

The Role of Trade Unions in Addressing the psychological Health of Working Women Victimized by Sexual Harassment in Algeria

A Case Study of the National Independent Trade Union of Public Administration Employees – Constantine



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Abstract

Trade union organizations seek to try to support individuals experiencing difficulties in the work place, as currently trade union work is not based solely on negotiating collective agreements but rather by moving towards contemporary issues such as psychosocial risks that have a negative impact on worker's psychological and physical health. Considering that sexual harassment is a type of risk that working women are exposed to and which has a direct impact on their psychological health and the development of their professional path, this study aims to reveal the types of supports provided by the national independent union of public administration employees in Constantine to preserve the psychological health of working women who are victims of sexual harassment.

Keywords

Trade unions;
Psychological health;
Sexual harassment.

الكلمات المفتاحية

التنظيمات النقابية؛
الصحة النفسية؛
التحرش الجنسي.

دور النقابات في معالجة الصحة النفسية للمرأة العاملة ضحية التحرش الجنسي في الجزائر – دراسة حالة النقابة الوطنية المستقلة لموظفي الإدارة العمومية – قسنطينة

ملخص

تسعى التنظيمات النقابية إلى محاولة دعم الأفراد الذين يواجهون صعوبات في مواقع العمل، حيث أن العمل النقابي لا يقوم على أساس التفاوض فقط على الاتفاقيات الجماعية وإنما من خلال التوجه نحو الاهتمام بالقضايا الحديثة في المؤسسات كالمخاطر النفسية الاجتماعية والتي لديها تأثير سلبي على الصحة النفسية والجسدية للعمال. وعلى اعتبار أن التحرش الجنسي نوع من أنواع المخاطر الذي تتعرض له النساء العاملات والذي يؤثر تأثيرا مباشرا على صحتهم النفسية وعلى تطور مسارهم المهني فإن هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى الكشف عن أنواع التكفل الذي تقدمه النقابة الوطنية المستقلة للإدارة العمومية بقسنطينة في الحفاظ على الصحة النفسية للمرأة العاملة ضحية التحرش الجنسي.

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1. Introduction :

When discussing the stressful working conditions that lead to the spread of various types of psychosocial risks, a pressing question arises: How can work be a source of danger instead of a source of needs' satisfaction?

Working conditions are subject to numerous transformations and changes that have increased mental and psychological burdens, leading to higher levels of psychosocial risks. This has resulted in the emergence of a new expression: "suffering at work", associated with the emergence of new values that characterize modern work, such as the erosion of teamwork and sense of isolation in the workplace, as well as the fragility of belonging groups and the deterioration of professional socialization factors. With the decline of collective work, individuals now rely on their own resources, whether in completing tasks or facing challenges at work. Feelings of helplessness and incapacity manifest when these conditions or new values affect the worker.

Working women, like their male counterparts, are subjected to such perilous conditions. They spend approximately 40 hours a week at work, making them vulnerable to various risks due to the prevalence of workplace violence, especially in the form of sexual harassment. Regardless of its manifestations, sexual harassment creates an unsafe and hostile work environment.

Sexual harassment is perpetrated daily against a large number of working women, threatening their psychological health and affecting their careers, which in many cases end as women leave their jobs to avoid the pressures exerted on them.

In the absence of accurate statistics on the number of working women subjected to harassment at work due to various reasons, including the reluctance of most victims to report or complain out of fear of scandal, some sources confirm that sexual harassment in Algerian workplaces is increasing day by day, with higher prevalence in urban areas than in rural ones. Lunchtime is considered peak time when workers return to their offices for lunch, and it affects various age groups ranging from 21 to 55 years.

With many working women remaining silent about sexual harassment—some accepting the status quo while others refuse to acknowledge their victimization out of fear of losing their jobs and damaging their reputations and dignity—Algerian women face daily humiliation, embarrassment, and stress that threaten their psychological and physical health.

Despite the prevalence of a culture of violence and harassment in most professional sectors, and although the Algerian legislation and labor laws aim to preserve workers' dignity and encourage the reporting of all forms of harassment, many women are compelled to remain silent due to complicated legal procedures. As a result, some women adhere to trade unions to confront such phenomena. The union provides them with a sense of unity, solidarity, and support that they lack in their workplaces, serving as an alternative for their unmet needs and a space for expressing their frustrations and pent-up emotions.

The current role of the union was the result of changes in the working environment that led to the emergence of disorders and the spread of many psychological and organizational problems.

Talking about work-related stress, moral and sexual harassment and suicide in the workplace has become among the most important issues that specialists seek to find appropriate ways to minimize their occurrence and their previous effects. With the high costs of taking care of workers who are victims of these risks, it has become necessary for all organizations, including the union, to look for the most appropriate ways to solve these problems and pay attention to worker's psychological health through intervention for prevention.

This presentation aims to explore the role of the National Independent Trade Union of Public Administration Employees in Constantine in addressing the psychological health of the Algerian working women who are victims of sexual harassment.

Thus, through this work, we seek to answer the following questions:

- What methods does the National Independent Trade Union of Public Administration Employees in Constantine employ to assist working women who are victims of sexual harassment?
- What role does this union play in maintaining the psychological health of working women who are victims of sexual harassment?

2. Objectives of the Study: This study aims to uncover:

1. Psychological support methods for working women who are victims of sexual harassment.
2. Organizational support methods for working women who are victims of sexual harassment.
3. The role of the trade union in maintaining the psychological health of working women who are victims of sexual harassment.

3. Defining Concepts:

3.1. Concept of psychological Health:

Psychological health is generally defined as a state of mental, emotional, and psychological balance, meaning the ability to manage oneself and interact with society while handling various emotions. It encompasses an individual's capacity to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance their ability to enjoy life and confront difficulties and challenges.

Psychological health is characterized by a positive sense of psychological and spiritual well-being that upholds personal dignity and allows for positive interaction with the community.

The World Health Organization defines it as: "A state of well-being that enables each individual to realize their potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to their community"(Fontaine,Pelletier,2015,p.07)

Psychological health can also be viewed as a seamless and effective process that enables individuals to face difficult and stressful situations, allowing them to achieve personal balance. It involves the body being free from disease and the mind being free from disturbances, creating a sense of comfort that enables individuals to utilize their potential and effectively face daily life challenges. It is the ability to enjoy life, rise to challenges, and experience a positive sense of psychological comfort.

Psychological health cannot be directly measured, but can be inferred from individuals' behaviors, interactions, and responses. Thus, it is reflected in an individual's stability and psychological, social, and professional adjustment, leading to self-esteem and optimal use of skills and competencies.

3.1.1. Importance of Psychological Health:

1. Utilizing sound and balanced methods to solve social problems that could affect the integrity of an individual's psychological growth process.
2. Achieving personal stability and ensuring a life free from tension and fear.
3. Understanding oneself and others, as well as managing and regulating emotions and desires.
4. Positively dealing with various problems, maintaining emotional balance, and taking responsibility without avoidance or withdrawal.
5. Enabling individuals to assume responsibilities and leverage their energies and competencies, as a well-adjusted personality makes an individual more effective and productive.

3.1.2. Psychological Health in the Workplace:

Psychological health in the workplace is the balance between the components of work, including the job itself, the organization's policies and regulations, and the employee in terms of thinking and coping methods.

Experts in the field of workplace psychological health emphasize its dual dimensions, which are: the absence of disorders and of symptoms of mental illness on one hand, and on the other hand, the presence of many positive aspects that allow an individual to achieve their potential. Thus, workplace psychological health has two essential levels:

1. Ensuring the absence of pathological symptoms.
2. Identifying the presence of positive subjective elements.

In the literature on workplace psychological health, there are several definitions. Some specialists emphasize the role of the individual's experience in achieving mental health at work, while others focus on the role of the surrounding environment, which can have a strong and significant impact, either positive or negative. For example, Bloch et al. define workplace mental health as: "The ability of the self to work in a harmonious, enjoyable, and effective manner, and to deal with difficult situations with flexibility to regain balance."(Achile,2003,p.65)

Foucher& Leduc define workplace mental health as: "On the one hand, workplace psychological health refers to the possibilities offered by the general organizational context, working conditions, and tasks assigned to the employee so that they feel valued and developed, and can live a balanced life and adapt to different levels of stress. On the other hand, workplace psychological health refers to the state developed by the employee with respect to indicators such as self-respect, self-esteem, transcendent experiences, social life balance, and stress levels, taking into account the individual's ability to adapt to their work and organizational environment." (Achile,2003,p.67)

In addition, experts stress that it can be viewed both as a state and as a result at the same time. It is evaluated through the quality of the relationship with oneself, the work requirements, and society as a whole. It is a dynamic system that takes into account organizational, personal, and psychosocial factors.

Brien defines it as: "The employee's ability to meet the demands of work and satisfy their basic needs from a psychological-behavioral perspective, through the promotion of available organizational, personal, and psychosocial resources. The work environment must provide the employee with elements such as: a sense of security, trust in the organization, acceptance, and respect."(Deslaurier,2016,p.28)

Thus, we can say that work is one of the main factors that affect an individual's psychological well-being. Working in a healthy and secure organizational climate leads to the employee feeling mental comfort and satisfaction, which in turn helps increase productivity, reduce medical expenses, decrease turnover, and minimize wasted time.

Workplace psychological health is influenced by several factors, including:

*** Characteristics of the Worker:**

- 1- **Personality Type:** It influences how an individual reacts to workplace stress.
- 2- **Educational Level:** It affects skills, confidence, and job performance.
- 3- **Physical Health:** It impacts overall well-being and ability to cope with work demands.
- 4- **Personal History:** Past experiences can shape current behavior and reactions.
- 5- **Emotional Dimensions:** They include emotional intelligence and resilience.

*** Social Environment:**

Support Systems: The availability of family and social support elements plays a crucial role in how workers cope with stress.

*** Job Components:**

1. **Meaning of Work:** It enables the worker to achieve professional identity through independence. Workers should have a degree of autonomy, feel in control of their actions, and choose professional behaviors that align with their personal values.
2. **Work Competence:** It develops through the worker's confidence in their abilities and skills, leading to a sense of importance regarding their tasks.
3. **Social Belonging:** The worker's capacity to build healthy relationships with colleagues and supervisors, as well as the right to choose a group they feel valued and appreciated by, fulfills their psychological and social needs.
4. **Recognition:** It refers to the status and importance of the worker within their organization, through appreciation and support from supervisors, appropriate compensation for their tasks, encouragement of personal initiatives, and positive feedback on their work.

3.2. Defining Sexual Harassment:

In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness of the dangers of sexual harassment, spurred by a growing number of advocates and organizations denouncing its impact on individuals and society.

The concept of sexual harassment is relatively new, emerging in the 1970s. It was first used by Mary Rowe in 1970 to describe various forms of sexual issues. It appeared in a report in 1973 presented to the president and advisor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, addressing all forms of discrimination against women (The Jordanian National Commission For Women)

Sexual harassment is a global issue, prevalent in various organizations, and affects women across different educational, social, and economic backgrounds. It is one of the most common forms of violence against women, and represents a significant psychosocial risk in institutions of all kinds, leading to workplace suffering that can, in severe cases, result in suicide.

In the absence of accurate statistics on the number of victims of sexual harassment, most countries around the world record hundreds of cases of sexual harassment in workplaces annually. In the United States, according to a study conducted in 2017, 84% of women in the U.S. military reported experiencing sexual harassment, in addition to thousands of women in various professional sectors. Meanwhile, in the UK in 2017, 40% of women reported experiencing some forms of sexual harassment in the workplace

Sexual harassment is defined as an act imposed on someone through words or behaviors with a sexual connotation. It involves bullying or coercion for physical acts or inappropriate promises of rewards in exchange for sexual services and is considered illegal in most international laws.

The International Labour Organization defines it as: "Any behavior of a sexual nature that is inappropriate and demeaning" (Salmon, 2019, p. 10)

The International Labour Conference considers sexual harassment a widespread phenomenon that undermines and destroys equality in the workplace. It has negative impacts on workers' skills and career development, sometimes forcing individuals to leave their jobs. It particularly affects women and reinforces stereotypes about women's capabilities and aspirations (as if they are deficient and created solely for pleasure) and contributes to widening the gap in women's participation in the workforce (Greb, 2019, p. 32)

Sexual harassment in a hostile environment is also defined as: "Any unwanted sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or any physical or verbal behavior of a sexual nature when the intent or effect of such behavior is to unreasonably interfere with a person's work performance or to create a threatening and hostile work environment" (Professional Interest pages 2019)

Additionally, a protection project presented by Johns Hopkins University defines it as: "Making unwelcome sexual innuendos that lead to a hostile work environment, or when the recipient of these sexual innuendos considers them immoral, and that rejecting them would negatively affect their working conditions" (The Jordanian National Commission For Women 2017).

Thus, we can affirm that sexual harassment is a serious manifestation of gender discrimination and a violation of human rights. It is an unwanted behavior with sexual connotations, expressed physically, verbally, or through any gender-based conduct. It is unwelcome, unreasonable, and harmful to the individual, with rejection or submission to it leading to significant consequences.

Sexual harassment, whether overt or implicit, affects the victim's job and creates a frightening, hostile, and humiliating work environment for the individual.

It takes many forms, including:

- Sexual behaviors.
- Sexual innuendos.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.
- Sexual remarks, comments, jokes, or insults.
- Physical proximity.
- Dissemination of images or posters depicting women.
- Sexual assaults.
- Electronic sexual harassment, which is one of the most recent and widespread forms of harassment.

Regardless of the manifestations it takes, sexual harassment creates a hostile and unsafe work environment for the victimized woman, where rejecting sexual advances can have negative consequences on her work conditions. It can lead to job offers, promotions, and job continuity being contingent on her acceptance of these advances.

Sexual harassment is characterized by two main features:

- The characteristic of violence, where the relationship between the harasser and the victim is based on power, authority, and dominance.
- The characteristic of isolation, which involves separating the victim from her colleagues to facilitate control over her.

Sexual harassment has negative effects on victims, with specialists noting that repeated sexual harassment can have psychological impacts similar to those of rape or sexual assault. Victims who do not submit to harassment may face various forms of retaliation.

Additionally, sexual harassment undermines a woman's dignity and threatens her mental health, leading to depression, anxiety, panic attacks, nightmares, and feelings of shame about herself and those around her. Experiencing sexual harassment can also cause women to feel stressed and may lead to nervous breakdowns, depending on the victim's coping ability and the presence of psychological and social support. Women may suffer psychologically, leading to self-contempt, decreased motivation, and changes in behavior that result in increased isolation.

Moreover, sexual harassment can lead victims to lose motivation and decrease their performance due to constant pressure and increased absenteeism out of fear of repeated incidents. In some cases, it may lead to resignation and rejection of job opportunities, resulting in a loss of professional life. (Salmona, 2019, p.63)

3.3. Defining trade unionism:

Trade unionism refers to activities aimed at organizing workers and protecting their rights and interests through the formation of trade unions and labor associations that represent workers to management. It works to enhance their positions and improve their working conditions.

Trade unionism encourages dialogue, negotiation, and consultation, promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes. It fosters solidarity and harmony among workers themselves and with management, ultimately leading to improvements in work requirements, increased productivity, and enhanced performance.

The emergence of the trade unions was driven by the injustice, oppression, exploitation, and violation of rights faced by the working class, alongside the declining living standards while employers grew wealthier. Britain is considered the birthplace of the trade union movements globally, with English workers being among the first to suffer the repercussions of the Industrial Revolution, which resulted in the oppression and exploitation of workers without providing guarantees for their safety and security in their jobs. These conditions compelled workers to band together and organize into associations that would help them demand their material and moral rights.

The first associations in Britain were formed in 1720 by skilled workers, and the first professional unions appeared under names such as the Tailors' Association in London and the West Britain Wool Industry Workers' Association.

In France, workers organized within cooperatives that primarily demanded increases in daily wages before evolving into a new form called "French Mutuals", which included workers from various professional backgrounds, transcending occupational boundaries.

Between 1844 and 1918, after a long struggle by the working class worldwide, trade unions began forming to protect workers and advocate for their rights, emphasizing the need for respect and the provision of all conditions for professional safety and security. (Lesage-Landry, 2021, p.57)

In Algeria, the discussion of trade unions cannot be separated from those in France, as the initial demands for the general rights of Algerian workers were closely linked to the French General Confederation of Labor, established in 1895 in France. This connection continued until the outbreak of the liberation revolution and the foundation of the General

Union of Algerian Workers by AissatIdir in 1956, marking a break from the General Confederation of Labor and from the colonial regime. (Bourouba ,1998,p.46)

The General Union of Algerian Workers, led by AissatIdir, is considered the first trade union organization in Algeria, which established key tasks for union activities to mobilizing workers to demand their rights. This organization remained the sole representative of the Algerian workers until Algeria entered a new political phase characterized by party pluralism, during which new laws were enacted, allowing workers to establish independent unions. This included Law 14/99, which defined how the right to unionize could be exercised, and Law 11/99, which outlined labor relations. Many independent unions were formed, playing a crucial role in revitalizing and activating union activism in Algeria.

4. Methodological Procedures of the Study:

4.1. Definition of the place of study:

The study was conducted at the headquarters of the National Independent Trade Union of Public Administration Employees in Constantine

The National Independent Trade Union (SNAPAP) is an independent union founded on September 10, 1990, after the issuance of the 1989 Constitution, which approved party and trade unions pluralism , It aimed at :

- Rehabilitating the administrative assistants by improving their professional and social status.
- Reconsidering trade unions work methodologies.
- Reconsidering the legal system.
- The (SNAPAP) union includes a working women's office composed of a group of trade union women from various sectors of public administration in Constantine ,the office's functions are :

Defending the material and moral rights of women employees

- Organizing periodic meeting with a view to enhancing the importance of trade union work and joining the trade unionism
- Count the most important problems and obstacles faced by women workers , especially in public administrations
- Ensure conflict resolution and psychosocial and professional problems for working women and intervene at the level of their institutions to provide appropriate assistance
- Taking care to the listening cell to receive women in danger and ensure that they help to overcome the risk.

4.2. Method:

This study relied on a descriptive methodology that includes data collection through participant observation and interview techniques, focusing on a sample from the Women's Office of the National Independent Trade Union of Public Administration Employees in the Wilaya of Constantine. This office consists of two clinical psychology specialists, two social assistants, and two senior executives working in a public institution. The office deals with working women who are victims of psychosocial risks and provides support for their issues. It welcomes women voluntarily on a weekly basis, most of whom are union members seeking solutions for both organizational and personal or social problems.

4.3. Study Tools: The study tools included:

1- Observation: This involved participant observation during information debriefing sessions, as well as group dynamic sessions, both of which are considered therapeutic techniques that help women victims of sexual harassment overcome the negative psychological impact they have experienced. These sessions are conducted weekly by the Women's Office with all working women suffering from various professional or psychosocial risks, who seek consultation and assistance.

Through participant observation, all notes and information were recorded, and at times, the researcher intervened to provide advice and guidance

2- Interviews: It is well-known that interviews are among the most commonly used tools in psychology due to their specific characteristics. They provide researchers with a substantial amount of information and allow them to observe any changes that may arise during the interaction, including behavioral and physical changes, in addition to their high flexibility and the ability to confirm the responses of the informants, providing deep and clear answers to the questions.

The interview questions were open-ended to allow the office members to speak freely. The questions focused on:

1. Psychological care methods for working women who are victims of sexual harassment.
2. Organizational care methods for women who are victims of sexual harassment.
3. The role of the union in addressing the psychological health of working women who are victims of sexual harassment.

4.4. Sample

The study sample consisted of the six (06) employees of the Women's Office of the National Independent Trade Union of Public Administration Employees in the Wilaya of Constantine.

4.4.1. Sample Characteristics:

- **Educational Level:** The sample members have university-level education, which enables them to hold senior administrative positions and, thus, enhance their confidence in their abilities to provide advice and assistance.
- **Professional grades:** The Women's Office includes:
 - 2 clinical psychology specialists working at the Mental Health Hospital in Constantine.
 - 2 social assistants working at the Directorate of Social Affairs, where they receive cases of women facing various types of violence daily.
 - 2 senior executives working at the municipality and Wilaya of Constantine.

5. Presentation of Results:

5.1. General Characteristics of the Sample: The members of the Women's Office show the following characteristics:

Training: In addition to their previous involvement in community work within local associations and university clubs, the members of the Women's Office regularly attend training sessions organized by the provincial trade union office, overseen by union leaders to provide them with the literature on union work and methods of assistance for cases requiring immediate intervention. It also includes full knowledge of laws and legislation on how to address forms of violence and sexual harassment in the workplace and to have a clear vision of how to properly care for victims.

Union Activism: A fundamental feature of the Women's Office is the total commitment of its members to the union. They are fully devoted to serious activism aimed at providing assistance and at addressing the problems of working women who seek their help, especially with the increasing social awareness of the need to unite within unions to advocate for their rights and amplify their voices. These members play an active, central, and driving role in union work, as they are familiar with the psychological, organizational, and social problems faced by working women. They are committed to their volunteer work and believe in continuous struggle to achieve their goals. They often connect their personal experiences of challenges and difficulties in their professions to their activism. All have previously been involved in associations, allowing them to develop a vision of social justice focused on the comfort and well-being of others. For them, union work is a means and a force for achieving workers' well-being.

Mutual Assistance: This assistance is spontaneous and self-initiated, aimed at overcoming difficulties and pressures. What distinguishes the office members is their openness to the problems of others. They have the ability to embrace change and accept new ideas, along with a sense of responsibility and belief in helping others and working for labor issues. Helping others is a fundamental characteristic of the office, built on their desire to create communication with workers and their deep concern for others, coupled with a desire to engage in social work.

To support working women who are victims of sexual harassment, the office emphasizes that certain personal qualities must be present to build a helping relationship with workers in order to gain their trust and cooperation. These qualities include:

- Openness to others
- Good listening skills and empathy
- Proactive behavior, meaning they should have the ability to create opportunities, take necessary actions, and persistently anticipate problems that women may encounter due to sexual harassment.
- Awareness of all types of risks, their causes, and methods of providing assistance.
- Ensuring confidentiality in their work.
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5.2. Discussion of Study Objectives:

5.2.1. Discussion of the First Objective ; psychological support of women victims of sexual harassment.

Regarding the psychological care methods for working women who are victims of sexual harassment, the Women's Office asserts that the union is no longer indifferent to the rising rates of sexual harassment at work. Thus, the National Independent Trade Union has established a network of interveners consisting of psychologists and social assistants to support victims of sexual harassment and mitigate its negative impacts. The union also seeks to conduct awareness-raising and educational activities to combat such deviant behaviors in workplaces.

Thus, this new form of union intervention goes beyond the traditional framework of trade union work, which is based on negotiation and the implementation of collective agreements. The Women's Office emphasizes that the phenomenon of sexual harassment is widespread in workplaces and poses a threat to the mental and physical health of women, causing them to experience a whirlwind of conflicting emotions and psychological struggles. Victims often hesitate to disclose their experiences for several reasons, including:

- The normalization of sexual harassment, which makes it seem like an ordinary behavior by supervisors or employers, perceived as a benefit of their position and social status.
- Ignorance about the forms and manifestations of sexual harassment, as most victims associate it solely with assault or rape.
- Fear of retaliation, either from the harasser, who may feel entitled to punish the victim for rejecting such behavior, or from family members who often place the blame on the victim. In the Algerian society, and even in foreign contexts, social models often blame the female victim, leading to fear of family shame associated with the harassment.
- Lack of effective reporting and redress mechanisms.

Therefore, the psychological support process for women who are victims of sexual harassment begins with a series of effective collective and personal protection measures for women in order to combat any physical or sexual violence or harassment, by pursuing a strong preventive and remedial policy to develop awareness, inform and sensitize by providing correct information and strengthening methods of prevention of sexual harassment cases, in addition to develop urgent procedures to address all communications and alert procedures without fear or hesitation.

The bureau of working women has also sought to establish a listening and psychological support unit to receive women workers who are victims of sexual harassment to be heard and ensured with a view to helping them to overcome and resolve their problems.

The process of psychological support begins by creating a climate of mutual trust with women workers and listening well to them and discussing them honestly, so that they can earn their trust and thus talk without fear. The best way to address and prevent sexual harassment is to build a multidimensional strategy that begins with raising the victim's awareness and ensuring her protection in the workplace by taking the necessary measures and precautions to promote the principles of non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

Thus, psychological support for women workers who are victims of sexual harassment begins by informing them about their rights, followed by intervention from the office, which includes:

1. **Listening** Through active listening, the office aims to break the sense of isolation and suffering experienced by the victim at work, showing that someone cares about her problems and is willing to help her find suitable solutions in a confidential environment, away from the workplace and family. This helps the victim understand what is happening to her so she can act appropriately.
2. **Encouraging the victim to talk about her experiences:** It's important for the victim to express her feelings instead of repressing them, as unaddressed feelings can lead to psychological trauma. Discussing these emotions is crucial to prevent the buildup of distress that could result in an emotional breakdown.
3. **Encouraging psychological resilience:** The early stages of sexual harassment often disrupt the victim's mental balance and isolate her from her colleagues to exert pressure and control. In such cases, the office advises the woman to seek support from her peers to regain the necessary psychological strength to defend herself.
4. **Follow-up and support:** The office ensures that the working woman who is a victim of sexual harassment receives special psychological follow-up at her workplace, helping her to overcome the effects of the harassment and the psychological barriers associated with returning to work.

The office also works to prepare the ground with supervisors and colleagues for the victim's reintegration into her job.

5.2.2. Discussion of the Second Objective: Organizational Support for Women Victims of Sexual Harassment

Organizational support is somewhat challenging, as it requires the cooperation and intervention of the institution where the victim works. Consequently, the trade union often organizes open days aimed at raising awareness about the negative effects of sexual harassment on the mental and psychological health of working women. The union also seeks to inform and persuade management about the various preventive measures against sexual harassment, emphasizing the need to acknowledge its existence within the institution in order to establish preventive plans that ensure the safety, health, and well-being of women. Additionally, the union encourages managers to communicate with their female employees, understand their problems closely, and provide genuine support for anything that might affect their health and job performance. The union highlights indicators of dysfunction within the institution, such as complaints, work stoppages, absenteeism, and illness.

- The women office also advises that effective complaints mechanisms should be provided in the event of sexual harassment by women working , taking into account certain criteria such as maintaining the confidentiality of the complainant , demanding a safe and healthy professional environment for women in working places and coordinating with the manager of institutions to provide counseling services to victims of sexual harassment
- Emphasize the need for the managers of institutions to develop a policy to combat violence and harassment of all kinds , and to communicate it effectively to all workers.
- To make everyone aware of the need to take responsibility for their actions , and that the responsibility lies with all managers and people who perform an administrative function by creating and maintaining a working environment free from harassment and taking timely and effective protective measures to create a healthy occupational climate of trust , security and safety.

Sexual harassment is an act that effects women's psychological , social and professional status .It also leaves a terrifying , hostile and degrading work environment .Trade union intervention in this situation , is often a key means of training , information and sensitization on all matters related to the prevalence of violence , immoral practices and harassment of various kinds in the workplace .It is know that the workplace reflects the widespread stereotype in society that women are created for pleasure only and that enjoying and sexually harassing them is one of the advantages of a job position , and there is a great work of formation and sensitization awaits the trade union frameworks not only to spread the culture of awareness of the unacceptability of such behaviors and negative attitudes towards working women , but also to detect and identify the manifestations and forms of harassment situations as normal subordinate to the advantages of the higher job position.

As for the Women's Office, their intervention begins with:

- Convincing employers to listen to the real issues of female victims of sexual harassment, and educating them about the various forms of harassment, as many employers are unaware of behaviors like jokes and innuendos that constitute harassment.
- Encouraging victims to refer to the laws that protect them and penalize harassers.
- Advising victims to improve their workplace relationships and join informal groups. One of the harasser's objectives is to isolate the victim. Therefore, it is crucial to gain support from colleagues and informal networks to prevent the harasser from being left alone with the woman. This also fosters feelings of solidarity and collective defense.

In many cases, the office may seek external mediation to assist the woman in resolving her issues and distancing herself from the harasser. This often involves contacting labor inspectors who can act as intermediaries in cases where direct intervention within the institution has stalled. If necessary, the office may request the labor inspector's help to change the victim's position, relocating her to a different department to avoid contact with the harasser this is ,of course after the victim accepts the intervention of an external mediator because in many cases external mediation is refused to avoid the spread of news of sexual harassment , which damages her reputation ,dignity and that of her family, and has significant effects on the psychological and social levels of women victim of sexual harassment . In specific situations, legal action may be pursued if the issue remains unresolved through appropriate channels.

Despite all these interventions , there remain many obstacles that hinder union intervention in the institutions, including :

1- Lack of information, as the union is considered a competitor that can disrupt the institution's system , and therefore all informations are withheld in application of the prevailing saying that the holder of information possesses power and authority.

2- Lack of cooperation from institutions that consider union work as interference in their private affairs.

3- Lack of awareness- raising operations about the real role of the union as a voluntary work aimed at providing assistance in order to improve the organizational performance and protect workers psychologically, professionally and socially.

4-Lack of resources , given that the union does not have the necessary resources to allow it to intervene, take care of and pay attention to all the problems raised.

5.2.3. Discussion of the Third Objective: The Role of the Union in Maintaining the psychological Health of Women Victims of Sexual Harassment

For the Women's Office, the union today faces new challenges in keeping up with developments and changes to ensure its survival. By addressing the issues faced by workers who are victims of professional and psychosocial risks, the trade union aims to redirect union activities towards new horizons, including the management and support of psychological health issues in the workplace. This comes in response to the rising number of harassment cases and the prevalence of a culture of violence across various professional fields, necessitating the establishment of new spaces for social dialogue to assist workers.

With the growing recognition of the psychological health of workers as the greatest challenges faced by institutions around the world , especially because of changes in the world of employment and the overlapping of several internal and external factors that have a significant impact on psychological health programs in the workplace and to provide an

integrated framework of work partners that includes managers and trade unions to promote the concept of mental healthy by illustrating the most important sources that affect them and the most important psychosocial risks that working women may face , as well as identifying their consequences and effects on workforce planning and on working environment.

Thus, the Women's Office considers the psychological health of working women who are victims of sexual harassment to be a priority for union work. The primary goal of union activism is to achieve organizational justice, which is closely linked to the mental and psychological health of working women. Since the work environment is often unsafe and unhealthy, it directly impacts women's psychological health. In this context, the union provides forms of psychological and social support by standing alongside these women. It also sees preventive measures in workplace psychological health as part of its daily responsibilities. These measures include:

- 1- Identifying the key forms of sexual harassment that impact women's mental health.
- 2- Exploring ways to enhance mutual support among female workers to ensure their psychological well-being and improve their quality of life at work.
- 3- Strengthening positive relationships between victims and their colleagues by promoting solidarity and cooperation, and by encouraging them to form supportive groups.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, sexual harassment in the workplace raises a significant threat to the right to work and hinders the professional development of working women, and is detrimental to their mental health. Women face considerable challenges in proving such actions, which remain social taboos that bring shame and affect their dignity and that of their families. Consequently, they often choose silence over defending their rights. Therefore, it is essential for working women to unite in union organizations that help them achieve organizational justice. Today, trade unions have become a means of supporting women by focusing on protective measures, prevention from various risks, and assisting them in seeking solutions and strategies to overcome workplace difficulties and pressures.

Trade union are a means of helping workers overcome some of the difficulties associated with their field of work .In view of the fact that the current role of the union is no longer limited to demanding the improvement of the worker's professional status , it is necessary to work with these organizations to prevent all forms of violence and harassment in the workplace , as they possess the necessary means to intervene in order to contribute to the development of appropriate solutions .And then we suggest the following :

- Working with trade union organizations to issue regulations and conduct preventive campaigns and develop clear polices to combat violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Commitment to give the highest priority to fighting violence within professional sites.
- Intolerance of any conduct by any employee , regardless of rank or standing , and emphasis on penalties to combat all kinds of violence and harassment.
- Raising awareness among all workers and preparing to participate in any action aimed at creating a violence -free environment
- Use of counseling offices to help workers resolve conflicts , manage psychological problems and provide the necessary supporting
- Activation of legal texts to subject the harasser to penalties such as transfer , temporary suspension and even expulsion
- Make possible changes to office planing and workspace by introducing glass separators , mid-height doors and well-lit corridors without dark corners to avoid isolation and reduce the chances of harassment.

Appendix

1. Interview guide

Questions	Axis
1- What is meant by psychological support? 2- How psychological support is done ? 3- What stages do you follow in the psychological support process ? 4- Is psychological support enough to help women overcome sexual harassment ? 5- How harassed women are helped to restore confidence ?	Psychological Support
1- What is the content of organizational support process ? 2- Can you actually intervene at the institutional level to help harassed women ? 3- Do you request external assistance for organizational support (labour inspector or specialists consultants) ? 4- Can organizational support for harassed women be considered as an easy process in terms of application ?	Organizational Support
1- Does psychological and organizational support help to improve psychological health of the harassed women ? 2- What assistance do you provide as a union to maintain the psychological health of the harassed women ? 3- What difficulties impede trade union work in protecting worker's psychological health ?	Psychological Health

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