

Expressions of Sexism in the Workplace: Scoping Review

Renata de Oliveira Andrade & Sheyla Christine Santos Fernandes

Federal University of Alagoas (Universidade Federal de Alagoas [UFAL]), Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil

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Author Note

Renata de O. Andrade  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3922-6886>

Sheyla C. S. Fernandes  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4759-1314>

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Renata de Oliveira Andrade, Rua Lauro Leite Martins, 62, Conj. Santo Eduardo, bairro Poço, Maceió, AL, Brasil. CEP 57025760. Email: renatandrade.89@hotmail.com

Abstract

Sexism, as prejudice and discrimination against women, can also be observed in the work environment, in an interpersonal and institutional way, especially in environments considered typically male. In this context, we believe studying sexism in the workplace is essential. We conducted a scoping review to identify and analyze studies dealing with “expressions of sexism in the workplace.” For this purpose, we performed a bibliographic search in the SciELO, PePSIC, LILACS, Index Psi, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES and Web of Science databases, selecting documents published in article format and articles with descriptors present in the title, abstract, keywords or subject, and excluding duplicate articles, articles without abstract or unavailable in full on the internet and articles that did not deal with the theme as the primary focus. Thus, we obtained a final bank of 129 articles, which were analyzed manually using the IRAMUTEQ software. The results showed a more significant number of publications in recent years, a predominance of quantitative empirical and international articles, and the topic of multidisciplinary interest, emphasizing psychology. The studies present a well-defined methodological structure and highlight the ambivalent character of sexism, its institutional manifestation, and the figure of women as victims of this phenomenon. The theme is of increasing interest but deserves more attention in the local context. This review brings significant contributions and presents limitations and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: gender relations, sexism, women, workplace, scoping review

EXPRESSIONES DO SEXISMO NO AMBIENTE DE TRABALHO: REVISÃO DE ESCOPO

Resumo

O sexismo, enquanto preconceito e discriminação contra as mulheres, também pode ser observado no ambiente de trabalho, de forma interpessoal e institucional, especialmente nos ambientes considerados tipicamente masculinos. Nesse contexto, entendemos importante estudar o sexismo no ambiente de trabalho. Posto isso, realizamos uma revisão de escopo com o objetivo de identificar e analisar estudos que tratam de “expressões do sexismo no ambiente de trabalho”. Para tanto, realizamos uma busca bibliográfica nas bases de dados SciELO, PePSIC, LILACS, Index Psi, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES e Web of Science, selecionando documentos publicados em formato de artigo e artigos com descritores presentes no título, resumo, palavras-chave ou assunto, e excluindo artigos duplicados, artigos sem resumo ou indisponíveis na íntegra na internet e artigos que não tratavam da temática como foco principal. Assim, obtivemos um banco final constituído por 129 artigos, que foram analisados manualmente e através do software IRAMUTEQ. Os resultados apontaram maior publicação nos últimos anos, predominância de artigos empíricos quantitativos e internacionais e que o tema é de interesse multidisciplinar, com destaque para a Psicologia. Os estudos apresentam estrutura metodológica bem definida e enfatizam o caráter ambivalente do sexismo, sua manifestação institucional e a figura da mulher como vítima desse fenômeno. A temática é de interesse crescente, mas merece mais atenção no contexto local. Esta revisão traz importantes contribuições e apresenta limitações e sugestões para pesquisas futuras.

Palavras-chave: relações de gênero, sexismo, mulheres, ambiente de trabalho, revisão de escopo

EXPRESIONES DEL SEXISMO EN EL TRABAJO: REVISIÓN DEL ALCANCE

Resumen

El sexismo, como prejuicio y discriminación contra las mujeres, también se puede observar en el ámbito laboral, de forma interpersonal e institucional, especialmente en ambientes considerados típicamente masculinos. En este contexto, creemos que es importante estudiar el sexismo en el lugar de trabajo. Dicho esto, realizamos una revisión del alcance con el fin de identificar y analizar estudios que abordan “expresiones de sexismo en el lugar de trabajo”. Por ello, realizamos una búsqueda bibliográfica en las bases de datos SciELO, PePSIC, LILACS, Index Psi, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES y Web of Science, seleccionando documentos publicados en formato artículo y artículos con descriptores presentes en el título, resumen, palabras clave o tema, y excluyendo artículos duplicados, artículos sin resumen o no disponibles en su totalidad en Internet y artículos que no trataron el tema como enfoque principal. Así, obtuvimos un banco final compuesto por 129 artículos, los cuales fueron analizados de forma manual y a

través del software IRAMUTEQ. Los resultados mostraron una mayor publicación en los últimos años, un predominio de artículos empíricos cuantitativos e internacionales y que el tema es de interés multidisciplinario, con énfasis en Psicología. Los estudios presentan una estructura metodológica bien definida y enfatizan el carácter ambivalente del sexismo, su manifestación institucional y la figura de la mujer como víctima de este fenómeno. El tema es de creciente interés, pero merece más atención en el contexto local. Esta revisión aporta contribuciones importantes y presenta limitaciones y sugerencias para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras-clave: relaciones de genero, sexismo, mujeres, lugar de trabajo, revisión del alcance

The historical construction of the notion of individual and society has been marked by different assignments of value to men and women, hierarchizing the differences between the sexes in a way that positions the male as superior to the female, reserving the private sphere (domestic) and the roles of mother, devoted wife, and “queen of the home” for women, while men occupy the public, political space, centralizing power and the duty to provide for the family (Bourdieu, 1999/2012; Ferreira, 2004; Lara et al., 2017; Oliveira, 2023).

The belief in female inferiority is reinforced by the stereotypical image of women as fragile, emotional, sensitive, docile, and submissive, with an emphasis on interdependence and femininity, while men are considered rational decision-makers, strong, and dominant (Ferreira, 2004; Formiga et al., 2002; Viana, 2016). Therefore, stereotypes form the cognitive basis of prejudice (Santos, 2008, p. 14), representing the “feeling of disregard and devaluation of the other or the concept that this other, for some reason, might be someone of lesser value and possess fewer rights” (Silva, 2010, p. 562), devaluing the identity of the other and overvaluing or affirming one’s identification (Bandeira & Batista, 2002).

According to Formiga et al. (2002), over time, masculinity and femininity became the basis for distinctions between the sexes, and an individual’s identity as a man or woman would correspond to their biological sex, with conscious acceptance occurring from birth to development. In this case, the distinction of attributes, attitudes, and behaviors of each biological sex would act as guiding ideologies (considered “common”) for preferences, attitudes, and the individual’s choice of gender role, contributing to the formation of psychological and ideological schemas as inducers of discrimination. Therefore, sex refers to a biological condition that classifies the individual as male or female at birth based on biological characteristics, while the social roles corresponding to each sex are socially constructed through the notion of gender, which defines what is male and female (Araújo, 2005; Borges, 2008; Cappelle & Melo, 2010).

In this context, sexism encompasses a series of stereotypes and beliefs about the appropriate role in society based on gender (Formiga, 2011). Expanding on this concept, Glick and Fiske (1996, p. 491) argue that sexism is “a special case of prejudice marked by a deep ambivalence, rather than a uniform antipathy toward women.” According to them, linking sexism only to hostility towards women neglects another critical aspect of this phenomenon: positive feelings that do not fit the standard notion of prejudice. Accordingly, they discuss the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism, defining two sets of sexist attitudes: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is characterized by negative attitudes with the explicit manifestation of prejudice, where there is antipathy and intolerance toward women in power and decision-making, considering them inferior to men and relegating them to the home. Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, represents a positive attitude without apparent prejudice against women, viewing them as fragile and in need of protection. Hostile sexism is typical of traditional attitudes of discrimination against women, with clear gender role definitions, differential treatment between the sexes, and stereotypes about lower female competence. In contrast, benevolent sexism corresponds to neo-sexism or modern sexism, predominantly based on subtle manifestations of

discrimination in a more symbolic or indirect form (Costa et al., 2015; Ferreira, 2004; Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Consequently, individuals, both men and women, are less inclined to perceive these subtle expressions as manifestations of sexism. Furthermore, when contrasting individuals who espouse benevolent beliefs with those expressing hostile views, the former are often regarded as less sexist, primarily because they are perceived as more agreeable (Swim & Hyers, 2009). Therefore, benevolent sexism is society's more accepted and supported form (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2021). However, benevolent sexism can mask hostile behaviors and serve as a tool to maintain the current gender system, preserving traditional values and positions of power. Benevolent sexists, for example, tend to blame women more than men in cases of rape, especially when their behavior is deemed inappropriate, as they seek to justify the idea that women require protection. This leads to women being held accountable for violating gender role expectations (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2021; Swim & Hyers, 2009).

Sexism associated with asymmetric, dominating, and unequal relationships between men and women is also reflected in the workplace (Swim & Hyers, 2009). Women have gained access to the public sphere, integrating into the labor market and sharing responsibility for the family economy with men. As a result, they have entered professions previously dominated by men, with typically masculine characteristics and work values, which represents a "threat to work norms and practices, as well as to the male image of the profession" (Borges, 2008, p. 8).

In this context, Hirata and Kergoat (2007) argue that the sexual division of labor corresponds to a form of social division of labor resulting from social relations between the sexes and is related to the unequal division of domestic work and the differential distribution of men and women in the labor market, trades, and professions. Considering variations in time and space, society, based on this differentiation, seeks to hierarchize activities and sexes, creating a gender system.

The division of labor based on gender relies on principles that are valid for all societies, explained and legitimized through naturalistic ideology, which reduces gender to biological sex, establishing sex-based social roles as the natural destiny of the species. These principles are the principle of separation, which states that "there are jobs for men and jobs for women," and the hierarchical principle, which defines that "a man's job is 'worth' more than a woman's job" (Hirata & Kergoat, 2007, p. 599). The latter notion is clarified in Serpa's work (2010, p. 14), stating that "the value of work is not intrinsic to it, but related to the social recognition of the person who performs it." For example, the author highlights the association between jobs considered light and those seen as heavy and their execution by men or women, with what is light socially attributed to women and what is heavy to men. Similarly, Borges (2008, p. 17) affirms that "women are not evaluated based on their individual competencies but on the fact of being women."

This naturalistic ideology and the principles of separation and hierarchy are evident in Belo's study (2010). She observed that discourses about the representations of men and women

are still tied to traditional gender roles. In professions seen as predominantly female, men are considered more suitable for higher-status positions. At the same time, women in predominantly male environments do not receive the same recognition and are excluded from more prestigious roles. Therefore, in spaces characterized as more suitable for the opposite gender, gender discrimination manifests in different job opportunities for each gender (Belo, 2010), benefiting men, who find a *glass escalator* leading them to the top of the hierarchy, and disadvantaging women, who encounter the *glass ceiling* that prevents them from occupying higher positions (Castaño et al., 2019).

Considering the above, it can be seen that sexism, as a form of prejudice and discrimination against women, can manifest in interpersonal ways, corresponding to harmful conduct towards women in their interpersonal relationships, or institutional ways, referring to the exclusion of women by entities, organizations, and communities, preventing them, for instance, from having the same opportunities as men in the workplace, receiving equal pay, and assuming positions considered typically male (Ferreira, 2004; Formiga et al., 2002).

According to the latest surveys by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2021a, 2021b, 2022), the participation of women in the workforce is lower. It may be related to the unequal division of domestic and caregiving activities. Additionally, women occupy fewer leadership positions in the public and private sectors and earn lower incomes than men, even though the female workforce is more qualified.

In this context, Goldberg's paradigm (1968 as cited in Berges, 2008; Viana, 2016) emphasizes that, in addition to wage disparities between the sexes, discrimination is observed when (a) the prestige of a profession is reduced due to the increased participation of women, and (b) a job is evaluated more positively when performed by a man rather than a woman. These issues tend to arise in areas traditionally dominated by men and result from the influence of stereotypes.

Castaño et al. (2019) confirm the impact of stereotypes on the difficulty women face in assuming or maintaining managerial positions in organizations. Regardless of their characteristics, women are evaluated more negatively and perceived as less suitable for managerial roles. Their performance is considered inferior to men, who are evaluated more positively for managerial positions when they possess the same characteristics as women. According to the authors, inequalities can persist because the victims adapt to the social context, minimizing irritations and resentments considering the barriers encountered.

Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) further reinforce that sexism is more prevalent in male-dominated environments, and gender stereotypes have a significant impact on workplace relationships and the promotion of inequalities in the workplace. For example, police institutions are considered predominantly male environments, where discrimination against women can manifest in various ways, from material perspectives, such as infrastructure and equipment availability for female employees, to limited career advancement opportunities, as well as moral and sexual harassment. This can lead to health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and subsequent absenteeism (Pancheri, 2017; Pimenta & Fachinetto, 2019).

Lombardi (2017) also studied gender discrimination in a predominantly male field, civil engineering, and found occurrences of moral and sexual harassment, which are often normalized as “common” behaviors for establishing a professional identity. She also noted that there is difficulty in recognizing gender discrimination as such, even on the part of women, which hinders behavior change and reinforces gender inequalities in the profession.

Based on the theme of sexism in the workplace, we conducted this scoping review with a broad focus on sexism. Our goal was to identify and analyze studies dealing with “expressions of sexism in the workplace,” aiming to comprehend (1) how scientific production has been studying “expressions of sexism in the workplace”; (2) which areas of knowledge and countries have been researching this topic; and (3) the nature of the studies conducted. This research is vital to comprehend the attention given by scientific production to this theme, to deepen its understanding, guide further research, and encourage the development of new studies on the phenomenon. Identifying problems in interpersonal and institutional relationships highlighted in the literature makes it possible to suggest new studies that evaluate these problems and potential solutions. It is essential to note that researching sexism in a broad sense, without establishing a specific focus on the form(s) through which it manifests, allows for the collection of studies that answer the first research question, providing an overview of this theme and identifying different forms of sexism by comprehensively analyzing what the articles study and conclude about the phenomenon.

Method

This research constitutes a scoping review and adheres to the recommendations of Arksey and O’Malley (2005). This methodology appropriately guides our study, aiming to map the literature and comprehensively examine how a topic has been addressed, identifying evidence, concepts, characteristics, and knowledge gaps (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018). Research questions, databases, descriptors, search strategies, and eligibility criteria were defined to operationalize this study.

We conducted an electronic bibliographic search in the following databases: SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), PePSIC (Electronic Journals of Psychology), LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences), Index Psi, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and Web of Science. The search was conducted using descriptors combined with Boolean operators in the following way: (*Sexismo* OR *Machismo* OR “*Discriminação de Gênero*” OR “*Discriminação baseada em Gênero*” OR “*Discriminação Sexual*” OR “*Desigualdade de Gênero*” OR “*Desigualdades de Gênero*” OR “*Iniquidade de Gênero*” OR “*Iniquidades de Gênero*” OR “*Relações de Gênero*” OR “*Violência de Gênero*”) AND (“*Local de Trabalho*” OR “*Ambiente de Trabalho*” OR “*Ambiente Institucional*” OR “*Ambiente Organizacional*” OR “*Ambiente Laboral*” OR “*Relações de Trabalho*” OR “*Relações Laborais*”), and (*Sexism* OR *Chauvinism* OR *Machismo* OR “*Gender Discrimination*” OR “*Sexual Discrimination*” OR “*Gender Inequality*” OR “*Gender Inequity*” OR “*Gender Inequalities*” OR “*Gender Inequities*” OR “*Gender Iniquity*” OR “*Gender Iniquities*” OR “*Gender Relations*” OR

“Gender Violence”) AND (Workplace OR “Workplace Environment” OR “Working Environment” OR “Work Environment” OR “Institutional Environment” OR “Organizational Environment” OR “Labor Environment” OR “Labour Environment” OR “Workplace Relations” OR “Work Relations” OR “Labor Relations” OR “Labour Relations”).

Since this study focuses on sexism in a broad sense, the descriptors encompass these different terms (references to the general sense). They are defined based on expressions identified in the studies retrieved in the exploratory phase for grounding and deepening the research theme and after consulting indexes/terminologies/descriptors/search terms in the databases selected. Regarding language, descriptors in both Portuguese and English were used to ensure a comprehensive review of national and international literature from the chosen databases and the eligibility criteria defined.

As the interest of this review was to understand how scientific production has addressed “expressions of sexism in the workplace,” seeking a comprehensive analysis of the literature on the subject, we chose not to limit the publication period of the studies or define language as a search criterion to minimize the risk of excluding essential studies. Therefore, all studies published up to July 2019, when the searches were completed, were considered.

For the pre-selection of studies, the following inclusion criteria were defined: (1) documents published in article format and (2) articles with descriptors in the title, abstract, keywords, or subject. In this stage, the search filter resources available in the databases consulted were used, as they all provide these criteria as data refinement options. The articles identified in this stage were independently evaluated by the researchers and selected by consensus, then exported to two cataloging tools (Zotero and Parsifal), where some duplicates were automatically identified and removed. Other duplicate articles were removed manually after individual analysis. Among the other exclusion criteria for the final selection, we considered (1) articles without abstracts or not available in full on the internet and (2) articles that did not have “expressions of sexism in the workplace” as the primary focus. Initially, the titles, abstracts, and keywords were analyzed, with further readings of other sections for clarification when necessary.

Primarily, the analyses were manual and focused on the nature of the studies, methods, publication years, and areas of knowledge based on data from the journals and authors. Subsequently, the article abstracts were organized and subjected to analysis using the IRaMuTeQ software (Interface R for Multidimensional Text and Questionnaire Analysis), an open-source program for textual analysis that provides various possibilities for processing qualitative data by enabling different processing techniques (Camargo & Justo, 2016, 2018), such as Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC).

In this study, the abstracts of the selected articles are the text units that make up the corpus of analysis on the theme “expressions of sexism in the workplace.” The text units and the command lines that precede and encode the abstracts are organized according to the procedures established by the program. Subsequently, through standard analysis, the program divides the corpus into text segments that, through DHC analysis, are divided into classes based on their

respective vocabularies based on their frequencies and chi-square (χ^2) correlation values, with similar vocabularies in the same class and different from the segments in the other classes (Camargo & Justo, 2016, 2018; Salviati, 2017).

The chi-square (χ^2) test used by the program in DHC reveals the strength of the connection between words and their class. This strength is analyzed when $\chi^2 \geq 3.84$, considering $p < .05$ (significance level of the word's association with the class) (Camargo & Justo, 2016; Goetz et al., 2008; Oltramari & Camargo, 2010; Salviati, 2017). After analyzing the DHC and its classes, some individual analyses were necessary for clarification. Due to the importance of the theme of motherhood and its low representation within the DHC, for example, we conducted an individual analysis using the IRaMuTeQ software to identify other articles that contained the words maternity, pregnancy, and pregnant to improve the study and discussion in this context.

Results

Selection of the Articles

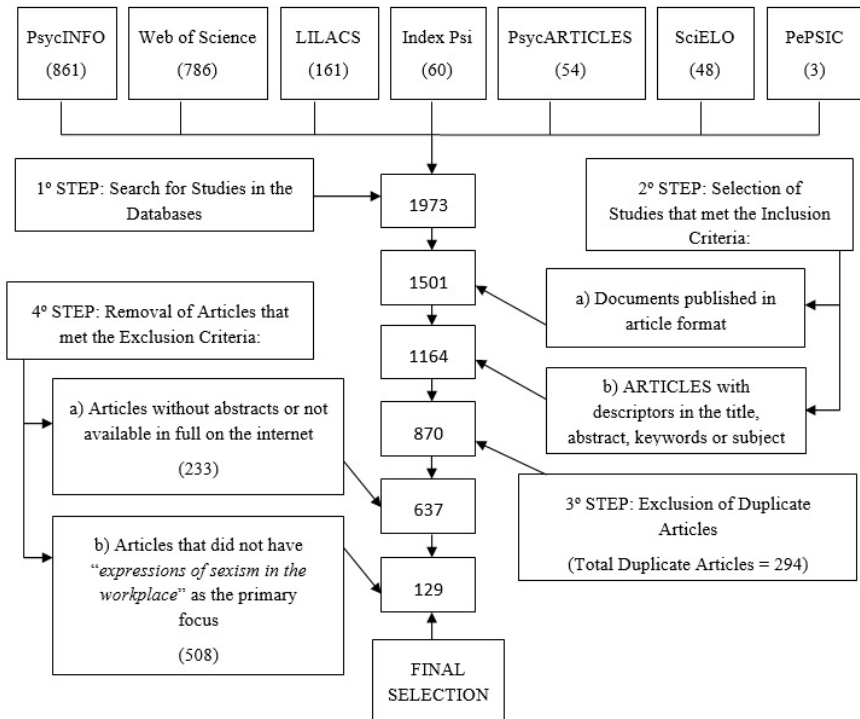
The first stage of the research – *search for studies in the databases* – yielded a total of 1973 documents, of which 1849 resulted from the search using English descriptors, representing 93.71% of the total. It should be noted that the PsycINFO, Web of Science, and PsycARTICLES databases did not produce results using the Portuguese descriptors.

These 1973 documents were subjected to the inclusion criteria, resulting in a total of 1164 articles, of which 1056 resulted from the search using English descriptors, representing 90.72% of the total. This may indicate that the majority of the studies were conducted in the international context. This initial screening presented 664 articles from the Web of Science, 232 from PsycINFO, 136 from LILACS, 60 from Index Psi, 47 from SciELO, 22 from PsycARTICLES, and three from PePSIC. It should be highlighted that the Web of Science database stood out, representing 57.04% of the total.

Of the 1164 articles pre-selected after applying the inclusion criteria, 294 duplicate titles were excluded, and 870 were subjected to the exclusion criteria. Of these, 233 were excluded for not having an abstract or being unavailable in full on the internet, and 508 were excluded for not addressing “expressions of sexism in the workplace” as the primary focus. Therefore, we obtained a final database consisting of 129 articles. All the study selection stages described here were organized in a flowchart, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

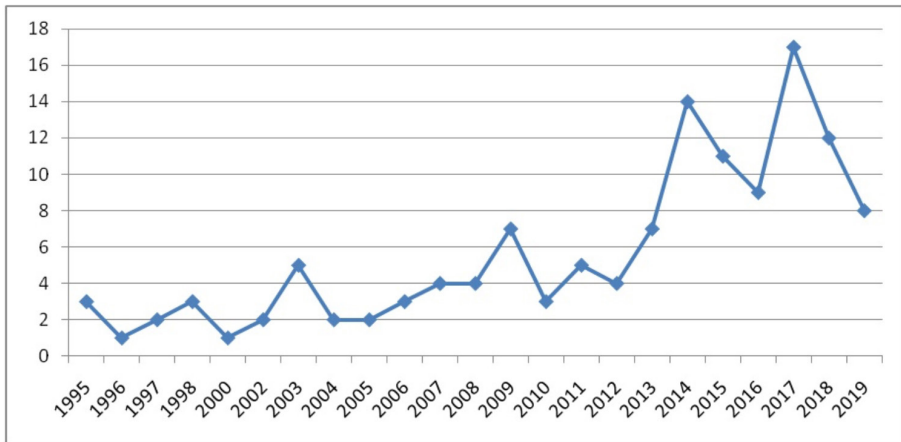
Flowchart of the study selection

**Manual Analyses**

The initial analysis of the selected articles revealed that works addressing “expressions of sexism in the workplace” began to be published in 1995, with no publications identified in the years 1999 or 2001. The most prominent period spans from 2014 to 2019, with 14, 11, 9, 17, 12, and 8 publications, respectively (Figure 2). It is important to emphasize that 2019 included only articles published until July, when the searches were concluded.

Figure 2

Frequency of articles (vertical axis) by year of publication (horizontal axis)



Regarding the language, 7 (5.43%) articles were published in Portuguese (6 from Brazil and one from Portugal), 113 (87.6%) in English, 7 (5.43%) in Spanish, 1 (0.77%) in French, and 1 (0.77%) in Turkish. Out of this total, eight were produced in Brazil, with six published in Portuguese and 2 in English. Among these 8, one English article was published in a foreign journal, and the rest were published in Brazilian journals.

The majority of studies were conducted in the United States (USA), with 61 publications from 1995 to 2019, of which seven were developed in collaboration with other countries, such as Canada (in 1997 and 2016), China (in 2000), Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom (in 2013), Pakistan (in 2014), and the United Kingdom (in 2012 and 2016).

The analysis of knowledge areas and countries that have been studying the topic was based on the journals (name or scope) and the academic area of the authors. Most journals ($n = 71$) were interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary. In the remaining journals, the identified areas were: Psychology ($n = 26$), Management ($n = 7$), Sociology ($n = 7$), Law ($n = 8$), Education ($n = 3$), Medicine ($n = 3$), Human Resources ($n = 2$), Social Work ($n = 2$), Anthropology ($n = 1$), Accounting ($n = 1$), Communication ($n = 1$), and Economics ($n = 1$). It should be highlighted that the same journal, which had four publications ($n = 4$), is categorized explicitly in both Psychology and Law areas. To differentiate the number of publications in each area, these four publications were counted separately, resulting in the values above. Psychology, Law, Management, and Sociology are the areas that stood out.

The countries that published articles on this topic are the USA ($n = 62$), the United Kingdom ($n = 36$), Brazil ($n = 7$), the Netherlands ($n = 4$), Australia ($n = 3$), Chile ($n = 3$), Colombia ($n = 2$), France ($n = 2$), Iran ($n = 2$), Mexico ($n = 2$), Switzerland ($n = 2$), Spain ($n = 1$),

Portugal ($n = 1$), Turkey ($n = 1$), and Venezuela ($n = 1$). Therefore, the USA, the United Kingdom, and Brazil were the most prominent countries.

Psychology was the academic field of the researchers who investigated the topic the most, followed by Management and Sociology, with 69, 23, and 18 publications, respectively. Most authors were from the USA, followed by Australia, Brazil, and the United Kingdom, with 74, 11, 9, and 8 articles, respectively. The authors with the most publications are listed in Table 1, including their countries and the quantity and years of their publications.

Table 1

Authors with the highest number of publications

Authors	Countries	Quantity	Years of publications
WIENER, Richard L.	USA	6	1997, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2018
CORTINA, Lilia M.	USA	5	2011, 2012, (2) 2013, 2015
KING, Eden B.	USA	4	2011, 2012, 2013, 2017
HASLAM, S. Alexander	United Kingdom and Australia	3	2007, 2011, 2014
LESKINEN, Emily A.	USA	3	2011, 2013, 2015
MORGAN, Whitney Botsford	USA	3	2011, 2012, 2013
NGO, Hang-Yue	China	3	2003, 2009, 2015
RYAN, Michelle K.	United Kingdom and the Netherlands	3	2007, 2011, 2014
SETTLES, Isis H.	USA	3	2012, (2) 2014

The journals that stood out were *Sex Roles* (with 15 publications) and *Gender, Work and Organization* (with five publications). The first (Qualis A2) is American and covers topics such as sexism, gender contexts, work, and organizations; the second (Qualis A1) is British and encompasses research on the role of gender in the workplace, gender relations, gender organization, and the gendering of organizations. This understanding of the scope explains these journals' prominence in publications on this review's subject. The Brazilian journals included in this study are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Data about the Brazilian journals included in the study

Journal	Qualis	Area de knowledge	Publication - quantity (year) -	Author	
				Country	Area
- <i>Cadernos de Psicologia Social do Trabalho</i>	B2	Psychology	1 (2014)	Brazil	Psychology
- <i>Quaestio iuris</i>	B1	Law	1 (2016)	Brazil	Law
- <i>Revista Direito GV</i>	A1	Law	1 (2016)	Brazil	Law
- <i>Cadernos de Pesquisa</i>	A1	Education	1 (2017)	Brazil	Sociology
- <i>Holos</i>	B2	Interdisciplinary	1 (2017)	Brazil	Administration and Engineering
- <i>Vibrant</i>	A1	Anthropology	1 (2017)	Brazil and USA	Political Science and Anthropology
- <i>Revista Contabilidade, Gestão e Governança</i>	B1	Accounting Sciences	1 (2018)	Brazil	Accounting Sciences

Note. Qualis classification data and area of knowledge obtained from the Sucupira Platform (<https://sucupira.capes.gov.br>).

Regarding the nature of the studies, 30 were theoretical, and 99 were empirical. Two of the theoretical studies corresponded to meta-analyses, and 6 had a section/topic detailing the research methodology. Of the eight articles produced in Brazil, four were theoretical. Of the total empirical studies, 63 used quantitative, 28 used qualitative, and 8 used mixed methods. Only five empirical studies did not have a methodology section/topic; all were qualitative.

It should be highlighted that 12 studies applied experimental procedures. Questionnaires and interviews were the primary data collection methods in the empirical studies. Interviews were used in 32 studies, and questionnaires, with an emphasis on the use of scales, were used in 69 studies. Of these, 11 used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory by Glick and Fiske (1996), a 22-item scale subdivided into two 11-item subscales that assess hostile and benevolent sexism, respectively.

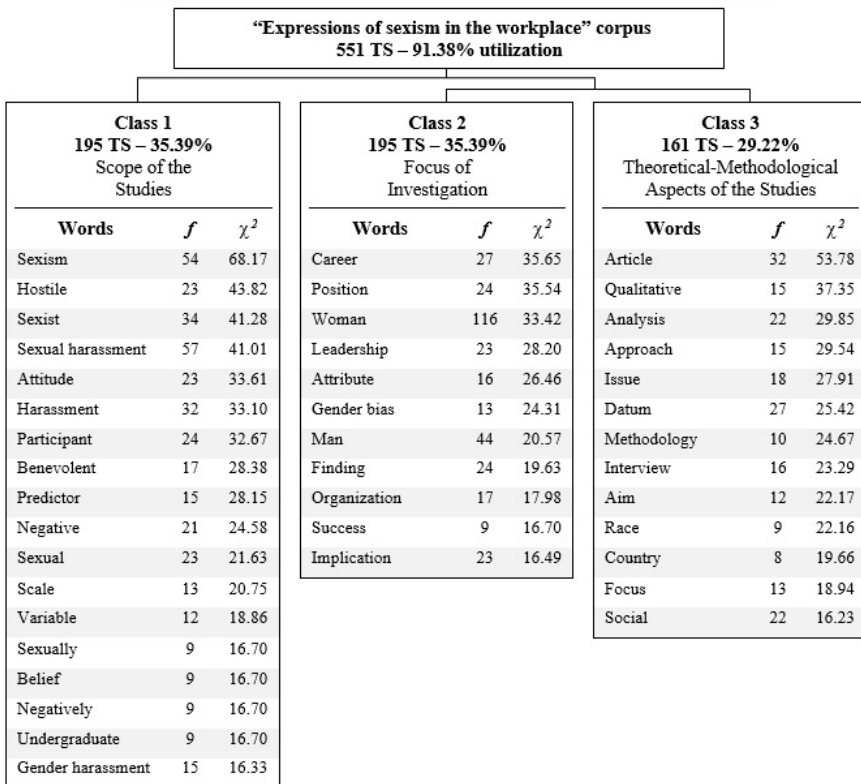
Analyses using the IRaMuTeQ software

For simultaneous analysis of all texts with the IRaMuTeQ program, they must form a corpus with a unified language. Therefore, we considered the English language for the analysis since most articles were in English (87.6%), and the studies in a different language had English abstracts within their structure. The corpus on the theme “expressions of sexism in the workplace” was formed by the English abstracts of the 129 selected articles, coded as r_001 to r_129 for identification. The textual analysis exclusively examines active forms (words), which are the most essential elements, specifically, the main words encountered in the corpus (Camargo & Justo, 2018; Salviati, 2017).

software from the DHC shows the corpus partition and indicates each class's size (Camargo & Justo, 2018; Salviati, 2017). The dendrogram shows that the first partition resulted in two subcorpora, separating Class 1 from the rest of the material, which underwent the second partition, generating Classes 2 and 3. The data generated by the DHC (classes and vocabularies with their frequency and chi-square values) were organized in a dendrogram (Figure 4), which is a representation that enables the relationships between words within each class to be visualized (Oltamari & Camargo, 2010).

Figure 4

Dendrogram of the DHC for the “Expressions of Sexism in the Workplace” corpus



The dendrogram displays the partitions and classes with their corresponding TS values and some vocabularies, selected based on the criteria suggested by Camargo and Justo (2016) and used by Goetz et al. (2008): vocabularies with a frequency higher than the mean occurrences in the corpus and an association value to the class ($\chi^2 \geq 3.84$). To simplify the dendrogram, we chose to select vocabulary with a lower margin of error regarding class association, which, in

other words, is the most significant. Accordingly, following Goetz et al. (2008), words with chi-square values of up to 15.36 (four times higher than the minimum value of 3.84) were considered, with a significance level of $p < .0001$ in all three classes.

Classes 1 and 2 were the most significant, representing 35.39% of the TS. Class 1 defines the scope of scientific production on “Expressions of Sexism in the Workplace” and was subdivided into Classes 2 and 3, which highlight the relationship between what is being studied (Class 2) and the methodologies employed in the studies (Class 3). The descriptions of the classes, some TS, and our emphasis are presented below.

Class 1. Class 1 was labeled “Scope of the Studies” and features the most significant words: sexism, hostile, and sexist. Its content encompasses what the studies cover as dimensions of investigation in the theme of this review, addressing attitudes, beliefs, sexist behaviors, and manifestations of sexism, such as gender and sexual discrimination. The excerpts from Table 3 can illustrate this class.

Table 3

Examples of text segments characteristic of Class 1

Abstract	Text segment
r_001	“As predicted, sense of belonging mediated the associations between <i>organizational sexism</i> and both <i>mental health and job satisfaction</i> ”; “In addition, sense of belonging mediated the association between <i>interpersonal sexism and mental health</i> ” (Rubin et al., 2019, p. 267)
r_013	“This study investigated <i>beliefs</i> about <i>gender discrimination</i> in opportunities for promotion in organizations and their relation to gender and gender-focused <i>ambivalent beliefs</i> ” (Feather & Boeckmann, 2007, p. 31).
r_057	“The <i>Sex Discrimination</i> and <i>Gender Harassment</i> theme included stories about sex discrimination and gender harassment, such as sexist hostility behaviors ranging from insults and jokes invoking misogynistic stereotypes to <i>bullying</i> behaviors” (Karami et al., 2019, p. 1).
r_081	“Recent research on <i>sexual harassment</i> has taken a cognitive approach, arguing that male sexual harassment of women results from 2 types of <i>sexism</i> in combination with <i>stereotypes</i> : hostile sexism and benevolent sexism” (Begany & Milburn, 2002, p. 119).
r_113	“In accord with <i>ambivalent sexism theory</i> ’s claim. . . , participants’ hostile sexism scores predicted lower ratings of applicant competence and hireability” (Good & Rudman, 2010, p. 481).

Class 2. Class 2 was named “Focus of Investigation” and features the most significant words: career, position, and woman. Its content also addresses sexism as gender discrimination, gender inequality, and sexual discrimination and is associated with what has been studied in the theme of this review; that is, it delves into specific aspects representing this theme. Other representative words in the class include gender bias, culture, hierarchy, wage, unequal, barrier, glass cliff, second generation, glass ceiling, gap, gender inequality, and workplace. The text segments presented in Table 4 illustrate this class.

Table 4

Examples of text segments characteristic of Class 2

Abstract	Text segment
r__014	"Major <i>sex inequalities</i> persist at the senior management level in the <i>salaries</i> and <i>benefits</i> offered to female and male staff and in access to certain favored occupations and sectors" (Özbilgin & Woodward, 2004, p. 668).
r__043	"When <i>women</i> are hired, they tend to start at <i>lower positions</i> and/or receive <i>lower initial salaries</i> than men. Over time, the <i>gap between ... salaries</i> and <i>promotion rates</i> grows" (Isaacs, 1995, p. 58).
r__049	"Various norms and practices . . . construct and maintain masculinity at the workplace, <i>depriving opportunities to professional women</i> which affect their <i>rise to leadership positions</i> ." "The findings show reproduction of a gender normative order through . . . norms and practices that favor men and . . . socio-cultural norms that <i>devalue</i> women in public spaces" (Gupta, 2017, p. 255).
r__072	" <i>men's narratives</i> attributed the dearth lack of women in higher-level positions to their <i>lack of professionalism and commitment to the work</i> " (Brumley, 2014, p. 217).
r__082	"the <i>phenomenon of the glass cliff</i> , whereby women are more likely than men to be placed in <i>precarious leadership positions</i> . Men's and women's reactions to this <i>subtle form of gender discrimination</i> are examined" (Ryan et al., 2007, p. 182).
r__086	"This paper . . . examines the key manifestations of <i>second-generation gender bias</i> and how it impacts <i>women's career progression into leadership positions</i> " (Opoku & Williams, 2019, p. 2).

Class 3. Class 3 was named "Theoretical-Methodological Aspects of the Studies," its main words were article, qualitative, analysis, approach, issue, datum, and methodology. Its content addressed the methodological characteristics of studies, focusing on theoretical perspective, objectives, scope, location, participants, procedures, instruments used, and results. In this context, other representative words included theory and study. Related to these issues (objectives, theory, or results achieved), the class also featured significant words such as labor relations, gender discrimination, and gender relations, as well as labor and working environment. The words qualitative and interview also stood out and corresponded to an essential data collection method in works related to the studied theme.

It should be emphasized that the words mother, officer, and police were also significant in this class and were present in TS associated with objectives, theory, or results achieved. Concerning motherhood, we identified that the words maternity, pregnancy, and pregnant were not significant words for the DHC classes but were present in studies on the theme, directly addressed (as an analysis objective) in six articles, and mentioned in the results of two. This class is illustrated by the text excerpts presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Examples of text segments characteristic of Class 3

Abstract	Text segment
r_002	"Parting from a <i>qualitative analysis of empirical data</i> . . . , this paper aims to demonstrate that the <i>gender discrimination</i> still happens to women in the <i>work relations</i> " (Matos & Cirino, 2016, p. 1955).
r_008	" <i>Mothers'</i> return to work following childbirth is widely recognized as a key stage in establishing employment arrangements that disadvantage them in the long run" (Yerkes et al., 2017, p. 476).
r_050	"The objective of this study was to analyze <i>gender relations</i> in the <i>workplace</i> of female <i>military police officers</i> at a Military Police Battalion (MPB)." "A <i>qualitative case study methodology</i> was used, with <i>interviews</i> conducted with a <i>semi-structured script</i> " (Lara et al., 2017, p. 56).
r_078	" <i>workplace relationships</i> based on traditional understandings of <i>gender roles</i> continue to hinder <i>women's</i> potential to thrive as police officers" (Gripp & Zaluar, 2017, p. 1).

Discussion

This study clarifies how sexism in the workplace has been studied in the literature and what the critical elements related to this phenomenon are from a broader (scope of the studies) or more specific (focus of investigation) perception.

Through *manual analysis*, we found that publications were mainly from 2014 to 2019 and were predominantly produced in Psychology. This demonstrates the discipline's relevance in this theme, expanding knowledge with significant contributions, particularly in the international context, where it holds a prominent position. The United States is a notable leader in studying this topic. It should be mentioned that other knowledge areas were identified concerning the journals and the researchers' training, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of this topic. Nonetheless, our observations also revealed that national publications encompassed a range of theoretical and practical studies in diverse fields but were relatively limited in number. This scarcity suggests that the phenomenon within the local context merits increased attention and investigation.

The fact that most publications occurred between 2014 and 2019 and were primarily from the United States can be attributed to the extensive media coverage in 2017 regarding sexual harassment cases, as highlighted by Crain and Matheny (2019) (r_090). The #MeToo movement, which characterizes a series of social movements accusing powerful men of sexual harassment, began in 2017 and gained international attention when actress Alyssa Milano posted the hashtag on Twitter in response to sexual harassment allegations by former American film producer Harvey Weinstein against several actresses. She encouraged harassment victims to use the hashtag to illustrate the scope of the problem, which indeed led to an increase in the number of sexual harassment accusations (Hörnle, 2021). This may have influenced the rise in scientific production on sexism.

In the case of the *frequency and word cloud analysis*, the thematic focus of the review was already evident in the most essential and representative words in the "expressions of sexism in the workplace" corpus. The results of this analysis indicate expressions related to the *theme*

(sexism, workplace), *representations of sexism* (such as attitude, discrimination, gender inequality, violence, harassment, behavior, hostile, benevolent), the *social elements related to the phenomenon* (such as woman, man, organization, worker), the *context of the development of the studies* (employment, career, role, relationship, position), and the *structure of investigation* (articles, theory, question, data, results, interviews). Therefore, the results summarize the study, encompassing various elements representing the theme.

In *Class 1 of the DHC*, sexism was addressed in its interpersonal and institutional forms, emphasizing its ambivalence, as discussed by Glick and Fiske (1996). In this context, three abstracts mentioned using the “Ambivalent Sexism Inventory” developed by these authors as a research instrument. The segments of text associated with this class focused on understanding benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, or both. Some authors also treated benevolent sexism as modern and hostile sexism as blatant (Cortina et al., 2013; Watkins et al., 2006) (r_087). Articles in this class also discussed sexism as gender harassment and its strong relationship with sexual harassment, presenting it as a result of discrimination against women. They highlighted the connection of these phenomena with sexual objectification and addressed the negative impact of sexism on job satisfaction and mental health, or psychological suffering, of female workers.

In *Class 2 of the DHC*, the results indicate that the studies focused more on institutional sexism regarding hiring, the gender pay gap, and organizational structure, addressing positions, benefits, promotions, and career progression. The concept of second-generation gender bias, extensively discussed by Opoku and Williams (2019) (r_086), is implicit and deals with subtle and “invisible” barriers for women arising from existing cultural and structural workplace practices and normative gender-based interaction patterns (p. 3). This type of discrimination is unintentional and may be unconscious, unlike first-generation gender bias, which is explicit. The class also emphasizes concepts such as the glass ceiling and the glass cliff, which represent these invisible barriers to women’s career progression, as discussed by Bell et al. (2002) (r_022), Bruckmüller et al. (2014) (r_016), Masser and Abrams (2004) (r_083), Martínez (2018) (r_044), Ryan et al. (2011) (r_105), and Ryan et al. (2007) (r_082).

Articles characteristic of this class also discussed the influence of gender stereotypes on workplace inequalities, such as in hiring, as studied by Gorman (2005) (r_053), and harassment and career progression, as explored by Leskinen et al. (2015) (r_054). These studies found that these stereotypes led to negative assessments of women in the workplace and a preference for men in higher positions, aligning with the findings of Castaño et al. (2019) on the relationship between these stereotypes and glass ceiling barriers.

Regarding discrimination, harassment, and the glass ceiling, Bell et al. (2002) (r_022) stated that “many of the factors that preclude women from occupying executive and managerial positions also foster sexual harassment” (p. 66). Text segments in this class emphasize women as victims of sexism and present men and organizations as active figures in this phenomenon, favoring men and devaluing women. This aligns with what was highlighted in the exploratory phase, which emphasized sexism as fundamentally associated with the victimization of women.

Class 3 of the HCA indicated that articles were concerned with a well-developed investigation structure, explicitly mentioning terms representing the broad thematic scope, such as “gender discrimination” and “workplace.” Specific issues related to maternity and the police environment were also identified as representative of this class, shaping the objectives or results of the studies.

The studies by Yerkes et al. (2017) (r_008), Verniers and Vala (2018) (r_062), and Alparslan et al. (2015) (r_079), for example, directly addressed gender discrimination related to motherhood. The first two directly studied the impact of motherhood on gender relations, shaping their study objectives. At the same time, the latter dealt with gender discrimination in a broad sense and presented motherhood as one of the reasons for discrimination in its results. Another article discussing motherhood and associated with the DHC was the study by Gloor et al. (2018) (r_007), which reported more significant organizational discrimination against women without children compared to men without children, mainly where there are substantial differences in maternity and paternity leave policies. However, this study's TS were associated with Class 2 due to the emphasis on associated institutional issues, such as organizational hiring and leave policies.

Regarding motherhood, considering the articles identified in the DHC and those identified in individual analyses, eight directly studied the relationship between motherhood and gender discrimination in the workplace, and three others addressed the topic in their results. This scenario reflects the limited direct attention to this issue, often treated more generally and institutionally, indicating that the subject is not saturated and there is still much room for further exploration. This discrimination may be associated with the culturally assigned role of women in the household as caregivers for children (Hirata & Kergoat, 2007), suggesting that the naturalization of this caregiver role also extends to the workplace, where sexism may not be identified and, therefore, not discussed. The limited number of articles on this topic identified in the review may indicate that this naturalization also influences the demand for research in this area.

Discrimination in the police environment was addressed by Carmen et al. (2007) (r_069), Gripp and Zaluar (2017) (r_078), and Lara et al. (2017) (r_050). The first study was conducted in the United States with a local police force, while the others were conducted in Brazil, focusing on Military Police. In this context, the study by Dick (2013) (r_103) also addressed sexism in the police environment. It was conducted in England with female officers from a local police force to analyze different interpretations of experiences or practices as sexist or non-sexist. While this article had TS associated with Class 3 due to its methodological characteristics, it was more strongly associated with Class 1 due to its focus on analyzing the interpretative duality of sexism as an objective or subjective experience. In the police context, we also identified the study by Czarniawska (2006) (r_027) – with TS associated with classes 2 and 3 – which used fiction as a data collection method, employing literature and fictional police cinema as study materials. Although this mention of the study of female police officers was not included in the abstract, it was found in a section entitled “policewomen,” that is, the abstract did not include

the words “officer” and “police” from Class 3, or otherwise mention the police context, which was only identified in the article after the individual analysis.

Final Considerations

This study aimed to identify and analyze articles that explore the theme of “expressions of sexism in the workplace” published before July 2019. The findings indicate that this topic garners multidisciplinary interest, with a particular emphasis on Psychology. There was a notable increase in international publications in recent years, with the United States taking a prominent position. There was a predominance of quantitative empirical articles. However, in Brazil, there is a scarcity of publications in this domain, and the existing ones are relatively recent and span various academic fields. This suggests that the phenomenon in the local context warrants more comprehensive attention. Therefore, more national studies and foreign studies outside the context of the USA would provide significant academic, political, and social contributions.

In this review study, sexism was observed broadly, showing how it can be referred to/addressed in different ways and understood through different approaches. Therefore, it is possible to know why the topic appeals to various fields of knowledge. In addition to Psychology, Law, Administration, and Sociology, which were the prominent fields identified, it is imperative to highlight the significance of studies in the less-represented areas. By doing so, we can encourage and promote research productivity across a broader spectrum of disciplines. Accordingly, we highlight the diversity of approaches to the theme evidenced in the review findings, reinforcing the importance of studying the subject from the perspective of other theories in areas with lower production.

In this context, we suggest developing studies on sexism in broad areas of knowledge, specific areas of professional training, and various professions that seek to analyze documents (institutional or particular legislation and regulations, for example) or studies already developed on the subject. We also suggest that new studies in these areas seek to understand how victims of sexism deal with this phenomenon in the job market or work environment, how the phenomenon manifests itself in these spaces, and how it impacts the development of work activities and workers' physical and mental health. Another opportunity is to investigate how global/local aspects such as legislation, the job market, politics, the economy, and the organizational culture impact organizational policies and practices that influence sexist manifestations in the workplace and how they affect the coping strategies of victims of this phenomenon. For this, we suggest that these new studies start with sexism broadly, as was the focus of this review, or are developed based on specific expressions/types of sexism, such as motherhood in the workplace.

This way, researchers from various fields can investigate this theme, spark new interests, and stimulate new productions. As there is a higher incidence of foreign studies, we suggest adapting the problems of international research to Brazil to understand the phenomena in the local context and then develop comparative studies.

The panorama of what scientific production has studied in this theme configures a significant theoretical contribution of this review, which also highlights the fact that women stand out as victims of ambivalent sexism in interpersonal and institutional relationships. The findings indicate that, in the workplace, gender stereotypes are still very prominent and reinforce culturally constructed beliefs about gender roles and the sexual division of labor. These beliefs and their manifestations seem to adapt to the course of time, the history of struggles, and the conquest of rights so that subtleties overcome (but do not nullify) hostilities. Consequently, there is a helical adaptation process to new social norms based on renewed forms of female inferiorization, reinforcing inequalities. The findings address this issue by raising concepts such as benevolent sexism, neo-sexism, modern sexism, second-generation gender bias, “glass ceiling,” and “glass cliff.” This reflects how many people and institutions deal with prejudice against women and social pressure to display desirable (“politically correct”) behaviors so that discrimination often occurs subtly and without the appearance of prejudice.

Isolated cases can generate doubts and may not be sufficient for the problem to be recognized by society, institutions, and governments. However, after data collection and comparison, gender pay and promotion disparities, for example, become evident. This review exposes these manifestations of sexism and reinforces moral and sexual harassment against women as the result of gender prejudice and discrimination. Harassment still involves legal issues in terms of definition, and, therefore, these issues should be explored in new studies for a better understanding of the problem. This should include discussing, for example, the need for adjustments in legislation. Therefore, the importance of well-structured organizational and governmental policies aimed at combating prejudice and discrimination against women in the workplace is evident, and these issues can be addressed and suggested in new studies on the phenomenon.

In the exploratory phase, we understood that sexism can be treated differently. For this reason, the review used various descriptors that represent “expressions of sexism” to encompass the different terms by which sexism is referred to in the literature to reduce selection bias. However, it is possible that studies on this theme use other terms and, in this case, may not have been identified in the searches. In addition, other limitations are that the searches only took place in online databases and considered only scientific articles, not including, for example, theses, dissertations, and books. These limitations, however, do not compromise the importance or validity of the review. Therefore, we suggest that a review of this theme expands to other types of documents and data sources.

We consider that the research questions were answered, and the review’s objective was achieved, presenting a comprehensive, informative framework that allows us to understand how scientific production has studied “expressions of sexism in the workplace,” which areas of knowledge and countries have been studying this theme, and the nature of the studies carried out.

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