences of female teachers in their teaching practice.
2. To identify the different types of gender violence experienced by female teachers during their teaching practice in Chilean schools.

From physical to psychological to hidden types of violence, the study aims to uncover the different kinds of violent experiences directly associated with gender identified by female teachers. It seeks to discern crucial experiences within the educational system in order to shed light on the pervasive yet often overlooked forms of gender violence.

3. To identify the factors which facilitate gender violence towards female teachers in educational institutions.

This objective aims to explore which aspects, actions, or daily occurrences allow and promote the appearance of gender violence throughout the daily work life of a female teacher. By uncovering these factors, essential understanding is gained regarding the structural and cultural dynamics that enable gender violence to persist, the proper action taken forward can thus become apparent for targeted interventions or systemic changes directly aimed at these facilitators.

4. To determine the effects of gender violence on the emotional well-being of female teachers.

In order to grasp the extent of this phenomenon in the personal and work lives of female teachers, the objective seeks to identify the many consequences of gender violence and in what ways this phenomenon can change the emotional experience of teaching or living as a teacher. Understanding what implies these consequences, can effectively illustrate the mental and emotional health effects in need of addressing, and the potential need for comprehensive support systems.

5. To determine the professional and workplace effects of gender violence on the experience of female teachers.

It focuses on understanding how gender violence can impact female teachers specifically within their professional lives, concerning their motivation, career advancement, relationships with colleagues, and any type of hindrance to their career satisfaction. Addressing this objective would help raise the awareness needed to tackle such an issue, that directly impacts the educational system through some of its most important actors.

## **Research Design**

The type of research presented is qualitative, producing findings not reached by statistical procedures or other means of quantification, but from coding methods following the structure of grounded theory. More specifically, this investigation mainly involves the analysis of people's lives, their lived experiences, reactions to these experiences, and behaviors perceived throughout them (Strauss & Corbin, 2002). Thus, it aims to characterize the experiences of

female teachers regarding gender violence through in-depth interviews, with the focus primarily being on their viewpoint of the situations discussed.

Furthermore, this research is exploratory, as it involves the discovery of a new and compelling topic. This type of research often serves as the foundation for further inquiry, key to innovative investigation as stated by Swedberg (2020). Since gender violence against female teachers in Chilean schools remains a scarcely examined topic, this research seeks to contribute new knowledge and a starting point for future endeavors. Lastly, it is cross-sectional since it was carried out at a specific point in time without a follow-up.

### **Research Methodology**

This qualitative research at hand follows the principles of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2002), a method which allows for the relevant expansion of knowledge and understanding of what tends to be preconceived realities; to provide meaningful guidance to future actions using pertinent evidence. By employing this approach, the study aims to uncover and expand on the often overlooked or taken-for-granted realities of gender violence experienced by female teachers. Specifically, it allows for the analysis of data taken directly from personally conducted interviews, enabling fresh perspectives on how gender violence is manifested in educational settings for teachers.

The conducted in-depth interviews permitted the examination of important insights characterizing gender violence as participants identified and determined key factors and effects. Likewise, to categorize the data gathered from these interviews, Charmaz's (2006) Grounded Theory approach to coding played a central role in guiding and shaping the analytical frame in which the analysis started. The categorization of data was done following a logic of initial open coding for ideas found within each interview, a unification of these codes into general coherent concepts associated with gender violence, and a posterior axial coding of these concepts into conditions, actions, and consequences surrounding the phenomenon.

### **Participants**

The participants selected to take part in this research were ten Chilean female teachers of various subjects who had at least 1 year of experience working in schools in Santiago de Chile. The teachers were chosen through convenience sampling as they were people the research team members knew beforehand, meaning they were easily available and willing to participate. They were divided into two categories, the first one consisted of teachers who defined themselves as feminists, while the other consisted of teachers who did not define themselves as feminists. The reason for making this distinction will be explained later in the description of the instrument. The number of interviewed teachers was ten, eight of them identifying as feminists, and two as non-feminists.

Below, a brief description will be provided for each participant, whose names have been anonymized to protect their identity. The pseudonyms Consuelo, Gilda, Cindy, Katrina, Lexi, Valery, Karen, and Lisa were given to the feminist teachers while Helen and Sigrid were to the non-feminists.

**Consuelo:** A 34 years old feminist teacher. She has 10 years of experience teaching history classes in schools. Currently, she is working in a private subsidized girls' school.

**Gilda:** A 25 years old teacher who considers herself a feminist. She is an English teacher with 3 years of experience. Presently she is working in a private subsidized mixed school.

**Cindy:** A 31 years old feminist teacher. She has 1 year of experience working as a primary teacher in a private subsidized mixed school.

**Katrina:** A 35 years old feminist teacher. She has 10 years of experience and is currently working as a history teacher in a public girls' school.

**Lexi:** A 54 years old primary school teacher with a mention in science. She considers herself a feminist and has 32 years of experience as a teacher. Presently she is working in a private subsidized girls' school.

**Valery:** A 39 years old English teacher who considers herself a feminist. She has 14 years of experience teaching and nowadays is working in a private subsidized girls' school.

**Karen:** A 34 years old feminist teacher. She has 8 years of experience teaching English. Presently she is working in a public mixed school.

**Lisa:** A 43 years old feminist teacher. She has 19 years of experience teaching English. Currently, she is working in a private subsidized girls' school.

**Helen:** A 40 years old Spanish teacher. She considers herself a non-feminist and has 16 years of experience. Presently she is working in a public mixed school.

**Sigrid:** A 63 years old retired teacher. She considers herself a non-feminist and worked for 40 years as a Spanish teacher in a public mixed school.

### **Instrument: In-depth interviews**

In order to follow the principles of Grounded theory, semi-structured interviews were developed and used as data collection instruments. This method allowed for in-depth exploration of individual viewpoints, providing rich, detailed data of personal experiences which other approaches might not capture to the same extent. These were comprised of a series of open-ended questions, structured to cover key themes of the investigation such as:

- Definitions and understandings of gender violence.
- Personal experiences with gender violence in their workplace.
- Effects of gender violence on the teacher's performance.
- Professional and personal consequences regarding gender violence.
- Institutional support and preventive measures regarding gender violence.
- Needs and recommendations for a safe environment.

The interview guide was reviewed by Prof. Leandro Silva, an expert on gender topics, who provided feedback about word choosing and structure of the instrument.

Scripts used for in-depth interviews were structured using different dimensions and formats concerning subjects to tackle, and the self-identification of the interviewee. The dimensions include; rapport, teacher's perceptions, types of gender violence, facilitating factors of gender

violence, its effects on professional and emotional well-being, and the institutional aspects of gender violence. The self-identifying of teachers as feminist or not feminist was used as a differentiating factor which allowed for the deepening of certain topics; to do this, the following questions were included in the rapport:

**Feminist Teachers Rapport Questions:**

- Do you consider yourself a feminist teacher?
- How do you incorporate that into your practice?

Affirmative responses to these questions would in turn yield in the application of “Template A” interview questions:

**Template A**

1. Do you perceive gender-based violence in the educational context? (Yes or no) How do you perceive gender-based violence in the educational context?
2. Do you identify gender-based violence in your work? Is this something you regularly reflect on? What actions or behaviors do you associate with or identify as gender-based violence? Are there any that you recognize as recurring?
3. Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your gender in your workplace?
4. Have you experienced violence in your role as a teacher from students? Have you noticed a gender pattern in that violence?
5. What factors do you think contribute to violence in your school? What types of violence do you identify? Who is typically involved?
6. Have you discussed these types of situations with your colleagues? What have you talked about?
7. Are there differences in the opinions of female and male colleagues?

8. Have you reported any incidents of violence? What barriers or difficulties do you face when trying to report incidents of gender-based violence in your work environment?
9. Have any administrative measures been taken due to cases of gender-based violence or as a form of prevention? (e.g., training, awareness courses, etc.)
10. Are there human resources policies or reporting mechanisms in your school to address cases of gender-based violence against teachers? Are you aware of them? Are they effective?
11. Have you experienced any form of discrimination or professional retaliation after facing gender-based violence in your workplace? How has this affected your career?
12. Do you believe the situation of violence you experienced has impacted your daily life? (e.g., difficulty concentrating while teaching, lack of motivation to go to work, etc.)
13. How do you think experiences of gender-based violence have affected your career as a teacher? (e.g., motivation, commitment, etc.)
14. Have you found support within the educational institution to confront and/or overcome the situations of gender-based violence you've experienced?
15. Based on your experiences, what does the school need to become a place free from gender-based violence?

**Non-feminist teachers Rapport Questions:**

- Do you consider yourself a feminist teacher?
- What characteristics do you associate with feminism?

Negative responses to these questions would in turn yield in the application of “Template B” interview questions:

**Template B**

1. During your years of teaching, have you witnessed or experienced any cases of gender discrimination at school? What happened? Who was involved? How did the witnesses react? If not: Why do you think such cases don't occur at your workplace?
2. Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your gender at work? Can you describe those moments?
3. Have you experienced discrimination from students in your role as a teacher?
4. Do you feel that your current workplace is a discriminatory environment?
5. Have any incidents of discrimination occurred at your school recently?
6. How would you describe the culture of your school regarding the treatment of women (students, teachers, staff, etc.)?
7. Is this something you regularly reflect on in your work? Based on this, are there behaviors you identify as recurring in the school?
8. What types of discrimination or violence do you identify? Who is typically involved?
9. Have you noticed differences or situations of discrimination compared to your male colleagues? (For example, are they favored over you?)
10. Have you discussed these types of situations with your colleagues? What have you talked about? Are there differences in the opinions of female and male colleagues?
11. In your professional experience as a teacher, do you believe that gender-based discrimination has influenced your opportunities for professional growth? (For example, promotions.)
12. What protocol does the school have in place for addressing incidents of violence? Do you feel the protocol is sufficient to handle such incidents?
13. Have administrative measures been taken to prevent cases of gender discrimination? (For example, training sessions, awareness courses, etc.)

14. Does your school have a psychological support system to promote emotional well-being for those who have experienced gender discrimination?

15. Based on your experiences, what does the school need to become a place free from gender discrimination?

*Note: All interviews were done in Spanish to ensure proper understanding of questions and answers.*

As mentioned earlier, two templates were created, one for feminist teachers and the other for non-feminist teachers. Template A and Template B differ significantly in their language usage and question-addressing approach, leading to ethical and methodological implications that impact the research quality. Moreover, combining the two viewpoints can lead to a more comprehensive and ethically sound representation, honoring the perspectives of participants and enhancing the research's scientific validity. Some instances of these variances are:

- Template B takes a cautious approach by steering clear of language that may come across as challenging or causing the interviewee to feel remorseful or forced. This lowers the chance of being victimized again.
- Variety of methods: Template A gathers information from individual experiences while Template B collects data from overall perspectives. This enhances the analysis by incorporating both depth and width.

Determining the use of different terms according to this differentiation allowed teachers to feel more comfortable and natural while discussing and sharing their professional experiences. Additionally, this distinction paved the way for analysis of how feminist self-identification could play a role in the perception of gender violence.

## **Data Collection**

The teachers participating in this investigation were contacted via email by the research team. Through this, participants were notified of the thesis objective, also attaching an informed consent form which contained all the details needed to be fully aware of the study before

agreeing to take part in it. At the time each teacher accepted, they had to sign the document and send it back to the research team.

Once ten teachers confirmed their participation, they were asked about their availability to coordinate meetings, both face-to-face and online, to apply the research instrument which was an in-depth interview. The sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes and at least 2 members of the research team were present in each of them, one in charge of interacting directly with the participants by conducting the interview while the other one took notes of any notable idea. For the purpose of documenting all testimonies for later analysis, interviews were taped using various cell phone voice recorders which later on allowed for the proper transcription of each conversation and its coding.

### **Data Analysis**

To address the research questions and objectives, the data collected from the interviews will be analyzed in detail in this section. The focus will be on understanding and materializing the new categories in the experiences of gender violence among female teachers in Chile. In order to start analyzing the answers from the interview the participants were divided into feminist teachers and non-feminist teachers, this division was explained in the previous part of the description of the instrument. After the transcriptions of the data, female teachers obtained fictitious names, to protect their personal lives while defining their experiences through the coding process of this study.

Following the principles of Grounded Theory to contribute to the corpus of gender-based violence in the school, coding needs to pause and inquire into the analytical features of the data collected (Charmaz, 2006). Afterward, it was divided into two categories, initial coding and focused coding. In initial coding, the data was analyzed into pieces. The teachers' answers generated specific coding, later this coding process was clustered into specific categories that emerged from them (Charmaz, 2006). Coding was an ongoing process, and comparing and analyzing the data was done back and forth during the entire exercise. Once the categories emerged, axial coding was the next step. In axial coding, categories were associated with subcategories around the core concept (Strauss & Corbin, 2002). The central concept was gender-based violence, the three subcategories were conditions, action/interactions, and consequences.

As previously mentioned, during the initial coding process, line by line the interviews were analyzed (Charmaz, 2006), keeping the description of what the interviewees shared from their personal experiences, feelings, and memories as feasible. The most useful initial data recollected from the ten teachers interviewed, including both feminist and non-feminists, provided a total of seven hundred ten codes, from which several themes often came up from teacher to teacher. Subsequently, each piece of data was thoroughly discerned to select the most frequent, and significant (Charmaz, 2006) regarding gender-based violence perspectives, which denoted not only a handful of concepts but also codes that later became categorized and labeled. Thus, several issues became visible resulting in 48 focused codes that showcased problems such as structural violence, gender stereotypes, normalization of violence, etc. Lastly in this process, the analysis of the axis in the categories determined their dimension: 1) conditions, for the appearance of gender violence, as seen in Table 1; 2) actions/interactions, routines, or responses to gender violence in everyday life, as seen in Table 2; and 3) consequences, outcomes of gender violence (Charmaz, 2006), as seen in Table 3. During this process, some of the codes were found to be transversal, meaning that the insights had different connotations around the same event. These findings will be profoundly discussed later in the results section of this study which will allow a deep understanding of the gender issues.

**Table 1**

*Conditions*

The categories of the structures behind gender-based violence along with each code for every sub-category.

Category	Sub-categories
Agent	Parental involvement importance in addressing gender-based violence.
	Tutors as Violence Perpetrators.
	Students as violence perpetrators.

	Incompetent management.
Bias Shaping Gender-based Violence	Difference in opinions between male and female teachers/directives.
	Normalization of violence.
	Sexism associated to a teaching role or position.
	Religious perspective on gender violence.
	Respecting male teachers over female teachers.
Female Traits	Motherhood as a source of discrimination.
	Ageism.
	Gender-based discrimination against women.

**Table 2**

*Actions and Interactions*

The categories of the structures behind gender-based violence along with each code for every sub-category.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>
Acts of Gender Violence	Students and tutors as violence perpetrators.
	Type of violence exercised against female teachers.

	Verbal abuse as the most routinely violence against female teachers.
	Physical violence as part of everyday in teachers' life.
	Sexual violence.
	Power dynamics.
	Gender-based violence as an aspect of day to day life, and generational change regarding feminist traits.
Prevention of Gender Violence	Administrative measures.
	Karin Law.
	Practices.
Responses to Violence	Reporting violence.
	Finding alternatives to desertion.
	Difference in opinions.

**Table 3**

*Consequences*

The categories of the structures behind gender-based violence along with each code for every sub-category.

Category	Sub-categories
Consequences in the Teachers' Lives	Emotional consequences.
	Health negative repercussions.
Supportive Workplaces for Teachers	Women feeling safe in female-dominated spaces.
	Teachers who have found support from their colleagues.
Gender Violence Impact on the Professional Field	Teachers questioning their profession.
	Female teachers resigning due to acts of violence.
	Protocols concerning school violence.
	Repercussions after reporting gender violence.
	Negative perceptions towards reporting.

## Chapter 4: Results

As previously stated in the theoretical framework, in Chile a significant percentage of women regardless of their age, social status, or sexual orientation, have suffered physical and psychological violence (División Políticas de Igualdad, 2018). The educational field is not exempt from this issue, consequently, female teachers suffer the consequences in their workplaces. According to the findings of Colegio de Profesoras y Profesores (2023), female teachers were determined to be the most reported victims of insults and attacks inside Chilean schools. Although direct acts of violence tend to be the most recognizable events, subtle actions that may seek to control or harm in less obvious ways (Castelao-Huerta, 2020) can still be noted through the lenses of teachers as hidden violence. These gender-based violence acts harm several aspects of a female teacher's life.

The following analysis elaborates on the reconstruction of ten teachers' testimonies, insights, feelings, and expectations in relation to gender violence experiences during their professional practice.

The findings gathered from this investigation are divided and displayed in three particular categories following the principles of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2002), more specifically the axial coding method of data designed by Charmaz (2006). The first section of data examines the conditions of gender violence, its factors, and its contextual variables in educational settings as described through interviews. The second section illustrates actions, routines, and any kind of interactions that female teachers have experienced regarding gender violence. Finally, the third section delves into the consequences of this violence and its meaning for all actors involved.

### **Conditions**

This section delves into the conditions for the appearance of gender-based violence. It is divided into three sections. In the first place, the agents that exert or facilitate the presence of this phenomenon will be presented. Similarly, the second section encloses certain biases that shape the existence of the same. Finally, the third section describes the identified female

traits.

### **Agents.**

The process of human formation is composed of both agents and formation ambits. Implying that education is distinguished from formal, academic instances as in schools with teachers, and informal learning that comes from unorganized instruction as the one coming naturally from families (Altarejos, 2011). Those two areas can be considered equally important as both have an effect on the students' conduct, yet families are the ones in charge of teaching values and morals with individualized instruction from birth (Altarejos, 2011) shaping the students' attitudes, actions, and perceptions. Whence, it could be argued that if parents perpetuate harmful patriarchal socialization in their teaching labor, it may be introduced in schools directly by their child/student, therefore perpetuating gender-based violence. In the same manner, “agents” will be understood in this subcategory as a person that produces a particular effect (Cambridge English-Spanish Dictionary, n.d.) as they acted as bearers of violence to some degree.

### ***Parental involvement importance in addressing gender violence.***

Parents and families play a critical role in the students' attitudes toward gender violence issues. Several interviewees pointed out that parents as agents in the educational process influencing the students' behaviors, lack addressing and mitigating gender violence, which may exacerbate the problem.

In this quote from the teacher Consuelo, she concluded that if parents are not familiar with the school norms their child will keep on repeating those violent acts:

And in the end, if the parents are not in line with these regulations, these episodes of repeated violence are generated. Because in the end, it is always the same students who fall as perpetrators of this violence.

In addition, the teachers identified that it might be necessary to expose parents to gender

violence instruction in order to increase parental involvement in gender matters at schools.

In particular, the following quote exemplifies the latter as teacher Gilda gives insight into the question ‘Based on your experiences, what does the school need to become a place free from gender-based violence?’. For her, education on the subject must be taught not only to teachers and students but also to their respective families.

I believe that workshops that inform not only the students but also the teaching staff and the parents. I definitely believe that parents need to know what gender violence is, how to recognize if these people are victims of gender violence, how to prevent their students from suffering this, and how to prevent their students from being victimizers as well, not only victims but also victimizers.

It could be stated that the school and the family sphere deficit of a coherent relation, reasonably concerning teachers, creates a systematic gap that influences the nuances of gender-based violence conditions that must be approached to cultivate safer school settings.

### ***Tutors as violence perpetrators.***

Besides parents influencing students' behaviour, they can also be agents as perpetrators of gender violence in schools. Accordingly, interviewees depicted instances of violence coming from the students' tutors (families) as common occurrences.

In this case, when asked about identifying types of violence and whose involved, teacher Karen stated that nowadays she has witnessed violent parents in interactions with female teachers:

Moreover, nowadays, the ones who are most involved in violence are the proxies. The parents sometimes when you cite them, it hasn't happened to me in particular, but it has happened to colleagues. You call them and, as they see you as a woman, “weaker”, they treat you badly, they curse at you, they disrespect you. In fact, (...) there have been attempts to hit and shout in the corridors.

Alike, teachers pointed out that if tutors establish violent discourses at home this will be reflected at the school through the students' behaviours. For instance, Lexi reflects about what factors contribute to violence at school:

Well, children who see violence at home and who are used to being treated with violence. I think that's fundamental. I think that children project what they see. So, for them, suddenly it's normal to treat each other the way they treat each other because at home they see the yelling, the cursing, or the violent treatment.

To summarize, the teachers present this dimension as a duality regarding the parents or tutors, they can be direct perpetrators and indirect perpetrators influencing their pupils behaviors and interactions at school.

### *Students as violence perpetrators.*

Gender violence can be exercised by different agents present in the educational context, and one group was brought up often by teachers during the interviews. Students are prone to internalize damaging societal norms and become offenders at school, with behaviors such as harassment, bullying, or exclusion.

In that matter Consuelo reflects on her experience being harassed by a student to delete a negative note after seeing the student bullying another student with reduced mobility and special education needs. She even relates how the parent got involved in the situation:

And it happened to me that just when I had that course, I saw and witnessed when the other girl said something to her. So that's when a whole issue started, that I felt violated by the other student, the one who had bothered this girl. Because she got angry because I gave her the negative notation and obviously I brought this information up to UTP and it wasn't taken into consideration, what I was saying (...) and it got to the point that, (...) I was walking around the schoolyard and she was like, "Are you going to erase the annotation? Like almost chasing me in my workplace to see if I erased the notation. And besides that, (...), well, the student's parent, too.

Instead of being self-critical about her daughter, she was also demanding, sending emails saying that the notation had to be eliminated and all that.

This account relates that despite her position as the head teacher, the student did not hesitate to approach the teacher repeatedly, thus the student was endorsed by her mother making the teacher feel violated by both agents at the school.

In the same line, regarding the students daring attitude against female teachers, when asked if she had suffer gender violence from students, Valery commented on the disregard of her students due to her gender, as a violent act against her:

Valery: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you seen any gender patterns in that violence?

Valery: Yes, yes absolutely. The same, they can question everything because I am a woman, they (students) think that because I am a woman they have the capacity to answer me back, my word is not valid immediately, as it was valid with male teachers (...) if I called the attention of a student because I was not working, it was always “why? and ‘I am not doing anything’, they always answer you back, all the time they answer you back. If I had a male professor calling them out because they weren't working, at most they might give an angry look, but they would get to work.

In conclusion, teachers report violent acts coming from the students revealing a concerning dynamic where gender-based violence, power imbalances and societal norms intersect perpetuated by students' misconduct. Furthermore, female teachers realize that even in positions of leadership, they face challenges asserting respect and authority in comparison to their male colleagues.

### ***Incompetent management.***

The school staff is another agent present in the educational context. Such could be the headmaster, the head of the pedagogical unit, school coexistence counselors, education assistants in general. For the most part, those agents have a leadership position in schools that can include addressing gender violence issues, therefore when instances of violence had

occurred to the interviewees they declared degrees of dissatisfaction with the way those agents address the situations, even when policies, and protocols exist.

To contextualize the next quote, teacher Valery answered if she had reported a gender-based violence act and if so what barriers did she face. She recalled the time in which she almost got hit by a parent of one of her students and the school offered to resign from her position:

Once a parent tried to hit me and the school didn't do much beyond (...) I wanted a change of headship, because you know there's money associated there, and the option they gave me was for me to resign as head teacher. When you resign, you stop receiving that bonus for that position.

This instance of violence caused Valery to quit her job at that school, as she feared having to interact repeatedly with the violent tutor, and the administration did not offer any option that would safeguard her integrity.

In addition, Lexi recounted when she was put in risky situations with a violent student because she was required to spend time alone with him, even when the school protocol stated that teachers could not be alone with students:

That boy (...) tried to burn down the school one day in the classroom, lighting the lighter. Later, they caught him where there were some giant gas balls that supply the casino at recess, trying to light it on fire. He was suspended. In other words, that was their (management) support measure.

And I worked in the library for a few hours. The other thing is that I couldn't be alone with children, I couldn't interview them by myself... One day I got an email that this student had to be with me in the library from nine to nine-thirty because he was not going to participate in physical training, because he was violent with his classmates. So I sent an email back saying, I'm not going to be alone with him in the library because you (management) said yourselves that teachers cannot be alone with the students. And my boss emailed me back and said: "Your job is to be in the library from such-and-such time, and if we send this child to you, you have to accept".

Finally, these testimonies present a deficiency of effective support, inconsistent protocols and a lack of initiative to properly address violence, as the management of those schools prioritize administrative convenience over the teachers safety and well-being. Thus, people in charge of such power positions become agents propitiating systematic violent settings.

### **Bias shaping gender-based violence.**

In schools, gender violence often manifests in ways influenced by biases and stereotypes. These biases perpetuate unequal power dynamics, normalize harmful behaviors, and target individuals based on gender identity and expression. Such biases shape how gender violence is experienced, addressed, and even overlooked within educational spaces. As defined by Banerjee et al. (2021), gender bias maintains itself dominant precisely because it tends not to be explicitly expressed: “women are simply expected to play certain roles, as are men, and these inform the broader understanding of masculinity and femininity.”

Accordingly, this subcategory delves into the role of bias in shaping the nature of gender violence in schools that teachers were able to distinguish. First, teachers acknowledge the different ideas and opinions that female and male teachers or directors have. Second, the normalization of gender violence by carrying violent attitudes learned at home. Third, sexism associated with a teaching role position. Fourth, religious perspectives on gender. And finally, showing preference and respect for male teachers over female teachers.

### ***Difference in opinions between male and female teachers/directives.***

In the educational institutions, gender differences not only influence the relationship between teachers and students, but also the internal dynamics between teaching professionals. In these interviews, Gilda and Katrina, both teachers with ample experience in the educational system, reflect on how men and women approach differently the challenges they face in their daily work, especially in relation to sensitive issues such as violence, authority, and emotional management in the classroom.

In this first quote, the interviewer asks Gilda if she thinks there are differences in opinions between female and male teachers regarding issues of gender. Gilda in this excerpt highlights the importance of considering gender-differentiated experiences in education, both in

interactions between teachers and in students' perceptions of authority figures. It also invites reflection on how power and gender structures shape these dynamics:

Gilda: Yes. (...) So, men don't give their opinion much.

Interviewer: Because for them, maybe that type of violence doesn't affect them either.

Gilda: Of course not. They are not part of that percentage, of course, since they are men, children take them as an authority without even thinking about why they take them as their authority.

Following the same question, in this case Katrina describes a marked difference in attitudes between men and women regarding how to address complex problems in the educational environment, especially related to sensitive issues such as violence, harassment or student well-being. The interviewee also highlights how gender perspectives influence attitudes and approaches within the educational field:

(...)Yes, yes, quite a difference, quite a difference, because for some, it seems that this no longer has a solution, there is nothing more to do (...) they close themselves off because there is nothing more to do, which is the attitude of men, more out of fear, like closing themselves off, like, ok, I'm not going to do anything else, if I see a girl crying, I'm not going to ask her because if I get close, she's going to think I'm harassing her (...) men have an attitude of being afraid to deal with these issues because they don't know how to approach them, and on the other hand, women insisted that these are issues that need to be worked on, that although they are difficult and sometimes we don't have all the tools, we have to look for the best ways as well (...)

It is safe to conclude that both interviews highlight how gender differences influence teachers' opinions, attitudes and responses to sensitive issues in education, such as violence, harassment or authority dynamics. These differences are reflected in the way men and women perceive their role, interact with students and participate in debates.

### *Normalization of violence.*

Regarding the normalization of violence, as it was previously stated in the theoretical framework, school violence involves “...institutional practices that produce a gender separation and hierarchy.” (Dunne et al., 2006). In this section, teachers stress how violence is normalised by its presence in the family environment, leading children to replicate these behaviours at school. They also denounce the lack of preventive measures against gender violence, which prevents both students and teachers from recognising and intervening in these situations.

In this subcategory, the question asked was “What factors do you think contribute to violence at school?”. This excerpt from the interview with Lexi addresses the normalization of violence in the school context, explaining how family experiences influence children's behavior. Lexi suggests that violence in schools is, in part, the result of a process of imitation and projection of what children experience at home:

Well, children who see violence at home and who are used to being treated with violence. I think that's fundamental. I think that children project what they see. So, for them, suddenly it's normal to treat each other the way they treat each other because at home they see the yelling, the cursing, or the violent treatment.

On the other hand, Gilda answers the question: Have administrative measures been taken due to cases of gender violence involving this particular child or as a preventive measure, training, awareness courses, workshops, something?. Here, the interviewee highlights the lack of preventive and educational measures against gender violence in the school environment, underlining the invisibility of the problem for both students and teachers:

No, nothing related to gender violence and it is very dangerous because neither the children nor us, the teachers, can realize if we are part of the percentage that suffers from gender violence or how to realize if we are suffering from gender violence. We have no way of knowing if this is happening.

The interviews with Lexi and Gilda reveal the profound need to address violence in the school environment from multiple perspectives. On the one hand, the widespread violence that children reproduce due to exposure in their homes. On the other hand, the invisibility of gender violence, mentioned by Gilda. Both testimonies point to a structural deficiency in

preventive education and in the training of teaching staff, which perpetuates a cycle of normalization and lack of protection against violence.

***Sexism associated to a teaching role or position.***

Gender-based violence in education is not limited to physical or verbal aggressions, but also manifests itself through rooted gender stereotypes and biases. Both the perception of teaching as a female task linked to "soft skills" and the devaluation of women in scientific fields, reflect how social structures perpetuate inequalities within the education system.

In this case, the excerpt of the interview with Lexi that answered the question "How do you perceive this gender violence?" exposes how sexism associated with certain teaching roles or positions manifests itself from the formative stage of future educators and how these perceptions influence professional dynamics. Moreover, Lexi notes that since her university education she observed how certain disciplines of education were dominated by men (such as a degree in chemistry) and were considered more prestigious or intellectually superior. In contrast, areas such as primary or preschool education were perceived as "for women", suggesting an implicit division based on gender stereotypes.

(...) Because I first studied chemistry, I studied education, a degree in chemistry. And, for example, it was dominated by men. And, in fact, female elementary school teachers were looked down upon, we were seen as silly. So I perceived this from that minute, from the moment I started studying. I saw that difference, that gender difference that preschool education or elementary education was for women. That's what I heard from my male classmates.

Following with the same idea and answering the same previous question, the interviewee Valery delves into this topic and points out that the teaching work is seen as "better for women" due to the association with soft skills. Also, the interviewee mentions that her knowledge may be questioned or seen as a threat to some men, especially in scientific fields.

(...) From everything. To start with, it is a job that everyone associates with being better for women, because women have more developed soft skills and because they are the ones in charge of families. (...) I think there is an intellectual bias, since

sometimes people question whether I know more, because they see a diminished male figure if I know more. I think there is still that bias in some men, perhaps a little less, that because I am a woman I am much better in the humanistic areas, not so much in the scientific one.

These interviews showed how dynamics of inequality and microaggressions in the workplace are generated, such as questioning female authority or resistance to accepting women's competence in certain fields. Furthermore, the above seen testimonies reveal how gender violence is not always explicit, but also manifests itself through subtle prejudices and biases that devalue the role of women in certain areas of knowledge.

### ***Religious perspective on gender violence.***

Gender discrimination in education can be influenced by a variety of factors, including strict religious beliefs and adherence to traditional norms that reinforce unequal gender roles. Through the interviews, it is observed how certain religion teachers tend to reproduce and perpetuate rigid views on the roles of men and women.

For this subcategory, the interviewer asks if gender violence is recurrent in this educational space. The interviewee Lisa points out that the school is run by a religious congregation whose members, mostly elderly, hold a more traditional and sexist view of the world. In this extract, the teacher suggests that religious beliefs, in this case, are influenced by patriarchal values rooted in their upbringing and family context, which can affect how situations related to gender violence are perceived and managed.

Always, and you have to keep in mind that this school belongs to a religious congregation, where the vast majority of nuns are older people. So they also have a vision, or come from their family niche, of a much more sexist vision of the world.

On the other hand, the interviewee Sigrid, answers the question “During your years in practice, did you witness or experience any cases of gender discrimination at school?”. The teacher in this case associates cases of gender discrimination with teachers who are very attached to religious norms.

Yes. In some cases, especially those where there is a teacher, for example, those of religion, who are very attached to religious norms.

In summary, older people in congregations are expressed as having conservatives regarding the role of women, stemming from a time when social and religious structures were more rigid and based on female subordination. Both testimonies reveal that adherence to strict religious norms can contribute to the perpetuation of discriminatory gender-based attitudes within the school environment.

### ***Respecting male teachers over female teachers.***

In the educational field, the perception of respect and authority towards teachers can be influenced by factors such as gender and the cultural context of the students. The testimonies analysed reflect a trend where male teachers are perceived as more respected or powerful figures in the eyes of students, while female teachers face greater challenges in establishing their authority in the classroom.

For this part of the interview, the teacher was asked if she perceived violence from students to teachers. The interviewee Lisa notes that some students tend to respect male teachers more, placing them in a position of superior authority, while female teachers are perceived as more accessible or vulnerable to questioning.

(...) but I do believe that suddenly there are students who have more, I don't know if respect or being able to put a teacher higher up because he is a man. In fact, it happens a lot here in school that men are untouchable. In fact, for example, here men are not given leadership of a grade, only in extreme cases. (...) Yes, I feel that in many cases this happens because the teacher is a man, he is like untouchable, that the female teacher is like more, I dare to say more things to her, I dare to answer her more, like that type of situation.

For her part, Gilda answers the question “How do you perceive gender violence in the educational context?” and responds with the same idea seen previously:

For example, female teachers are treated with less respect than male teachers.

Besides, in the following extract, Helen mentions that students, especially foreign males, tend to show greater respect and appreciation towards male teachers. The interviewee acknowledges that this perception is subjective and lacks "hard data", but points out that it is a recurring theme among her colleagues, which indicates that it is not an isolated case.

Maybe it's the way they treat, the respect. Maybe students show more obvious respect for male teachers than for female ones. I don't want to label anything, but this phenomenon comes up again. Now, it's a very perceptive thing, very personal. I have talked about it with other colleagues, who feel the same way. But I don't have hard data, but I do perceive that foreign male students feel more appreciation and more respect for the teaching work of a male teacher. They see in them a more powerful figure and they verbalize it.

These testimonies show how gender and culture influence the perception of respect towards teachers, with a clear advantage for men, especially among foreign groups of students. These differences not only show the persistence of gender stereotypes, but also how certain cultural factors can reinforce these dynamics.

### **Female traits.**

Attitudes to violence against women are inextricably grounded in and intertwined with attitudes toward women, gender, and sexuality. In other words, judgments of violence against women are shaped by wider norms of gender and sexuality (Flood & Pease, 2009, p. 128). This connection is especially visible in schools, where gender violence disproportionately affects women and girls, who face additional challenges such as discrimination related to motherhood, assumptions about their roles, and biases linked to their age or perceived gender responsibilities. These factors increase their susceptibility to violence and discrimination.

This subcategory examines key traits that underpin the basis of discrimination against women regarding gender-based violence in schools: first, motherhood as a source of discrimination. Second, discrimination for being a young woman. And third, gender-based discrimination against women.

### *Motherhood as a source of discrimination.*

In the educational field, as it was stated before, gender discrimination remains a present reality, especially when it comes to motherhood and teacher recruitment. The testimonies collected reveal how women face additional obstacles due to their potential or actual role as mothers, while men are favoured under the assumption that they will not take on parental responsibilities.

For this part of the interview with Lisa, she describes a situation of a reunion with the directives of the educational space she works in. The interviewee requested schedule adjustments and the superior's response affirmed that the problem is that she has a baby.

(...) I raised my hand and told her, you know, my schedules don't match, I need more schedules. And she told me, textual, that you have another problem and your problem is that you have a baby. That's your problem.

Later the teacher emphasizes that the superior is a woman and is also a mother.

She was a woman and she was a mother too.

In the case with Helen, comments that although she has not experienced violence against motherhood directly, she has seen it with her colleagues. The interviewee points out that, in the past, when she just started her teaching exercise discrimination against pregnant teachers was more evident and direct, manifesting itself in derogatory comments or criticisms related to the exercise of their right to motherhood.

With the topic of motherhood, I have seen it very visualized. When I first started my teaching career, it was much more explicit, even, comments. Not directly directed at me. But at women, female colleagues, who became pregnant or who were in full right to pre- and postnatal care. And men too, colleagues, indiscriminately, comments regarding the right to motherhood.

Following with the interview with Gilda to keep delving into this topic. According to Gilda, male teachers are more easily hired because of the assumption that they will not have to take

parental leave. Also, Gilda points out that during the selection process, men are not asked about family or care plans, while women are faced with these questions.

Male teachers are hired more often, men, because they won't have a postpartum period, well, unless they choose to, right? Being a caregiver also during that period, but generally it's not like that, they don't ask them questions related to the future.

In conclusion, the interviews with Lisa, Helen and Gilda highlights how parental responsibilities and gender stereotypes influence teacher recruitment processes, favouring men and discriminating against women for their potential role as mothers. This coming from both men and women. These testimonies also highlight how motherhood continues to be seen as a barrier in certain work environments, which represents a form of gender discrimination that limits women's professional opportunities.

### *Ageism.*

In the educational environment, the combination of gender, youth and leadership remains a barrier for women. The testimonies analysed reveal how young women who take on positions of responsibility face attitudes of delegitimization and resistance from their colleagues and students.

In this interview, Karen, was asked if her years of experience being a teacher has she noticed any gender pattern in this violence. In response, she describes an experience where, as a young woman, her presence in the classroom was seen with less seriousness. She also implies that discrimination is not only linked to gender, but also to age.

Maybe they ignored you more. For being a woman, when you were in class they didn't pay attention to you. It was like they looked down on you. Being young, being a woman. I don't know, it was like they didn't take you into account much.

Subsequently, the interview with Katrina answering if she can associate or identify actions or behaviors as gender violence at work, shows how the delegitimization of young female teachers is a recurring form of gender violence in the educational field and highlights that this delegitimization is not so frequent with young men as it is with young women.

(...)when they say “the little girl who arrived this year” and she is the English teacher who is 23 years old, that is violent because it delegitimizes only because of age, only because of gender as well because when they are younger men that invalidation does not occur as much, I think that is like the most systematic way of validating or not validating a teacher because of their age and their gender.

For her part, Lisa answers if she has ever felt discriminated against in her workplace, she answers affirmatively, later the teacher refers to how her status as a young woman in a position of responsibility generated derogatory comments and resistance,

Yes, absolutely. I came here working very young and I also started to take on responsibilities very young. So I feel that many times being a woman and also being a young woman and being in a position of responsibility generate a lot of comments or a lot of antipathy towards me being in that position.

Analysis shows how young women in leadership roles face a subtle but persistent form of gender-based violence and discrimination, based on resistance to their authority due to their age and gender. This gender-based violence against young women is a recurring problem that limits their full participation in the workplace. This highlights an unequal perception of authority, where young women are assumed to lack the experience or ability to lead and teach effectively.

### **Gender-based discrimination against women.**

The following testimonies highlight how gender discrimination remains a persistent problem in the educational field. Both experiences reflect a double standard in the perception and acceptance of teaching authority, where women face constant questioning and delegitimization of their voice compared to their male colleagues.

Consuelo was asked about what actions or behaviors she associates or identifies as gender violence, in this instance she tells about a male teacher in the school she works in, this teacher, according to the story, devalues the opinions or presence of the students solely

because of their gender. This excerpt shows a form of gender discrimination based on the underestimation of women by a male teacher.

(...) for example, regarding gender violence by that male teacher, it would be what he says to the female students. That in the end he looks down on them, just because they are women. It's like he doesn't give strength to their voice.

This testimony exposes how certain attitudes and behaviors can be everyday examples of gender violence in the educational field. While another interviewee, Valery, exposes that everything is questioned just because she is a woman:

I hate that everything is questioned just because I am a woman

Later in the interview, Valery was asked if she had seen any gender patterns in the violence, to which she responds that she notes that her authority is belittled and challenged more frequently than that of her male colleagues.

Yes, yes, absolutely. They can question me about everything because I am a woman, they think that because I am a woman they have the ability to answer me back, my word is not immediately valid, as it was valid with male professor colleagues.

As a summary, these interviews expose how certain attitudes and behaviors can be everyday examples of gender violence in the educational field creating an environment where their voices are perceived as less valid than that of their male colleagues. These practices not only perpetuate gender inequality, but also affect the school climate and limit the professional development of female teachers.

### **Actions and Interactions**

This section highlights the events where addressing or experiencing gender violence took center stage, exploring the nature of their actions and responses taken. It will be divided into three main sections. The first section encompasses acts of gender violence as well as perpetrator, the different types of violences, in addition to feminist traits. The second part

involves prevention regarding measures to address violence. In the last part there will be responses to gender-based violence from teachers.

### **Acts of gender violence.**

This subcategory emerges from the actions and interactions revolved around different issues of gender violence. In this part female teachers recognized several aspects that perpetuate gender-based violence towards them while constituting routines within the institutions: firstly, female teachers acknowledged who are the people involved in the perpetuations of gender-based violence. Secondly, the different types of violence exercised against them. Thirdly, the implicit relationship between power in the school in concordance with the normalization of certain actions. And finally, female teachers recognized gender-based violence as a present aspect of day to day life, while simultaneously reflecting the appearance of a generational change regarding feminist traits.

### ***Students and tutors as violence perpetrators.***

In regards to this matter, female teachers stated that students tend to be the first ones exercising violence towards them and their classmates, only then followed by their tutors. Teachers were aware that this issue is commonly repeated within schools. While some of them characterized it as something expectable or normal in the eyes of students due to their context, others teachers could not identify just one factor attributable to violence, but saw it as the consequence of multiple other elements. In addition, teachers' testimonies display a perception of students as victims of physical and verbal violence by tutors that can relate to their normalization of violence.

To illustrate the matter, the following quote was provided by Lexi; who alleges the conflict from students towards her was due because male students hold personal issues with their mothers. Lexi reflects that the problem lies in female authority within the classroom, relating this issue with students' contexts, in this case at home.

But the gender violence that I experienced was the part of the students because it was a mixed school (...) and there were many students who had conflicts with their

mothers. So they projected this on women, not only in female teachers, but in the girls students too, like his dislike of women.

On the other hand, Karen states that she was a victim of violence when she was in her first year working as a teacher, almost ten years ago. However, she associates this violence with her age and gender. Moreover, Karen acknowledges that nowadays, violence towards teachers in general tends to arise from tutors.

In early years it was more prominent. I was also younger and less experienced. They bully me (...) they ignore you more, due to you being a woman when you performed the lesson they did not pay attention. They look down one's nose at. Because you are young and a woman.

Likewise, Gilda states a similar idea during her interview as she, now in her second year working, has had to report violent attitudes from a male towards female students and herself, directly associating this to a gender fixation.

With a male teacher he would never fight as he does with us (...) with female students he was physically violent. He spitted a girl in her clothes. He had threatened other students, all women by sure. These types of things, with me he raised his voice sometimes. He tried to act in a violent attitude. His physical language is spoken by him. With other female teachers we have spoken that he is going to stand up and hit as. Really, all his body language exudes violence.

As affirmed by previously mentioned data, female teachers comprise most victims of violence in schools at the hands of both students and tutors, something that correlates directly with the statements of the analyzed interviews. This connection of data is highlighted as female teachers proved keen in their testimonies at recognizing subjects involved in the exertion of violence towards them, the reasons behind these actions, and which kind of violence was displayed.

Although students are the first group identified as involved in acts of violence towards teachers, the second, composed of parents and tutors, were characterized as relevant in their involvement with the formation of students. Teachers state a sense of normalization with

violence that students carry with themselves for what they see in their families. Furthermore, by describing the type of violence tutors employ around their pupils, teachers identify verbal, physical abuse, in-person, and online harassment.

Similarly, Valery declared that she was the victim of tutors twice; initially she received harassment from a student's parent, first the students harassed her in school, then the parent sending multiple mails to administration. And the last time a student's tutor tried to hit her.

Once I had a female student that tried to cancel me, precisely, due to gender-based violence, because according to her I have not done absolutely anything to defend another female student that was being harassed by a male student. It was funny, because the student did not know who the girl was or where this happened. There was any clue. And the other thing was on another occasion a tutor tried to hit me.

Sigrid, who is a teacher that considers herself as non feminist, relates education as a table of three legs, on one side you have students, in other families, and lastly school. She stated that these three legs should work in balance; in contrast, she affirmed families were the ones that did not collaborate further. Besides Families blame the school and the teachers.

Because teachers were complicated, the school was complicated. And the best way was to come to the school and create a riot, shouting at the old lady (...) because we were not female teachers, we were the old ladies and insults (...) What did the grandmother of a student do? (...) She came to fight at school and waited outside for the head teacher of her grandson.

Karen expressed in the interview nowadays the violence came from tutors more than students. In agreement with the previous teachers she also stated that verbal abuse was a common type of violence, followed by harassment and physical violence.

Look today, the ones that are more involved in violence are tutors (...) you make an appointment with them, and they look at you as a weak woman, they insult you, and they lack the respect for you (...) but yes, they raises their hand to scare you and shouted through the hallways of the schools.

To conclude, the most proximate environment from students are their parents and tutors, by extension they are the second that exert violence to female teachers. According to Colegio de Profesoras y Profesores (2023) parents and tutor are more likely to perform three different forms of violence: verbal abuse is the most regular, then harassment which can be in person or online through social networks, or physical violence, and this last one is the less prominent from the mentioned above.

### *Type of violence exercised against female teachers.*

As stated in the literature review, female teachers do not only experience gender-based violence from students and tutors, but also from colleagues, administrations, and staff. Hence, the subsequent examples will provide the type of violence experiences by female teachers in which not only students and parents are involved.

Following the last year survey done by Colegio de Profesoras y Profesores (2023), they classify the violence in teacher in four categories: insults which means verbal abuse, threats or harassment in person or through social media which can be seen as psychological violence, physical violence, lastly sexual violence. Consequently, female educators clustered insults, threats and harassment as one type of violence. In addition, male colleagues exerted this violence through jokes or comments. The above mention was perceive as psychological violence by them; similarly, they recognized physical violence just from students and tutors (addressed in the previous section), and none of them recognize sexual violence directly to them, eventhough one them experimented sexual violence.

### *Verbal abuse is the most routinely violence against female teachers.*

In agreement with the literature and the answers of the interviewers, verbal abuse in all the sub themes such as insults, threats, harassment, ill-intentioned comments and jokes are the current most identified types of violence against them. However, this type of violence was executed, as mentioned before, not only by students or tutors, as it can be colleagues, administrations, principals, or other members of the staff.

Helen mentioned that her male colleagues, who are under 30 years old, gave ill-intentioned comments and jokes to provoke. She manifests that this behavior is to get attention, in contrast female teachers under 30 years old are less afraid to confront these comments, she recognizes that they came empowered.

At the moment, I have met women, female colleagues younger than me, who came empowered in this topic, and they do not doubt in this matter, under any circumstance of gender topic (...) and in other moments, I have witnessed certain comments or jokes provoking to grab attention in general. To obtain an answer. To start a conversation, to break the ice very poorly, a lousy resource used. I perceived this in younger male teachers, I said younger meaning under 30 years old. And I say, this person with the mentality and how times have changed, he can't be serious. So, I have managed to realize that sometimes they do it as a resource of provocation or to grab attention.

Similarly related to Lexi, she received inappropriate comments from a male colleague.

In fact, the male teacher of physical education told us female teachers that we were silly. You are silly, you don't think. Because he was super masculine, he knew (...) women don't know, don't know.

In the same line, Consuelo stated that this year they have a new male colleague who set the alarms due to sexist comments.

And this new male colleague has raised several alarms about being a little bit chauvinist, like very much. So, he has said comments regarding women that have obviously not been well received (...) Moreover, there are still complaints from the students regarding the teacher's treatment of the girls.

To conclude, younger male teachers normally interact with sexist comments or jokes, whether they want to establish a conversation, or introduce an icebreaker. Furthermore, young male teachers tend to take less responsibilities in schools. This practice showed that female teachers and male teachers coexist in different realities, and despite generational changes, male teachers remain clinging to obsolete customs where women are still diminished due to gender. This type of violence can be included in ideas of Segato (2003) regarding moral violence, stating that violence can be perpetuated by co-workers in subtle manners which involves emotional aggression.

*Physical violence as part of everyday in teachers' life.*

Physical violence, as shared by teachers, and in agreement with previously stated ideas in the literature review, is another type of violence that can be found in schools. Although it is less prominent than verbal abuse, it affects teachers in general, albeit more female teachers. Educators confirm that when this type of violence occurred, they felt that protocols were lacking, parents or tutors should apologize too, and the punishment the student receives is not enough compared with the feeling of being mistreated.

This year, Karen reported an episode of physical violence with a student. She was hit in her breast by him. The protocol was activated and the student was suspended. Nevertheless she felt something else could have been done and she waited for an apology from tutors which never happened.

(...) Yes, this year a student hit me in my breast. And I reported it, they activated the protocol and the boy was suspended. It was for free (...) I was in my free time, I heard a male student, and I got closer to him to see him, I thought something was happening to this student. And he came to me, angry, he started to kick things and I was walking when he approached me and hit me. And then he left (...) I would want the school to make better amends. Beside the suspension, I would like that the school notifies the tutor that they need to talk to me, and maybe ask for my apologies.

In that matter, Valery declared that the same day that she left with medical leave due to student's harassment and a tutor tried to exert violence towards her, a male student kicked another female teacher.

I took my medical leave on five of may, and that same day a male student kicked a female teacher. And nothing was done. After that, teachers were on strike due to this situation.

Even though this type of violence is less common nowadays in female teachers' life, it is still present in routines within the school context; whether teachers perceive this violence against them, are physically involved, or witness violent behavior towards other students, colleagues,

or staff. In conclusion, teachers agree that this violence came from student's homes, and most of the time protocols are bureaucratic and not enough to repair the damage caused.

### *Sexual violence.*

According to previously stated data, the least experienced form of violence perpetrated against female teachers is sexual violence. Nevertheless, it remains the most degrading situation that a worker can experience. The perpetrators collected by data go from students concentrating the majority of cases, to male colleagues, principals, administration, and others.

From the interviewees, just one of them addresses this topic. Butler (2011), settles that sexual violence includes types of aggression that not only affects body but also reaffirm domination over bodies, which are perceived as vulnerable, a feeling shared by female teachers.

Lexi, was the only teacher that manifest sexual abuse against her and her female colleagues.

(...) We had male students that masturbate in the classroom. And we talked about it in a teacher meeting. Many of us cried because we felt outrage due to the act of seeing that. The meeting ended at four thirty. At four thirty the principal looked at us and asked does anyone have anything else to say? He replied no, nothing. We stand up and leave. Then, I do not talk to anyone, nothing.

In this sensitive matter, Lexi did not receive support from the Principal, nor from other male colleagues, while she and other female teachers were victims of this situation. In this particular case, the lack of support is associated with the Christian ideals of the school, and an evangelical perspective on values.

### *Power dynamics.*

This subcategory was recognized as something present in daily aspects of teacher lives according to their testimonies. Power dynamics are understood as a form of subtle violence inserted within the school environment. As stated by teachers, the relation between school administration and them, create an environment where power relationships arise.

In some of the teachers' answers, it was pointed out that these relationships allow the continued perpetuation of gender violence with harmful consequences to them and students. These power relations can be understood as symbolic power according to the literature review. Yet, this type of violence is not always physical, even though one of the teachers witnesses physical abuse from a principal toward a secretary. Bourdieu (2000) states this violence as careless and invisible to victims, in this case female teachers.

In the case of power dynamics, Gilda acknowledges that for some important positions in the school, male are preferred over female educators, and due to the same dynamic students show more respect to them.

In the school, there are more women than men, but definitely important positions are obtained by men (...) and because they are male teachers and a few, kids think about them as authority figures without even questioning why they do that.

In Cindy, she indicates that older teachers use power dynamics to exert violence, in this specific case to female students. The students felt uncomfortable with a dance in which their male classmates had to touch their waist for a long period of time. Those students talked to Cindy to find a solution.

I talked with the school coexistence manager, and told them, you know what? A student told me about this situation. And the school coexistence manager answered me: it can be sorted out, boys go in front of the line and girls in the back (...) if it is not possible we can make a separation between them to create two circles, closer but without touching each other. She advised me to talk with the female teacher of physical education. I explained the entire situation to that teacher and I told her that the ideal will be that girls go in the back and boys in front of the line all together, without any problem of feeling uncomfortable or touching other students. The teacher reacted in a threatening way and answered back I will ask who are those seven girls and I am going to talk to them (...) her solution was to discount points of their grade to those students who did not want to be touched by their male classmates.

Lisa on the other hand, when answering the questions of how she perceived gender-based violence within the school context, she addressed directly to power dynamics between female students, she stated that this situation is less now than before, but still exists.

I think that until today between female students it happened or what I've heard at least. To perceive your classmates as a weak person, or as a persona that I can be disrespectful towards them in some ways.

In conclusion, symbolic violence is a phenomenon that can be perpetuated against any members of the school community, as stated by the testimony of educators. This is understood as a multifaceted problem which can occur between a male over a female teacher, a teacher over students, or between students. Due to the subtle way perpetuations are executed, it becomes an issue more difficult to address, as it is invisible, insensible, and exerted through communication and knowledge (Bourdieu, 2000).

On the other hand, when acts of violence are perceived as normal in the school due to gender inequality, as described by interviewees and the literature, it is considered another type of subtle violence, also invisible, and with detrimental consequences to educators.

Normalization can be any type of violence which devalues female teachers' work within the school. In this regard, teachers recognized the following aspects as normalized: violent treatment in students' homes; normalizations of gestures as harmless, perpetuated harassment, normalizations of sexist attitudes, the use of language reinforcing gender stereotypes, making derogatory comments, or mansplaining, among others.

When Lexi responds to the question which factors contribute to violence in the school? She name students' families, and declared for students is normal to treat you bad, because they are used to be treat in that way. She normalized the students' situations without notice.

Well, kids that see violence in their home and they are used to being treated with violence. I think it's fundamental. I think kids projected what they see. Then, it's normal to treat other people as how they are treated at home, because in their home they hear shouts, using bad language or violently. This is something that they learn in their houses.

Dissimilarly, Cindy recognizes some normalization of gestures, as a kiss that seems harmless, can perpetuate harassment towards someone, in this particular case an older female colleague perpetuates harassment against a younger male teacher.

And this female colleague arrived, and gave him a kiss on his head, besides to be considered invasive, she didn't have to do that, it's, how can I say? To overlook someone, diminish, like my little boy, because if it was the other way around, a man to a woman, it would be disastrous.

As stated in the previous section by Helen, young male teachers have normalized sexist attitudes towards female counterpart. They perpetuated this through humor or comments, without fear of consequences. For her, it is particularly curious, and perceived as a form to create unnecessary complications with other female colleagues.

In other opportunities, I have witnessed certain comments or jokes to provoke or to grab the attention. To generate a response. To start a conversation, as a bad icebreaker, the worst resource to employ. Because I have perceived this in young men, I said young men are less than 30s.

Conversely Sigrid, who is a language teacher, identifies that the Principal of the school always tried to advise her in terms of grammatical structure without even dominating the subject. She acknowledges this, but does not recognise it as mansplaining.

The Principal went to see an online class by another female educator, and he told her that the only thing she needs to improve is the word *aiga*, instead of *haya*. And then all of us laugh. It was true, he tried to correct without even having a proper study.

In conclusion, this type of violence is challenging to perceive, it forms parts of the routines in school context as it seeks to control and harm female teachers in subtle manners. Due to the invisibilization, some teachers such as Sigrid and Lexi are not aware of the consequences of these situations, as both of them recognize that it should not happen, yet it is not distinguished as a real issue. In contrast, Helen and Cindy identified these attitudes which may seem harmless, as a perpetuation of violence or unnecessary.

***Gender-based violence as an aspect of day to day life, and generational change regarding feminist traits.***

This question is the first one that all female teachers answered, if they recognized gender-based violence in school context. Educators agreed it is an important phenomenon which is common in their day to day life in school. It is present in multiple ways, and can directly or indirectly affect women due to their gender. Moreover discrimination and harassment to female educators has historically made them face challenges, biases, and disempowerment. Educators in their answers underscore this situation while giving their opinion on how to improve this situation.

Lexi remarked that she perceived in all aspects of life, not only in school context, also in universities with male teachers as predominant abusers.

I perceive gender-based violence daily. Then I think that in every aspect men receive more respect even though laws. Like men know about everything. The men can be a judge. It cannot be a woman judge. Even the same male teachers tell my daughter that she cannot be an assistant because she is a woman.

In addition, Cindy addressed the topic that it is politically incorrect to recognize nowadays an institution as not feminist. However, with the pedagogical practices they show the contrary, with a hidden curriculum more present in the creation of school material.

It is always hidden underneath. Of course it's never obvious. They do not portray themselves as not feminist, or that they do not consider themselves as feminist. But it's obvious in their pedagogical practices and in the development and creation of school material.

Similarly to Cindy, Katrina said that it is a problem when you state a position which is not in agreement with your actions.

Mostly between adults, and there is a difference between something you do and something you say. I think it's violent when you say I believe in feminism and in gender equality, but at the end in her personal life she discriminates, she gives bad treatments to others (...) our daily routines when you stated that you value all people, but i don't even say hello, it is much more violent, and dangerous when you applied this to a specific gender over the other.

In conclusion, gender-based violence as an aspect of day to day life is present in all aspects of education, with female teachers as victims and in other times as perpetrators, as it was shown in previous subcategories.

As a response to gender-based violence and as a consequence from the earliest feminist movement, it appears a generational change regarding feminist traits. Older female educators portrait younger female educators as empowered, ready to debate about gender violence, and fearless to express themselves and settle boundaries. Helen perceives in the younger women generation a change in mentality which is reflected in their actions.

At the moment, I have found too with women, colleagues, younger female educators, that came much more empowered, and they do not judge under any circumstances gender themes (...) they do not have fear to debate, raise dissimilar perspectives (...)

In agreement with Helen, Lisa mentioned that younger students in this case, showed more fraternity among themselves, the act in a sisterly manner.

Generationally, I think girls nowadays have a very different relationship from adults. I perceive, for example, even in younger grades that I have, that little girls have more sorority relationships than older girls. They are more sisterly, they support each other. I also perceive this in older grades that I have.

Cindy also agreed with the previous teachers, but she applied the concept of sorority to teachers, in contrast to older generations of female educators, that until today showed aversion towards their younger female colleagues.

(...) of course, it exists in younger generations I think. The sorority is a fact among us, you can count on it. but it does not happen with other teachers (...) In older generations there is still this idea of competence among women. They say I'm better than you, or maybe I'm not better than you, but I still diminish your work to be less than me.

To conclude, female educators in general recognized sorority in younger generations more present than before. However with older generations of female teachers there is still a gap. Older educators interviewed stated that among them still exist a tendency to diminish other women. While younger teachers interviewed do not only recognize sorority as an important aspect between them, but also state a generational gap of ideas. However, as stated by Cindy, older educators may show empathy to gender issues or make efforts to educate themselves in this matter.

#### ***Prevention of gender violence.***

Due to the commonness of violence discussed in most examined settings, the imperative need for prevention also became apparent. In this matter, teachers demonstrated a wide range of understanding and capacity for reflection regarding the existing safeguard mechanisms, punitive actions, and the possibility of other effective measures more akin to the nature of teaching. Accordingly, this section underlines the most relevant elements of prevention against gender violence as identified, expressed, perceived, and proposed by female teachers.

#### ***Administrative measures.***

In matters of prevention and administrative action, a small number of teachers described initiatives of training programs as responses to active issues, and policies associated with their work life at school. This element was previously foreseen during the formulation of interview questions, which in turn gave way for important insights regarding the effectiveness and dynamics of training programs concerning school gender violence.

The following quote is given when the interviewer asks Consuelo about this specific type of measures taken as a result of gender violence. The teacher in this case had previously stated that, in her point of view, barriers for the effectiveness of protocols lie between those who hear the accounts of gender violence, and their actions expected in response. Following this up when expressing her account of a training course, she highlights the occurrence of this as a whole school approach instead of being limited to teachers, since this occurred due to the appearance of Karin law:

(...) there have been training sessions, when the Karin Law was introduced, there were training sessions. The people from the mutual insurance company came to give the training. And at that time, all the... all the workers had to participate. Not just the teachers (...) when information about internal regulations is provided, it's given to everyone, to all the staff at the school

Dissimilarly in another interview, Katrina mentions how her school holds arrangements with different institutions, promoting different training programs only for teachers. This one in particular had a focus on gender diversity and done by a foundation specialized in the topic:

I remember one that was very significant, which was with Todo Mejora, that taught us a lot about the concepts related to gender diversity and sexual diversity, as well as the effects, which I believe are very sensitive, of how the lack of respect for students' gender identity impacts them.

Yet, Katrina believes that if not received properly, these sessions fall flat on their objective:

(...) I can say that I spent 10 hours in a training session, but if I was playing on my phone, the truth is that it doesn't have much effect.

Based on the above, it is possible to conclude that the usage of training courses for the increase of awareness regarding gender violence were identified as potentially effective measures, but highly reliant on active participation and commitment by the school staff. And even though the preparation of teachers to address this issue is considered a crucial element against gender violence, as stated by Prezentszky et al. (2018), a whole school approach like

in Consuelo's account are declared by the same authors as just as relevant if not more due to this being a phenomenon related to all staff involved.

Additionally in terms of management, the people involved in them has been a recurring theme throughout many topics, being also directly correlated to the possibility of preventative actions. On Lisa's account we can see this clearly when she refers to a management team composed only by women and its effectiveness to promote more equality in the workplace. Lisa explains that due to her single-gender school only allowing women to be head teachers, she perceives an overwhelming amount of responsibilities placed on female teachers only.

Normally, there are, I don't know, actions or certain situations in which we are asked, for example, to be present (...) they feel no obligation to be present at certain activities, It's like they themselves delegate that responsibility only to the female head teacher (...) this year we have a management team that consists only of women, and we have also voiced this issue and tried to make them take on responsibilities as well.

Even though this remains as the only testimony on the subject of female management teams, the works of Monroe et al. (2008) state in similar manners that in order to avoid the devaluation of women's work within institutions, equal responsibilities for both genders are one of the most important factors to keep in mind.

### ***Karin law.***

The prevention of violence, and transgression of people's dignity within the workplace is the focus of the well known Karin law, a policy discussed through most interviews that with recent reforms seeks to ensure principles of confidentiality, impartiality, and conciseness for administrative procedures while also incorporating a gender perspective into them. However, teachers' perspectives on the matter have been decidedly mixed; some views are expressed through critical lens to see this law as an initial step towards better conditions of work, while others argue that its scope and applicability are limited by its focus being too broad for educational settings.

In the subsequent observation, the teacher Helen, when asked about discrimination being present at her workplace states that in general terms she does not believe there is, but that

some male colleagues tend to make sexist comments in discreet ways, attempting to not make their intentions obvious; something she directly associates with the arrival of Karin law.

Now, I believe that with the Karin law, which was recently approved, there has been a lot more awareness about the issue, and I feel that people take more care, but not because they have really internalized it as values; they take care to avoid getting into trouble with the law, due to legal concerns.

Helen believes that Karin law can only work as an effective deterrent in the face of sexism being that this does not correlate with a change of intentions, but just the fear of repercussions when being confronted. A fear also present in testimonies from other teachers, but for different reasons.

In Cindy's case, she states that during a social gathering with her colleagues, an uninvited teacher felt left behind because they were not as close to her as to the rest. This resulted in an altercation which got administration involved and in turn created a fear of being reported by the likes of Karin law.

When I arrived, she told me, 'Oh, they didn't let me, they didn't let me participate' (...) And then, the following week, when we had to bring the things, we found out that she hadn't gone to report it to the UTP (...) And in the end, we talked about it, and it was like, I mean, the fear was that she might almost accuse us

Another of the interviewees, Consuelo, indicates that for cases of gender violence in her school, no protocols or channels had been made a priori to the apparition of Karin law. When asked for her opinion regarding the school policies made in response to the law, she states them to be slow but effective.

There is a protocol where there must be an organ composed of members of the school's administration and teachers, and these reports must be brought to these people. In fact, there's an email specified for filing these reports (...) But of course, now there is something that can regulate these kinds of things, yes.

Even so, when asked if she and her colleagues reflect upon the law, the pedagogue states a critical viewpoint in relation to the general format given to the policy itself.

(...) it was discussed because part of the Karin Law addresses the violence towards people to whom services are provided. The Karin Law is viewed at the company level. And in this way, it is set up to be implemented within schools, but there is no specific regulation for schools.

In conclusion of the matter, all testimonies decidedly show a complicated picture of how Karin Law is currently being applied in educational settings. Although the law has brought attention to the problems of gender violence and sexism, its effect on real behavioral change, and workplace relationships are still debatable. As expressed by Prezensky et al. (2018) and Parkes (2016), laws and policies have proven to be an effective tool for the prevention of gender violence according to international literature, but these can be rendered ineffective if there exists a disconnection with local perspectives and knowledge in the issue being addressed, something possibly being exemplified in the Chilean context through these testimonies.

### ***Practices.***

Throughout the literature, the potential of schools to act as transformative spaces for addressing gender-based violence is highlighted as an important, and sometimes untapped element at the hands of teachers. Nonetheless, gathered testimonies reveal interest, active efforts, and proposals for raising awareness within the school community on this issue.

The following testimony comes from Helen, who after being asked what she considers is needed to free the school from violence, states that there is need to work on prevention around students. The interviewee characterizes the needed preventive approach as one necessarily equipped with resources, specialists, and an immediate evaluation of results.

And for that, we need specialists in educational fields who dedicate 100% of their time to these topics, a space where work is truly focused on these topics, with specialists, with guidance, with resources (...). For me, it has to be aimed at the students, always at them, because they are the new generations (...). There should be a

time that is not just filler, where we'll do this, but rather, that the educational project integrates these actions to focus on prevention more than reaction.

It is worth noting that, due to Helen's self-identification as non-feminist, she is only asked about violence instead of gender violence, yet the direction of the entire interview remained on the latter as she actively acknowledged this as the main issue discussed in need of addressing.

Consuelo similarly refers to the use of education to prevent future acts of gender violence. In her case, the teacher states that schools need to be open to the discussion of these subjects, and just like Helen states a need for professionals to teach them.

Because, of course, schools teach a lot of different subjects, but the things related to social matters are not being taught. And these should be things that are taught by education professionals to the students to prevent these kinds of situations from happening

In summary, the shared testimonies underline the crucial role that schools should play in avoiding gender-based violence, emphasizing an important need in the implementation of key educational strategies and resources. Their opinions reflect the belief that, if actively integrated, education may be an effective instrument in combating gender violence.

When asked about how their gender beliefs were put into practice, all teachers, including those self-identified as non-feminist shared a common sentiment of respect and its importance for proper social understanding among students. Some notable examples are provided by Lexi and Gilda, who respectively talk about specific ways in which their feminist practices are applied inside the classroom to promote gender equality.

In Lexi's case, her focus goes into fostering a deep sense of respect for both individual identity and collective well-being between female students.

Well, instilling respect, first of all the identity of being a woman, respect among themselves, respect towards others, and that they assert their rights and are respected in their work, in everything they do.

In Gilda's case, her strategy to achieve gender equality focuses on actively opposing traditional gender stereotypes while emphasizing female representation usually unseen.

I always try to give more feminine examples than masculine ones, especially in positions of power, like talking about female presidents instead of male presidents, female artists instead of male artists, that kind of thing. In sentences, for example, not to say 'the girl washes the clothes and the boy plays soccer,' but rather the opposite.

For both teachers, promoting gender equality involves creating an environment where female students can feel empowered, and validated while engaging in respectful dialogue, challenging a conservative view of gender roles. A sentiment shared through most other interviews who express using similar techniques. These practices, by focusing on social norms and addressing them within the classroom, become something Jiménez-Moya et al. (2022) address in their study, as their conclusion states that the use of social norms' power over the institution is what can really promote social change among students.

### ***Responses to violence.***

The many acts of gender violence throughout interviews, and the reactions delivered by female teachers in response to them constitute important elements of analysis. In this subcategory, the process of reporting violence, finding ways to endure the emotional consequences of violence, and the engagement of opinions regarding this topic, are incorporated in an effort to further understand the phenomenon of gender violence, specifically in how female teachers react to them.

### ***Reporting violence.***

In the act of reporting violence, several experiences reveal diverse viewpoints regarding the topic and how it is addressed. Educators express direct willingness to report incidents of violence by emphasizing communication, they question the effectiveness of current methods and reparations, and highlight the rise of feminist social movements as influential to current processes.



To begin, the testimony of Consuelo referring to a male teacher, who recently had been put under investigation for sexist tendencies and comments, has allowed direct insight into the process of reporting from a third person perspective. Consuelo shows in her account an active willingness to report any and all information she had on this particular teacher.

Because one of my colleagues, directly, told me what was happening, and I communicated it, saying, 'Look, this is what's going on.' Apart from that, there was also the fact that this professor is a bit of a harasser and also makes unpleasant comments. And those were the comments I had to report to my boss so she could keep an eye on that professor.

On a different note, Gilda, when discussing aspects of gender violence and its relation to students' and teachers' behavior, questions the effectiveness of present undertakings and reporting. This is said to be a topic commonly discussed around their colleagues, who share the opinion of the system requiring further efforts at understanding the core issue.

(...) what leads to such violent reactions from students and also from the staff, from teachers. Among teachers, what leads us to treat each other the way we do? (...) We try to have a conversation about where it comes from, to also find ways to stop it.

This account shares a very important similarity with Karen's testimony, who after sharing an anecdote of a violence act she suffered, states the feeling of the entire administrative process being insufficiently reparative for her.

Yes, this year a child hit me in the chest. (...) I reported it, and they were supposed to follow the protocol, and the child was suspended (...) They listened to me, but I expected the measures to be a bit more reparative, but no. Aside from the suspension, I would have liked them to have asked the tutor to speak with me, I don't know, maybe to apologize.

Finally, a very interesting topic arises from Katrina's interview, where the teacher associates feminist movements from 2018 with the rise of new understandings on gender violence. Katrina directly links these new understandings to the social judgment and willingness to report found in a situation of abuse between a male teacher and a student.

(...) I believe that this started around 2018, which triggered protocols and concepts that are now very clear in society. I'm not sure if everyone, but definitely the majority, understands that a teacher cannot be in a relationship with a student because that is abuse. It is abuse for an adult to be with a minor (...) And in that, I had to participate by reporting a teacher.

To conclude, these experiences reflect certain difficulties and complexities within the educational system when it comes to reporting acts of violence. Nevertheless, the willingness shown not only to help others and assist, but to question the current effectiveness of the system itself displays an active role of commitment from female teachers, which is in certain cases directly associated with feminism.

### ***Finding alternatives to desertion.***

The topic of desertion through many of the interviews proved to be a difficult point of conversation for female teachers, whose situations were as complex as unique. The following accounts reveal a professional and emotional challenge attained after becoming victims of gender violence, a challenge which led to the idea of desertion, but was eventually overcome through personal efforts.

On Lisa's testimony, after experiencing an incident of gender violence leading her to consider the possibility of desertion, this is eventually brushed aside once she finds support among her students. Lisa states that she was able to find strength to continue in what she describes as a "beautiful" occurrence.

I think that situation and the post-pandemic are the only two times I've thought, first, of leaving the school, and second, of stopping teaching. (...) But I also think something very beautiful happened to me during that time with the girls. (...) On the contrary, it was like I found a lot of affection and support from the girls.

Similarly, in Karen's account she explains how during her career as a teacher, after experiencing gender violence, she begins to question the possibility of continuing this path.

Nevertheless, the teacher eventually learns that with the proper approaches to these events of violence, and with adequate formation, things can improve and return to normality.

For example, motivation, commitment. Look, in the first years, I questioned a lot whether I should keep working as a teacher. (...) In fact, I even considered studying something else. (...) I started to have maybe a bit more strategies for managing groups, for how to approach, and knowing the protocols that one might need to follow. After that, it... it passed

In both exposed cases, the testimonies show a profound challenge that is dealing with gender violence, but which does not decisively determine the career path of female teachers. The support from students, and the institutional framework can play a crucial role at helping educators victims of violence continue their professional journey. Providing resources and occasions of support for them can then be determined as an appropriate approach for reparations.

### *Difference in opinions.*

When asked about the possibility of differing opinions among female and male teachers, responses varied in tone and the subjects of disagreement. In the following accounts, the dynamics of gender violence are highlighted in these disagreements through a perceived gendered power structure, and interpersonal tensions between colleagues.

Firstly, on Gilda's testimony it is highlighted how a gendered imbalance among male and female teachers influences their willingness to comment on certain topics, as male teachers do not empathize with the experiences of their female colleagues. She states that positions of power within the school are mostly occupied by males, leaving them unaffected by problems of gender.

I have very few male colleagues, and the truth is that they don't really share much of their opinions either. The truth is that the school works with more women than men. But definitely, positions of more power are held by men. So, the men don't share much of their opinion, because for them, maybe, that kind of violence doesn't affect them

Secondly, in Helen's interview, a shift of focus is put into the internal divisions among male and female colleagues. She describes how some female colleagues, willing to break bonds with others, take a stand against sexist practices of male teachers.

Situations that have been shared with me regarding comments and the female voice, in this case, which have come forward and directly confronted the issue. So, from there, these rifts between women have been created, among colleagues, women who are willing to maintain that division.

Together, these perspectives into the matter of differing opinions display interesting interactions regarding the matter of gender violence. As understood by Krahe (2017), this phenomenon in of itself lies on the foundation of a societal consensus where male and female must follow different roles, something clearly reflected within these educational institutions where experiences differ and clash.

## **Consequences**

This section explores the outcomes of gender violence experienced by the participants of this study. It will be divided into three main sections. The first one encloses direct consequences in the teachers' lives which consider the emotional and health aspect. Furthermore, the second section describes how colleagues are a key part in creating a supportive environment after a violent act. Finally, the third one delves into the impact that the violence phenomenon has on the professional aspect for the teachers.

### ***Consequences in the teachers' lives.***

Gender-based violence not only transgresses the principles of equality and respect but also deeply affects women's lives. In that regard, this subcategory encompasses the negative impact that gender violence has on the general well-being of female teachers. It involves two main dimensions. The first one is related to the consequences that violence has in the teachers' lives, such as emotional repercussions and professional discouragement. Closely related, the second dimension directly points to the teachers' health.

### *Emotional consequences.*

This dimension emerged from the participants' testimonies in which they described several repercussions after experiencing violent acts in their workplaces. In that sense, these consequences pointed directly to a detriment in their emotional wellbeing and a loss of professional motivation. In relation to that, Wilhelmina (2018) established that teachers' emotional responses to violence in schools includes fear, helplessness, and a sense of isolation when confronted with such an issue.

In view of this, when asked by the interviewer if she had been affected by violent events that took place at school, teacher Karen pointed out that within her first years teaching this reality was quite worrying for her and deeply impacted her emotional wellbeing. This can be identified in the following comment she made during her interview:

Look, during the first years I even cried because it was really shocking the violent way the students treated me.

Closely related, Karen described a physical violence act she suffered from a third grade student and how it impacted her wellbeing. She described what she felt in that moment as follows:

I was affected with the hit I received, I was in a big shock. In fact, I stayed standing and did not know what to do. And of course, I was thinking all day why I ran into him.

On the other hand, professional motivation is another aspect impacted by violence in schools. As an example, what was mentioned by teacher Consuelo can be taken into account since she experienced it after suffered harassment by a student who demanded that she delete a negative annotation. The teacher described how she felt with the following words:

Yes, it did affect me. It affected me with the issue of motivation, I did not really want to work because I knew I had to face seeing this student every day.

The experiences shared by teachers like Karen and Consuelo highlight the profound effects of violence acts on both the emotional and professional side. In the case of Karen, her emotional distress which resulted from verbal and physical abuse illustrates the lasting impact that these incidents can have. Similarly, Consuelo's experience with harassment shows how continued exposure to violent situations can negatively affect professional motivation, generating a sense of fear and diminishing passion for teaching.

### ***Health negative repercussions.***

In addition to the dimension previously described, it was identified that female teachers also suffer health negative repercussions after the violent events they have to face in their workplaces. In view of that, the interviewed teachers gave valuable testimonies that indicate how this phenomenon can compromise their wellbeing.

In the case of Sigrid, she described that after certain violent situations and disagreements at the school she worked at, it was common for teachers to have negative feelings that could even lead to a psychological leave. It can be identified in the following excerpt of her interview:

(...) Then, suddenly, getting to the point of vomiting your rage out loud was useful. And on other occasions, get home, and more than once in previous years of practice, a leave with psychological treatment.

Closely related, Valery mentioned that during her stay at the school where she previously worked, the environment was so violent that it had serious consequences for her as she described with the subsequent words:

I could not go out, I had a leave for all those months, I was on medication. I changed jobs permanently.

To sum up, the testimonies shared by Sigrid and Valery highlight the medical repercussions that can emerge from threatening work environments. As teachers are a key part in the educational process, these experiences underscore the urgent need for schools to generate a

supportive atmosphere for teachers by safeguarding their mental health and ensuring professional stability.

### **Supportive workplaces for teachers.**

This subcategory embraces supportive outcomes that took place in the educational context after the participants suffered gender violence in their workplaces. This will be explained considering two main categories. The first one is related to the feeling of security of female teachers when they develop their profession in a workplace where women predominate. In addition, the second dimension explores supportive practices among colleagues after facing a violent act.

#### ***Women feeling safe in female-dominated spaces.***

Throughout the development of this research, it was possible to identify that the participating teachers carry out their work in diverse educational contexts. This is reflected both in the subsidy of the establishment and in those who form part of the school community. The latter refers to if the school is mixed or single-sex and whether one gender predominates over the other among its staff. This dimension arose from this idea, since during the interviews some teachers stated that they felt more comfortable in workplaces where there was more female presence than male as a consequence of men being more prone to violent acts than women. Following that line, Segato (2003) stated that aggressive behaviour is often perpetrated by male figures such as supervisors or colleagues.

In that sense, while being interviewed, teacher Lisa described an unfortunate situation she had to go through in her workplace. Specifically, this was a direct discrimination against her for being a mother, which she faced with the support of another female colleague who defended her, as Lisa indicated:

And a colleague of mine at the time who was a Spanish teacher, whom I really appreciated, saw that I was very affected and immediately told the other person, you can't answer her like that. Motherhood is not a problem, the problem is you.

Similarly, Lisa stated that while she was going through difficult moments when she had limited time due to raising her baby, she found great support from her female students as she indicated with the following words:

But I think that something very nice happened to me during that time with the girls. And that is why I tell you that I feel that these generations are very different. Because I never had a comment like "Oh, look how the teacher came" or "Look, the teacher is tired." On the contrary, I found a lot of affection, a lot of support from the girls.

In addition, teacher Consuelo mentioned that in her school the predominantly female presence reduced the possibility of suffering violent acts. It can be identified in the following extract from her interview:

In my school, it is not as much as in other schools, because in fact, for example, if we look at the students, the majority are women. And if we look at the teachers, the majority are also women. There are very few men in the school.

The testimonies shared by teachers Lisa and Consuelo reveal how the educational context and gender composition in institutions can significantly influence the perception of safety and support at work. In particular, the situations faced by Lisa due to her role as a mother, and the support she received from both her colleague and her students, illustrate the importance of sisterhood. Likewise, what Consuelo mentioned about the greater female presence in the school community and its relationship with a less violent environment.

#### ***Teachers who have found support from their colleagues.***

In relation to the consequences of gender-based violence, and all its forms of expression, educators answered that they have found support from their closest colleagues, even when the school administrations gave them no support due to the experiences of violence or on the contrary, they find support in the institution but it was not enough to the damage cause. Then the main support was from female teachers at the first moment.

Sigrid stated that in most cases, when she feels overcome by situations with students, or school management administrations, she finds a safe environment in her work place with her peers.

(...) then, in front of certain issues, you feel powerlessness, and how can you manage that? Well, with my group of friends, because as with everything in life, you with other teachers or with colleagues from work, you have groups more alike. Then, with them you throw up your anger (...) Then, in front of x situation, we instead connect at 1 o'clock, we meet at 12 past 30, and we chat to know how we are, how were our families, we release things during pandemic (...)

In addition, Karen experiences the same as Sigrid. Due to tough situations experienced by her in the school with students, tutors or school administration, the only support that she could find was with colleagues, even when she was hit by a student.

Maybe a conversation. Among colleagues. More like a containment, yes (...) but informal.

To conclude, when administrations are abusive towards female educators, and as a consequence that female teachers experience violence in their workplace, they have found support and containment among themselves, as a tool for overcoming the situations experienced.

### **Gender violence impact on the professional field.**

This section encircles the impact of gender violence on female teachers' development and growth in the professional field. For a major understanding of this phenomenon's impact, it will be analyzed first, in how facing a violent act may lead to question the profession's continuity, and second, how the institutional protocols respond to acts of violence against female teachers.

### *Teachers questioning their profession.*

As previously mentioned, the professional aspect is not exempt from gender violence which is why through the interviews conducted it was possible to identify the negative impact this issue has on female teachers when it comes to that field. Broadly speaking, there is a questioning of whether to continue with the profession or not. In that sense, Carrasco et al. (2024) established that teacher development is at risk as it is a constant process with little consideration for the work, emotional and social aspects that are experienced throughout the professional career. It will be explained in the following part considering one great dimension: teachers resigning due to violent acts.

### *Female teachers resigning due to acts of violence.*

In the previous dimensions it was described how violence directly affects female teachers in terms of health, however, this really complex phenomenon covers various areas. That is why this section will explore certain exhaustion on the part of teachers after experiencing violent events which led to them leaving their workplaces in search of opportunities that would provide them with greater tranquility and well-being.

Within that context, teacher Valery's testimony was of great value in exemplifying this problem. As she described, at the school where she worked at the time, students were constantly bullying their teachers, which caused her to feel unsafe and uncomfortable. This reality was what led her to make the decision to withdraw from the establishment, as evidenced in the following excerpt from her interview:

I changed jobs definitely. And when I came here, the environment is totally different. I mean, the worst thing you have to deal with here is getting attention or taking away a couple of cell phones. But in the other environment it was terrible, in general it was terrible.

Following that line, when teacher Lexi was asked by the interviewer if she identified gender violence in her job, she mentioned that she did not in her current job, but in her previous one she did and that was the reason she decided to leave it. It was described by her with the following words:

I left the school I was at for a reason. I worked for 26 years. But I experienced gender violence from the students because it was a mixed school. And there were many students who had conflicts with their mothers. So they kind of expressed their dislike of women to the women, not only to the teachers, but to the girls as well.

To sum up, the experiences of Valery and Lexi demonstrate how the presence of violence in educational settings can lead to professional exhaustion, and consequently, drive teachers to leave their positions in search of safer and supportive environments. At the same time, the need for protocols to ensure the well-being of teachers and the construction of a healthy atmosphere for all members of the community is evidenced. This topic will be explored in detail in the following category.

### ***Protocols concerning school violence.***

Results obtained from the execution of protocols have not been exempt from reflection during interviews. In this regard, teachers have shown a complex understanding of these processes while maintaining a critical view of them and their dynamics, even when no true resolution is achieved. The following testimonies have been chosen for this very aspect, as these teachers share important remarks on the issue, and a necessity for the proper implementation of them.

Firstly, when discussing the topic of protocols, the teacher Helen, states that these are commonly known around her colleagues but that, intentionally or not, they can be bent and transgressed. She refers specifically to the usage of humor to camouflage actions which are not accepted within the workplace. Furthermore, Helen highlights the complexity of protocols as a motive for the lack of understanding of these by students and tutors, being an unfriendly approach in their eyes.

(...) It's bureaucracy; it has several stages, and at that stage, everything sometimes gets diluted. For various reasons: because of time, because when activating one protocol, another has to be activated because another one has already been violated, I don't know. So, I feel that in the educational field, and everything related to it, even though it's regulated on paper, in practice, it's very difficult to carry it out.

Secondly, during the discussion revolving around administrative measures as preventative measures, Valery negates the existence of these in her establishment, as well as any policies or mechanisms to tackle gender violence. She directly

No, there wasn't. In fact, once that happened to me—this happened to me in May 2022. I went on leave on May 5, 2022, and that same day, a student hit a teacher. I mean, nothing ever happens to the teachers, but a student kicks a teacher, and nothing was done about it. I returned from my leave on December 26. I was on leave the whole time.

These testimonies work to show the importance of critically implementing protocols in schools regarding gender violence. While these can be seen as complex, unclear, or easily avoidable, their implementation remains extremely relevant in the eyes of female teachers.

*Repercussions after reporting gender violence.*

As mentioned in the Actions/Interactions section, through this investigation the willingness of female teachers to report acts of violence was evidenced. However, this situation brought certain consequences for the teachers, which was reflected in questions and comments towards them in their workplaces.

In that sense, teacher Katrina testified that a few years ago she took active part in reporting the relationship between a student and a male teacher. After having done so, she experienced a period of questioning by her colleagues which caused her distress. Katrina described the situation as follow:

They did not tell me you are harming the teachers, but rather they asked me a lot of questions, questioning why I had turned my back on them.

Strongly associated, teacher Lexi went through a similar situation when she reported that a student had brought a weapon to school, specifically a pistol. After that report, the other teachers of the school accused her of being a conflict and exaggerated person, as she

indicated with the following words after the interviewer asked her about the barriers of reporting:

Well, first the public ridicule of my colleagues who treated me as if I was conflictive because I accused the children of their class. I was not a head teacher. Then, they thought I was exaggerated because they were children.

Summarizing, Katrina and Lexi's testimonies reveal a worrying situation: questioning and disqualification by colleagues, which creates an environment of pressure and isolation which significantly contributes to generating a negative perception towards reporting inappropriate and violent acts.

*Negative perceptions towards reporting.*

Violent acts, and consequently, their reports are an ordinary aspect in the educational context. According to Hughes (2020) every school has some degree of subtle forms of violence present. In that sense, through the interviews it was identified a pattern of negative perception towards reporting those events from the teachers' part.

In that sense, when the interviewer asked Helen about her school's protocols to deal with violent acts, she indicated that although they exist, in the practice they do not work in the established way which causes them to be seen as insufficient. It is reflected in the following excerpt of her interview:

So, I feel that in the educational field, and everything that has to do with it, even though it is regulated on paper, in practice it is very difficult to carry it out. Just as there is a saying that says that paper lasts a long time. Then, on paper it looks very good for the purposes of everything that one demands.

Similarly, when the same question was asked to teacher Gilda she indicated that the reporting protocols at her workplace are completely unknown to her, therefore she does not know how to proceed or who to contact when facing a problem of this type, as she described:

I do not know them. I have never been told “if you have a problem, come and talk to this person, or if you have this type of problem, these types of protocols apply”. No, I have never been told anything about that. I mean, the people in charge know them and no one else.

In the case of teacher Cindy, she expressed that the school needs to do training to instruct its workers on gender issues and thus avoid filing a complaint, since she considered it to be an extremely complicated issue as she mentioned with the following words:

Start doing workshops and make people realize and change. I feel that this is the way to fix and solve things. It is so annoying to have to report things as such. And on top of that, it is still scary to report things.

To sum up, the teachers’ testimonies show that although protocols for dealing with acts of violence exist, they are not necessarily familiar to the entire school community, which generates a negative perception regarding reporting. Specifically, Helen’s experience highlights the gap between policy and practice, while Gilda’s lack of understanding of reporting protocols underscore communication failures. Finally, Cindy’s perspective reflects how the lack of clarity of this process causes fear and a desire to avoid it.

## Chapter 5: Discussions

In this segment, once having examined the results from all data gathered, the most relevant aspects of female teacher's experiences in relation to gender violence is developed in juxtaposition with previously evaluated literature. The framework used for this discussion involves conditions, actions, and consequences surrounding discrimination, agents, and structural phenomena in order to properly understand the significance of these elements for the experiences of female teachers.

As drawn from the results, the phenomenon of gender-based violence can be understood as strongly present in the Chilean educational field, and an important affection for female teachers. In that sense, schools construct the gender structure through routine practices that are normalized and rarely questioned (Dunne et al., 2003). Within this context, the testimonies shared by the participants of this study demonstrated that female teachers are a group firmly affected by it. Nevertheless, they demonstrate to have a positive disposition to overcome this issue by supporting the implementation of preventive practices. It was noticeable, for example, in Consuelo's words as she stated that just as traditional subjects, social matters should be taught in schools in order to prevent unfortunate situations such as gender-based violence events. Similarly, and even when she did not define herself as a feminist, Helen established the necessity of addressing these topics in the educational field under the guidance of specialists. In view of this, the effective preparation of teachers and professionals is stated in the literature as playing a critical role in eradicating gender-based violence (Prezenszky, et al., 2018).

In this regard, reporting violent events or gender-based violence acts remained an action partaken and highly mentioned by the teachers. However, a negative perception regarding this issue was visible during their testimonies. In the case of Cindy, she established that due to her experiences she considers the reporting process to be extremely complicated, and even frightening. Similarly, Katrina testified that when she was part of the reporting process against a male teacher she received questioning from certain members of the school community, which made the process even more difficult. These situations, which are just some of the narrations collected, are closely related to the structural violence phenomenon defined by Turvey (2022) as it involves the active repression of any movement challenging

these injustices, generating situations where teachers not only become victims of violence, but also enduring of a difficult process when making the decision of reporting.

As a consequence, the identified impacts on teachers' lives were numerous. Violence against teachers negatively influences their overall wellbeing, affecting physical, mental, and emotional health (Berlanda, et al., 2019). This is reflected, for example, in Karen's testimony about experiencing physical violence from a student. When describing this situation, she declared that after the event she stayed standing in shock with no idea about what to do. In line, Valery testified that due to the violent environment of the school in which she was working, and her negative experiences there, she had a medical leave and medication for months. Moreover, given that society does not recognize the value of women to the same extent as it does that of their male colleagues (Couceiro, 2018), it can be understood that female teachers are victims of double discrimination, and suffer the consequences of it, both for their professional and personal lives.

Furthermore, teachers stated that their colleagues were a key part for them when facing this issue. In this regard, support networks are emphasized as crucial in overcoming gender-based violence (Prezenszky, et al., 2018). In the case of Sigrid, she described finding a safe atmosphere with her peers to vent about these acts. On the contrary, after reporting a violent situation performed by a student, Lexi testified that she felt their colleagues' rejection towards her, which made her feel uncomfortable. These situations contrast how experiences of support or rejection among colleagues can have a significant impact on the ability of teachers to deal with violence. While Sigrid found a space of relief and understanding, the exclusion experienced by Lexi reflects the lack of solidarity that can further aggravate the circumstances. Building strong and supportive relationships within the school community is essential for teachers, as it meets their need for relatedness and contributes to their wellbeing (Maas, et al., 2022).

Another aspect of great relevance for the study is the profound impact of established biases, and societal expectations on the experiences of female educators, thereby perpetuating various forms of invisible violence. In this regard, a prominent topic identified became the intersection of sexism and the teaching profession itself, where conventional gender roles position women as nurturing "mothers" and men as "authoritative" figures. As an example of this, Lexi exposes how sexism associated with certain teaching roles or positions manifests

itself from the formative stage of future educators and how these perceptions influence professional dynamics. Moreover, Lisa notes that some students tend to respect male teachers more, by placing them in a position of superior authority, while female teachers are perceived as more accessible or vulnerable to questioning. This observation aligns with existing literature highlighting the feminization of care-related professions, such as primary and preschool education, which serves to marginalize the professional identities of women while simultaneously reinforcing prevailing stereotypes (Couceiro, 2018). Participants effectively illustrate how these societal expectations constrain their authority and undermine their professional recognition (Segato, 2003).

Additionally, ageism surfaced as another prominent topic, particularly in its intersection with gender. Testimonies from participants of the study revealed that authority is often linked to age, with younger female teachers experiencing unique challenges. For example, participants often reported that younger women faced challenges asserting authority, as their age intersected with gender to undermine their credibility. The interviewee Karen describes in her testimony an experience where, as a young woman, her presence in the classroom was not taken seriously. She also implies that discrimination is not only linked to gender but also to age. Another interviewee who shared similar ideas was Katrina, expressing how the delegitimization of young female teachers is a recurring form of gender violence in the educational field while highlighting that this delegitimization is not so frequent with young men as it is with young women. This phenomenon reflects broader societal biases against women's competence, especially when juxtaposed with age. The literature corroborates these findings, highlighting how ageism disproportionately impacts women, where youth is often equated with inexperience or lack of capability (Women of Influence, 2024).

Moreover, obtained results indicate that motherhood continues to be a significant factor influencing the professional experiences of female teachers, often to their detriment. This aligns with existing literature which highlights active discrimination against women due to their potential or actual roles as mothers (Torres et al., 2024). Paradoxically, while societal norms emphasize women's caregiving roles, these same norms serve as a barrier within professional environments, where motherhood is perceived as a limitation rather than an asset (Ishizuka, 2021). This contradiction shows the irony embedded within traditional gender roles: women are expected to excel as caregivers in their personal lives, yet are penalized for this very role in their professional capacities. For instance, Gilda describes how recruitment

processes often favor male candidates under the assumption that they are less hindered by parental responsibilities. These findings mirror studies that emphasize how the mere possibility of pregnancy or motherhood can lead to discriminatory hiring practices (Cunningham, 2007). Hence, such biases not only obstruct women's career progression but also perpetuate a workplace culture that values availability over capability.

When discussing the events of violence throughout the interviews, the most prominent form of violence experienced by female teachers appeared in the form of verbal abuse from students and their tutors. This matter led to notions of parenting in the fact that while students receive formal instruction in schools, informal types of instruction are also experienced in their homes, through their families (Altarejo, 2011). Nurture or the absence of it, in this case, appears to weigh upon students on the ways they perceive the world, and shapes a moral framework around them which leads their actions (Daud et al., 2023).

As stated by Lexi, students tend to unconsciously evoke a bias towards female teachers. Male students, as characterized by the interviews, tend to see in these educators a mothering role due to an act of caring also performed by their mothers, a phenomenon further enhanced by societal values attributed to older women (Krahé, 2017). In that sense, other teachers also state the ways in which students tend to question and ignore them more than male counterparts, to the point of sometimes enacting physical violence. It is worth noting that, from these experiences, all of these acts of subtle and direct violence from students remain possibly replicated among peers due to their commonness and shared social norms (Jackson et al., 2015).

Overall, students have been stated to echo actions and behaviors learned outside of the classroom, even affecting female teachers in morally despicable ways, such as with sexual violence. In this regard, Lexi mentions that she and other female colleagues have seen male students masturbate in classrooms during their classes. Since she has neither received support from authorities nor psychological contention. Correspondingly, Leach (2003), by exploring the normalization of sexual assaults in African schools, indicates how the extent of sexual violence from the outside world tends to be mirrored in educational scenery. The author concludes that these situations require awareness and attention from key staff, such as teachers and school administrators, in order to be effectively tackled, which in the case of Lexi did not occur, leading to the invisibilization of the event. Female teachers, additionally,

have been stated as less likely to receive support from male administrations in events of abuse, such as it is in this case.

Complementary to students, parents or tutors remain the second most relevant group in the exertion of violence against female teachers (Colegio de Profesoras y Profesores, 2023). The most prominent form of abuse from these individuals being harassment through verbal abuse and threats. Teachers agree that tutors and parents intervene in the educational processes of students with values and ways in which they perceive the world. It is here that a conspicuous relationship between students and tutors as violent perpetrators cements itself close to the data gathered, and literature with direct regards to the development of morality (Medez & Gayoles, 2021).

Katrina states how on certain occasions tutors have attempted to physically hurt teachers while shouting and verbally harassing them. Sigrid, and many other teachers allude to numerous occasions where being shouted at and persecuted by parents was expected when an issue with their sons or daughters arose. To the question: What is needed in the school to be a place free of gender-based violence? Teachers agreed that involving parents in these topics is a must to prevent and reduce the harmful way students and tutors act with female teachers and female students, as in the morality and behaviors of students, every part of society must be involved, especially parents (Daud et al., 2023). Due to the multi-factor perspective of gender-based violence, the necessity to address this issue must involve both families and schools. As stated by Sigrid, a metaphor about education is to see it as a table with three legs, with one leg representing the school, the other representing families, and the last one being students, as they should all work in balance.

Finally, the last agents to be discussed are male teachers. Teachers considered that their male colleagues, especially younger and under-thirties, are not feminist allies to their younger female counterparts. While young female teachers are more empowered as stated by Helen, they are also willing to break bonds with male teachers and take a stand against sexist practices. She declares that male colleagues have given, on multiple occasions, ill-intentioned comments and jokes in order to provoke a reaction, to break the ice, or to initiate a conversation. These humor resources, or jokes, are identified as a form of hidden violence by teachers while also identified in the very foundation of structural violence by literature (Johan Galtung, 1969). A separation can be said to exist between female and male young educators,

occasioned by those who perpetrate the exercise of violence in the form of emotional aggression (Segato, 2003). However, due to the invisibilization of these subtle violent interactions among colleagues, gender violence is actively facilitated (Castelao-Huerta, 2020). Conclusively, schools are not a place free of violence, it is possible to find multiple forms of aggression towards female teachers, and more than one kind of perpetrator, a phenomenon that literature indicates is due to the patriarchal structure inlay in society and the reproduction of behaviors in educational fields.

The presence of power dynamics is a relevant point of contention found within some of the testimonies, whether explicitly expressed or understood on different terms. Female teachers in this regard, like Gilda and Cindy, tend to express a subtle but highly influential position of power held by teachers, and administrators, where elements of ageism and gender determine a relation of servitude and domination between colleagues or with students. Holding an important connection to the influence of gender discourse (Couceiro, 2018) in teaching, and the devaluation of feminine work (Monroe et al., 2008), male staff in positions of power have been shown to abuse their influence on others while maintaining a majority on administrative placement.

The highlighted existence of male dominated administrations in schools exhibits the unequal workforce participation of Chilean women (Eyzaguirre and Vergara, 2023) who still are undermined in their labor, even in socially considered feminine occupations such as education (Couceiro, 2018). Furthermore, male staff in positions of power have been stated to not empathize with the experiences of female teachers, while also partaking on the perpetuation of subtle gender violence (Dunne et al., 2006); as in the exposed case of Sigrid, who while not recognizing the existence of gender violence, highlights events of male administrators abusing their power in several occasions. Consequently, the actions of male teachers and administrators in power can be understood as being shaped by their roles according to a societal consensus of sexist values (Krahé, 2017), the behaviors men follow to maintain structural power (Segato, 2003), and the carelessness of invisible violence (Bourdieu, 2000).

In addition to power dynamics, the data suggest that educational institutions contribute to both facilitating and perpetuating gender-based violence due to a rigid manifestation of institutionalized violence (Turvey, 2022), as agents such as colleagues and administrators

often dismiss or unaddressed the female teachers' experiences when facing gender-based violence. Thus demonstrated in the testimonies of teachers Valery and Lexi who recalled a detrimental use of power from their superiors against them at school, as both did not receive any consideration for their concerns in risky situations but instead, they were received with a negative and harmful attitude which caused one of them to leave her job at that school. Further, this understanding could be deepened with the concept of gender devaluation from Monroe et al. (2008), which states that women in positions of leadership are systematically devalued leaving their concerns not only unaddressed but also actively repressed through penalties instead of conveying root causes that can help both students and teachers. Therefore it could be stated that these situations portray inadequate responses from actors in power positions that reinforce and facilitate not only the marginalization but also the devaluation of the teachers' professional integrity and wellbeing by institutionalizing violence.

Moreover, in accordance with the literature, the interviewees acknowledged the school as a potentially transformative space to address and battle gender-based violence, yet they also declared that schools lack effective prevention strategies. Hence, highlighting a gap between this reported potential for change and the lived realities of female teachers in those settings. Along these lines, Helen emphasized the importance of incorporating a resource-equipped specialist who can integrate preventive strategies into educational contexts, targeting students' development. Her testimonies point to the critical need for systemic reform in violence issues at schools. Likewise, Consuelo stated that social issues such as gender-based violence need to be integrated into the Chilean curricula by professionals in the field to prevent future acts of gender violence. In summary, both teachers seemed to share the belief that schools can disrupt cycles of violence by delivering the necessary tools. In consequence, the institutions' absence of preventive strategies comes up as a significant factor in facilitating gender-based violence as the schools lack resources and intentional efforts to address harmful social norms and practices.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Based on this research findings, it is possible to conclude that gender-based violence is a complex phenomenon that negatively impacts the lives of female teachers with varying consequences. In the educational field, violence directed at female teachers is not only explicitly found in physical and verbal attacks but also in invisible and subtle manners –at times unidentified due to aspects of normalization– manifesting itself through harmful practices and the abuse of power. Nonetheless, according to the findings, violence directed at female teachers is mainly exercised by students and their tutors, with teachers and administrators mostly playing a secondary role of permissiveness concerning behaviors and structural tolerance. Given the complexity of this issue, unfortunate consequences are identified for female teachers in several areas, among which the emotional and professional ones remain the most relevant. Some of these outcomes, as mentioned by the interviewees, are emotional exhaustion reflected through crying and discomfort, desertion consideration, medical leaves, and professional discouragement which manifested in a lack of motivation to teach lessons. In this regard, the necessity to establish a safe and supportive educational environment is crucial to ensure female teachers can perform their roles without fear or discouragement.

This investigation advocates for systemic reforms that properly address gender-based violence issues at Chilean schools, through preventive measures, clear reporting mechanisms, and professional support to reduce teacher resignation and discouragement, to enhance the learning environment by reducing violent disruptions. Additionally, it promotes gender equality and anti-violence education incorporation into the curriculum adjacent to training targeted at parents, teachers, and educational personnel management to foster a culture of respect and non-discrimination in our schools. Integrating feminist views of gender into the curricula can contribute to address gender inequality practices and influence the overall quality of Chilean education by targeting every agent present in the educational settings, thus forming an awareness of societal inequities along with tools to confront them.

During the development of this research, some limitations were presented which must be considered when interpreting its results. First, as the gathering of the data was cross-sectional based on just 10 interviews, categories could not be saturated as grounded theory suggests

Therefore, findings could have been influenced by the particular perspectives and experiences of this small group. Second, the interviews lasted on average 35 minutes, time which may have limited the possibility to explore in depth certain more complex topics and aspects of the phenomenon studied. Third, this research was conducted over a short period of time, which not only restricted the previously mentioned elements but also the possibility of checking for reliability and validity on the instruments used before continuing with the analysis. This constraint also restricted other relevant dimensions that may have been explored, while monitoring teachers and following up on the long-term impact of this type of violence. Further research on this topic might benefit from other approaches that consider observation or participation in schools in order to deepen the inside actions and relationships displaying gender-based violence. Despite these limitations, the investigation offers a valuable contribution to the understanding of invisible gender-based violence in the school context.

Ultimately, this dissertation aims to contribute knowledge in the field of gender-based violence on female teachers in Chile. As a result of the entire process discussed so far, some suggestions have emerged. Firstly, as mentioned by teachers, a gap exists between young female and male teachers regarding their willingness to discuss sexism or question gender-based violence, a situation associated with their social positioning given by gender; thus future investigation could address this topic to a further extent. Secondly, the only identified difference between feminist teachers and non-feminist teachers was determined to be their self-associated label, inasmuch as their pedagogical practices were mostly in line or oriented towards the feminist domain, hence further research could delve into this topic in detail to identify more explicitly what differences exist between these two groups. Finally, the lack of support from school management regarding the proper coexistence of staff and students was mentioned by the ten teachers from different perspectives, a topic which must be examined at length. Nevertheless, owing to the invisibilization of gender-based violence there is much to investigate within different school contexts, such as the experiences of female teachers in religious schools, male teachers and their relationship to gender-based violence, the possibility of gender-focused interventions for students, the potential of whole school approaches to tackle this issue, older female teachers which continue teaching after their retirement, among other important topics which can contribute to this field.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Authorization for use of SUBUMCE materials

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## Appendix B

### Anexo 1: AUTORIZACIÓN PARA USO DE MATERIALES EN SIBUMCE

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