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**Gender-based violence on digital platforms: an analysis  
from the perspectives of psychology and law**

Violencia de género en plataformas digitales: un análisis desde las  
perspectivas de la psicología y el derecho

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## Gender-based violence on digital platforms: an analysis from the perspectives of psychology and law

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### Abstract

The fundamental purpose of this article was to analyze gender-based violence in the digital environment from legal and psychological perspectives, employing a qualitative, analytical, and descriptive method. It is argued that gender-based violence in the digital age is primarily a cyber-violent phenomenon, based on a meticulous literature review that included the analysis of key documents, jurisprudence, and relevant literature. Online psychological violence was the focus of the study, highlighting that cyberbullying has a devastating impact on the emotional, mental, and even physical stability of individuals, both women and men. From a psychological perspective, it is clear that women who have experienced online gender-based violence exhibit elevated levels of anxiety, post-traumatic


stress, and depression, which seriously affects their health. In legal terms, the legislation in Colombia is examined, specifically Law 1257 of 2008. It is noted that, despite some progress, there are notable shortcomings in the regulatory framework that prevent an appropriate response to the problems faced by victims. The persistence of violence is fueled by the lack of proper classification of certain cybercrimes and by the fact that institutional support is insufficient. It is concluded that gender-based violence in cyberspace comprehensively affects mental health, and that legislative reforms and increased psychological support for victims are essential to effectively address this serious problem.

*Keywords:* gender, violence, cyber, depression, anxiety, jurisprudence

## Resumen

El propósito fundamental de este artículo fue analizar la violencia de género en el entorno digital desde los puntos de vista del derecho y la psicología, empleando un método cualitativo que es analítico y descriptivo. Se dice que la violencia de género en la era digital es un tipo de violencia que ocurre en línea. Esto se basa en una cuidadosa revisión de la literatura, que incluyó el análisis de documentos importantes, leyes y textos relevantes. La violencia psicológica en línea fue el foco de estudio, poniendo de relieve que el hostigamiento cibernético tiene un impacto desastroso en la estabilidad emocional, mental e incluso física de las personas, tanto mujeres como hombres. Es claro desde el enfoque psicológico que las mujeres que han padecido violencia de género en la red presentan niveles elevados de ansiedad, estrés postraumático y depresión, lo que afecta seriamente su salud. En términos legales, se examina la legislación en Colombia, concretamente la Ley 1257 de 2008. Se indica que, pese a algunos progresos, hay insuficiencias notables en el marco normativo que impiden una respuesta apropiada a los problemas que afrontan las víctimas. La persistencia de la violencia se ve alimentada por la escasez de una correcta tipificación de algunos delitos cibernéticos y por el hecho de que la atención institucional es insuficiente. Se concluye que la violencia de género en el ciberespacio afecta integralmente la salud mental y es imprescindible llevar a cabo reformas legislativas e incrementar el apoyo psicológico a las víctimas para enfrentar de forma eficaz este grave problema.

*Palabras clave:* género, violencia, cibernética, depresión, ansiedad, jurisprudencia

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence in the digital environment has increased in our time, affecting the form of virtual attacks against women. This harassment, which includes all forms of intimidation, slander, and any kind of disparagement simply because one is a woman, has found fertile ground in the vast cyber social network, where relationships and communications are not subject to the social or legal controls that exist in the physical world (Pascoe et al., 2022). From a social perspective, gender-based violence in these spaces can have long-term effects on women's social health, lowering their self-esteem, causing stress and depression, and, in the most severe cases, revictimizing them (van der Miesen et al., 2020).

In the sociological sphere, it has been noted that digital platforms bear witness to the social inequalities observed in the physical world. Social interactions and customs that have defined the treatment of men and women in real life tend to be reproduced and even intensified in the virtual realm (De Vries et al., 2020). Gender-based violence in cyberspace not only encompasses explicit harm, but also includes acts of social control and surveillance in which women appear to be under constant, systematic observation. This is even more serious in situations where the media cover the event, since what is observed is, for the most part, sexist aggression against women in the public eye (Doyle et al., 2023).

From a sociological perspective, online gender-based violence represents power relations that are historically rooted in society. Despite advances in women's rights, the dominant attitude persists that treats women as prisoners who must be monitored and punished for their social actions (Ruiz-Pérez & Pastor-Moreno, 2020). Digital platforms provide a space for interaction beyond physical contact, allowing perpetrators of violence to operate without scrutiny and exacerbating gender imbalances in social relationships. This form of violence, often dismissed as trivial, is a consequence of a reality in which women continue to suffer rampant discrimination (Ajduković et al., 2021).

The legal framework in Colombia has advanced toward recognizing gender-based violence. However, there are still gaps in the law on digital violence. Although Law 1257 of 2008 seeks to address violence against women, it fails to provide clear provisions for preventing and addressing violence against women in the online sphere. This lack of measures provides inadequate protection for victims, as perpetrators can exploit the anonymity afforded by the internet. The absence of effective and comprehensive legal instruments allows digital violence to go inadequately regulated without an effective legal remedy (Hardy et al., 2020).

In the social context, victimization in digital spaces also reinforces gender stereotypes that restrict women's participation in public life. When they experience gender-based violence in the digital space, they are labeled as guilty or as provocateurs of such acts, thereby fueling a culture of blame directed at victims (Mtotywa et al., 2023). This can be associated with revictimization, in the sense that women are questioned about their behavior on social media, further invalidating the reality of the violence they have suffered. Without solidarity and support from society, this type of aggression becomes invisible (Karalexi et al., 2020).

Psychology also plays a fundamental role in understanding the emotional and behavioral responses that women have to digital violence. In many cases, women who experience online gender-based violence suffer a profound decline in their psychological well-being, which can lead them to develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or, in more extreme cases, result in a significant decrease in trust in their relationships (Silva et al., 2021). As a space for constant interaction, the Internet facilitates the ongoing occurrence of harassment and violence that causes emotional trauma and severely restricts the ability to heal (Garzón-Segura & Carcedo-González, 2020).

From a sociological perspective, the term "culture of violence" is relevant to the study of gender-based violence in the online context (Thulin et al., 2020). In this sense, platforms not only serve as spaces

where acts of aggression take place, but also perpetuate the normalization of violent behaviors. Discrediting and controlling aggression thru digital media is understood and justified as “part of the game” in online interactions. This translates into little social condemnation of perpetrators, which means that, for the most part, gender-based violence on social media is not considered a serious problem (Bani-Fatemi et al., 2020).

In the legal sphere, concerning digital gender-based violence in Colombia, the legal response has been somewhat indifferent compared to the efforts made by feminist organizations and human rights groups to raise awareness of this type of situation (Hernández-Flórez et al., 2024). Although Colombian legislation is beginning to recognize digital violence in cases such as cyberbullying, sexual violence, and psychological violence, enforcement of these regulations remains very limited (Jaimes-Velásquez et al., 2023). In most cases, victims choose to remain silent due to distrust in the justice system and the social stigma involved. Added to this is the difficulty that anonymous harassers face in being identified and prosecuted on social media, which exacerbates the lack of justice (Hernández-Flórez et al., 2023).

To adequately address the problem of digital gender-based violence, it is necessary to integrate psychology, sociology, and law. First, I believe that addressing the psychological needs of victims should be prioritized thru counselling programs to help them process and recover from the emotional impact of the violence (John et al., 2023). Furthermore, there should be social education on the importance of gender equality in the digital space, and awareness campaigns about the dangers of violence against women should be implemented. Last but not least, the legal framework must be strengthened to provide an adequate legal response to victims and ensure that perpetrators are held legally accountable (Almeida et al., 2023)

The problem of gender-based violence in digital spaces is particularly troubling, and in the case of Colombia, we are faced with the need to implement effective, specific public policies that safeguard women’s integrity in the digital realm (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2021). This involves amending existing laws, raising awareness about gender-based violence, and even providing appropriate psychological support to those who have been victimized. Only in this way, and with the interdisciplinary support of psychology, sociology, and law, can we eliminate this form of violence and create a safer and more equitable digital environment for all women (Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2020)

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodological approach of this article is descriptive and analytical qualitative research. The main objective is to document and critically and comprehensively analyze violence against women and gender-based violence on digital platforms, paying attention to the repercussions, the impact it has, and the response provided by the legal framework, as well as by psychology and sociology (Saraswati & Devi, 2023). The article seeks, thru the analysis of discourses, narratives, and the existing legal framework, to explain the structural components of violence that reflect deeply rooted social problems and pose current challenges (Atta-Sakyi et al., 2020).

The qualitative approach is justified by the need to understand the phenomenon in question beyond statistical figures. This type of research helps capture the complexity of gender-based violence in a digital context, the interaction with established social control systems, and how digital platforms serve as spaces for perpetuating gender inequalities (Pillai & Kaushal, 2020).

The type of research conducted in this article is reflective and analytical in nature. It involves reviewing, interpreting, and analyzing the existing literature on gender-based violence in relation to digital platforms, including academic writings, relevant case law, and both national and international legislation (Haydam & Steenkamp, 2020). The literature on the effects of digital violence on victims’

mental health, especially among women, and the control mechanisms behind these violent acts is also analyzed. Additionally, institutional responses and gaps in the enforcement of existing regulations are explored (Reddy, 2020)

The reflexive aspect under consideration arises from the need to explain how online gender-based violence is, in fact, an intricate interplay of numerous events and how it exists within the broader societal framework of systemic inequality, a persistent patriarchal culture, and inadequate legal frameworks (Fox & Alldred, 2023). The analysis is based on several sociological and psychological theories of violence and the virtual space in which it occurs (Lundberg et al., 2020)

## Research Procedures

### Literature Review

Completing a literature review is the first step in contextualizing the problem and identifying useful theoretical frameworks for analysis. It covers all information relevant to the topic at hand. This review will include:

**Academic articles:** Previous studies addressing gender-based violence on digital platforms will be compiled, particularly in relation to Colombia and other international contexts (Guevara et al., 2020).

**Legislation and case law:** Colombian laws on gender-based violence will be analyzed, specifically the scope of digital violence (i.e., Law 1257 of 2008, Law 1620 of 2013, etc.), as well as relevant decisions by the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court of Colombia addressing this type of violence (Furidha, 2024).

**Reports from international organizations:** Documents from institutions such as the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and other NGOs that address digital gender-based violence and its ramifications at the global level and within the region (Saraswati & Devi, 2023).

**Case studies and statistics:** The study of incidents of digital gender-based violence in Colombia and other countries, along with statistics related to the effects of this violence on the female population.

### Stories and Speeches That Ignite

After collecting the necessary information, I will proceed to analyze the discourse and narratives within the selected sources. The analysis will focus on the social representations of gender-based violence within sociocultural frameworks and how these narratives reinforce the normalization of online abuse. This analysis will examine social victimization, the perpetrator, and institutional responses, including the gender stereotypes and biases that dominate and sustain this type of violence. (Andrades-Moya, 2024).

The analysis of narratives involves a critical examination of how victims of gender-based violence are portrayed online on social media, in mainstream news, and in other media, as well as the consequences of these representations for the public's understanding of the relative violence of the digital space (Ariyani et al., 2021)

Colombia has legislation and case law on gender-based violence in digital environments. This legal mechanism will be analyzed to establish punitive measures proportionate to the type of violence inflicted. This integrative study will enable us to recognize how the legislator's intent plays out in practice, in light of the gaps in the application of the law and the obstacles to its enforcement. Digital gender-based violence will also be analyzed from the perspective of the legal responses that have been provided, taking into account the concepts of violence and gender (Fox & Alldred, 2023).

Gender-based violence is a phenomenon characterized by its complexity; therefore, I will address the issue from the perspectives of psychology, sociology, and law. The perceived harms of digital gender-based violence will be addressed from a legal perspective, considering its most extreme manifestation: harm to a person's dignity, and analyzing the suffering caused by the devaluation and disheartenment that arise when their social image is affected. The concepts related to the flows of violence, domination, and power associated with this type of violence will be explored. From a legal perspective, normative actions are undertaken to establish categories (Furidha, 2024).

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **Analysis from case law in Colombia**

Gender-based violence on digital platforms has become one of the most intricate and widespread forms of violence against women in Colombia, affecting their physical, psychological, and emotional well-being (Chaparro-Saenz & Galpin, 2021). Thru social media and other digital spaces, this phenomenon is largely expressed thru sexual harassment, defamation, threats, and the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images (Mutinta, 2025). In an effort to address this problem, Colombian law has made significant strides in recognizing and addressing online gender-based violence, but gaps still exist between the law and practice when it comes to the effective enforcement and implementation of these laws (Muñoz-Zapata & Osorio-Franco, 2024)

A milestone in Colombian jurisprudence regarding gender-based violence on digital platforms is the Constitutional Court's Decision C-355 of 2018, which upheld the constitutionality of several provisions aimed at safeguarding women's rights in the digital context (Rodas-Zuleta et al., 2022). In this ruling, the court accepted the notion of digital gender-based violence as a form of psychological violence, affirming women's right to a life free from violence in both the physical and virtual spheres. This marked a critical step in integrating Colombian law to address the challenges posed by the modern digital age (Suarez-Estrada, 2022).

In the Court's jurisprudence, it has been argued that gender-based violence on digital platforms is a product of the systems of control and domination that have existed in society throughout history (Andrade-Perdomo, 2024). The Court has also stated in several rulings that women in Colombia continue to be victims of patriarchal violence, domination, and subordination that manifests physically in virtual spaces. In this way, case law has consistently held that online harassment, threats, and defamation constitute violence that reproduces structural gender inequality in Colombian society (Rodriguez-Saavedra et al., 2025).

The Colombian Penal Code has sought to respond to these new forms of violence by introducing new laws related to cyberbullying, invasion of privacy, and the misuse of information technologies. For example, Law 1620 of 2013, as a violence prevention policy, sought to address not only traditional forms of violence but also cyberviolence, ensuring respect for students' fundamental educational rights (Escalera-Silva et al., 2024). This has been implemented in several court rulings in which the Court has issued decisions in favor of victims of digital harassment, emphasizing the State's duty to provide protective measures to all women, without discrimination as to the physical or virtual spaces in which such violence occurs.

As for the Supreme Court of Justice, in its most recent jurisprudence, the court has integrated "gender-based violence" in the digital context into its scope of application (Vanegas & Pinzón, 2025). In 2019, the Court emphasized the need to study the impact of using platforms to perpetrate digital violence against women, especially in relation to human trafficking, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse via the internet. This decision is a notable step forward in understanding the Colombian regulatory framework in relation to technological advances and emerging forms of violence (Cookson et al., 2023).

With regard to the regulatory framework, the fact that online harassment has been criminalized under Article 210A of the Colombian Penal Code provides a clear indication of the concern surrounding this issue (Hicks, 2024). This article imposes prison sentences on those who, thru technological means, engage in violence, harassment, or defamation against another person. The creation of this criminal offense seeks to safeguard individuals' integrity against the abusive use of digital tools, setting an important precedent in the fight against digital violence (Guerrero-Sierra et al., 2025). Its application has faced problems such as those surrounding the identification and prosecution of offenders in virtual environments, where anonymity facilitates the commission of these crimes.

In the context of the right to privacy, case law has been quite forceful in addressing individuals' right to privacy and protecting their data in digital environments. In 2017, the Constitutional Court, in its ruling T-479, highlighted the intrusion into women's privacy thru the unauthorized dissemination of intimate images, holding that it was necessary to protect their privacy. To this end, the Court has held that women control the information projected about them, and any infringement of this right, even in the digital sphere, constitutes violence that the State is obliged to protect and must therefore be mitigated in accordance with domestic laws and international law (Bates, 2022).

However, one of the most significant problems of the Colombian judicial system in relation to this type of violence against women is the lack of resources and capacity to practically enforce the laws already in place (Henshaw, 2023). Despite the efforts made by case law to protect women in the virtual sphere, the robust regulations remain unenforced (Iyawa et al., 2024). The inability to identify perpetrators, fear of revictimization, and the lack of support for victims are factors that hinder access to justice (López-Baquero, 2025).

Likewise, it has been emphasized that a comprehensive approach to digital gender-based violence must include preventive, educational, and awareness-raising measures (García, 2024). The Court has noted in multiple rulings the need to strengthen awareness campaigns on respect for women's human rights in the virtual sphere, as well as the need to train justice system personnel in digital violence thru programs designed for their professional development. Gender-based violence must also be combated in schools and universities thru educational initiatives (Monroy-Santander & Otálora-Gallego, 2024).

In conclusion, it is evident that jurisprudence in Colombia has made efforts to protect women from digital gender-based violence; however, there remains a significant gap in the country regarding the persistent challenges of implementation and regulatory adjustment. Although judicial rulings have acknowledged the magnitude of the problem, the judicial system needs to redouble its legislative response efforts to address violence in a comprehensive manner (Cookson & Fuentes, 2025). The issue must be addressed from various disciplines. At the very least, law, technology, and psychology can be used to devise solutions and, therefore, to fully safeguard women in the digital sphere (Koch et al., 2025).

## RESULTS

In recent years, violence against women in the digital sphere has emerged as a concerning issue that impacts the lives of millions of women worldwide. Thru the qualitative methodology employed in this article, it has been found that digital forms of violence are an extension of the socially conditioned dominance already exerted in the physical world (Wold, 2020). Women, particularly those active in public domains such as social media or blogs, face multifaceted attacks ranging from harassment to defamation and cyberbullying. This represents the growing phenomenon of structural violence in an intensified form. This digital form of aggression is largely divorced from accountability (Pascoe et al., 2022).

The analysis of narratives on digital platforms reveals that online aggression must be understood as more than isolated incidents: it constitutes a form of violence within a broader system of misogynistic oppression. Thru comments and posts, aggressors reinforce sexist stereotypes that objectify and demean women (van der Miesen et al., 2020). This form of violence is rooted in the normalization of traditional gender roles, and very often social indifference facilitates its dismissal. Women are frequently deprived of effective means to defend themselves, which in turn reinforces the culture of violence in the digital sphere (Dunn, 2020).

Regarding Colombian law, it has been noted that, although there is a legal framework such as Law 1257 of 2008 that seeks to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women, there is no specific and effective provision for digital gender-based violence (Rodas-Zuleta et al., 2022). In particular, the law on digital violence fails to define certain offenses such as online harassment or the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images. In case law, while the Constitutional Court has issued decisions related to domestic violence, the response to digital violence is still in its infancy, and victims often do not find adequate support under the available legislation.

The analysis of cases of digital gender-based violence in Colombia showed that many victims do not report the attacks due to fear of revictimization, lack of trust in institutions, or the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators (García, 2024). This phenomenon is reflected in the lack of reports, as well as in the authorities' ineffectiveness in tracking down and sanctioning those responsible for acts of digital violence. The challenge that anonymous platforms pose in identifying perpetrators is one of the greatest barriers to law enforcement and continues to perpetuate impunity, thereby limiting victims' opportunities for justice. (Zamora-Moncayo et al., 2021).

Women who are victims of digital gender-based violence face psychological impacts that result in anxiety, depression, stress, and low self-esteem. From a psychological perspective, these results demonstrate the destructive repercussions that digital gender-based violence inflicts on victims (Vanegas & Pinzón, 2025). Women who experience online harassment live with an endless sense of exposure that harms their emotional well-being and their ability to fully engage in the digital sphere. On some occasions, victims feel they must withdraw from digital platforms to safeguard their mental health. In turn, this limits their freedom of expression and participation in public life (Monroy-Santander & Otálora-Gallego, 2024).

Furthermore, digital power dynamics have been found to reinforce gender inequality by creating an environment in which women are constantly monitored and controlled. Digital harassment and online aggression serve as mechanisms of social control intended to subordinate women (Bates, 2022). This phenomenon is particularly evident on social media, where women in public life whether politicians, celebrities, or activists are often the primary targets of sexist and discriminatory abuse. It illustrates a patriarchal culture that has carried over into the digital age, viewing women as mere objects of violent aggression (Sánchez-Fuentes et al., 2021).

From a sociological perspective, the findings reveal that digital violence is not merely an individual occurrence but is underpinned by systemic social and gender inequalities. As a result of the lack of effective control mechanisms to mitigate abusive online behavior, digital platforms have become fertile ground for violence, since they facilitate interaction without physical filters (Bonilla-Algovia et al., 2020). Social norms and gender biases are easily carried over into the digital sphere, where women, just as in the physical world, are shaped by a culture that views them as inferior, subjugated, or dominated (Escalera-Silva et al., 2024).

A crucial dimension of digital violence is revictimization, where attacks against a woman intensify the moment she tries to seek justice or expresses disagreement with what has happened. Generally, institutional responses dedicated to addressing and responding to cases of gender-based violence in

the digital sphere are highly inadequate, given the particularities of violence in cyberspace (Thulin et al., 2020). This highlights the lack of adequate regulatory frameworks for online gender-based violence, which should place greater emphasis on protection and sanction mechanisms, as well as the need to address digital education rights, gender equality, and feminism (Garzón-Segura & Carcedo-González, 2020).

The study also mentions that, while there are NGOs and other sectors of feminist civil society working to address gender-based violence, there is still a lack of a comprehensive public policy that tackles this issue in an integrated manner (Brito et al., 2020). The current problems in public investment are largely related to a lack of leadership and to the systematic handling of cyberbullying response efforts under a single, isolated approach. It is crucial not only to understand the dimensions of the phenomenon, but also to strengthen all administrative control mechanisms thru training in addressing and handling gender-based violence, as well as in providing counselling and appropriate support to victims (Bani-Fatemi et al., 2020).

Ultimately, the reflective analysis conducted in this article demonstrates that, to address the problem of gender-based violence on digital platforms, it is essential to implement an integrated approach that includes laws, education, healthcare, and also a shift in social culture. Within the digital space, women must be granted respect as a basic human right, and as such, legal reforms must be complemented by awareness campaigns (Koch et al., 2025). Furthermore, victims of digital abuse should receive appropriate psychological support, as well as educational programs that address gender-based violence in a suitable manner to prevent its future occurrence (John et al., 2023)

In conclusion, gender-based violence on digital platforms must be addressed as a multifaceted problem thru interdisciplinary collaboration. Lawmakers must stay abreast of evolving forms of violence, while institutions must coordinate efforts to safeguard victims and deter future violence (Cookson et al., 2023). Digital culture must advocate for respect and equality, enabling women to defend their rights and actively participate in the digital sphere without fear of aggression (Cookson et al., 2023).

## **DISCUSSION**

The problem of gender-based violence on digital platforms has emerged as one of the most insidious and complex forms of aggression against women, especially in the context of online sexual harassment. This form of abuse has become rampant as technology has advanced and Internet access has become easier (Hall & Evans, 2020). The lack of identification requirements, coupled with poorly defined online regulations and the absence of boundaries on the Internet, has created the perfect environment for the spread of violent behavior. Online perpetrators attack with such anonymity and ease that violence has reached new dimensions. The safety and protection of women, even in the virtual sphere, no longer exist. They are dangerously exposed to incessant threats of violence (Hossain et al., 2020). The forms of abuse inflicted unleash vast emotional damage on their psyche and are a sociological, psychological, and legal issue of great concern.

From a psychological perspective, it has been noted that sexual cyberbullying can cause severe emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and a marked reduction in self-esteem (Hossain et al., 2020). The concern is greater for victims, as they suffer a deterioration in their mental health from being surrounded by violent and humiliating content. This type of aggression not only harms women's mental health but also impairs their ability to form healthy relationships in the digital sphere, thereby contributing to their social isolation. Another phenomenon that frequently accompanies this type of aggression is revictimization, which occurs when women, in their attempt to express what is happening to them, are attacked or discredited over and over again (Lugova et al., 2020).

In Colombia, legal authorities are beginning to address this issue using legislation that remains insufficient. Legal frameworks such as Law 1257 of 2008 have served to recognize the existence of gender-based violence, but have not been able to fully adapt to the challenges posed by digital sexual violence (Muñoz-Zapata & Osorio-Franco, 2024). The legal classification of online sexual harassment, the non-consensual distribution of intimate material, and grooming lacks clear definitions, strict penalty structures, and effective enforcement mechanisms. In many cases, victims distrust the institutions meant to help them, and the judicial process is lengthy and painful. The rapid development and proliferation of digital technologies, coupled with the lack of relevant legal frameworks, result in lasting impunity and make it impossible to protect victims in a meaningful way (Bates, 2022).

From a sociological perspective, gender-based violence in the digital sphere reproduces the social imbalances that already exist in the real world. The digital sphere has become a space where the same dynamics of domination and control that women experience in real life are reproduced, but intensified by anonymity and the lack of regulation (Ruiz-Pérez & Pastor-Moreno, 2020). In most cases, online abusers use this space as a means to reinforce their power over women and, consequently, to crush them, which reflects a deeply rooted patriarchal culture. In light of the above, it is worth highlighting that women who experience this type of violence face a double form of violence (Mtotywa et al., 2023). First, sexual violence itself. Second, the social burden of being stigmatized and blamed for this violence by the attackers and by a society that tries to justify, minimize, or downplay it (Capasso et al., 2021).

In this context, digital violence as a social problem takes on a critical dimension. In various cultures, violence perpetrated thru the use of technological media is perceived as a lesser form of attack than physical violence, which contributes to the delegitimization of complaints. This lack of information, as well as the downplaying of virtual sexual violence cases, results in the inability to address sexual violence inflicted thru digital means (Escalera-Silva et al., 2024). In addition to these, victims often face psychological barriers, such as fear of social judgment, revictimization, or ignorance of legal issues, which make reporting difficult. The disconnect between victims and authorities reinforces violence (Thulin et al., 2020).

From a clinical perspective, violence perpetrated thru digital devices not only affects the perpetrator but also has implications for the victim, constituting a phenomenon of multicausality (Goessmann et al., 2020). Many women need not legal support but psychological help to navigate the emotional effects of digital violence on their lives. Psychological support should consider the full range of short- and long-term consequences that can compromise health, particularly emotional effects and self-esteem. It is necessary for women to receive assistance during and after the process so that they can file their complaints and subsequently resume their online lives safely and with empowerment (González-Gijón et al., 2025).

From a legal standpoint, it is essential to have a regulatory framework that addresses cases of gender-based violence on digital platforms in a particularly comprehensive manner. A legal change is required that specifically addresses online sexual violence and, as a result, imposes strict penalties on offenders (Brito et al., 2020). It is also necessary to establish a swift and secure reporting and case-tracking system that protects victims of harassment and prevents revictimization. The establishment of such measures, such as regulating digital platforms and creating protocols for responding to cases of violence, would be fundamental to addressing one of the great dilemmas of the 21st century: online sexual violence (Rodas-Zuleta et al., 2022).

The challenge from a sociological perspective lies in modifying the social and cultural structures that enable online gender-based violence. For this type of aggression, awareness campaigns and education on respect and gender equality must play a fundamental role (Koch et al., 2025). Similarly, it is necessary for the most influential institutions digital platforms to commit to building a safer and more

equitable environment where content involving sexual violence is moderated and sanctioned in accordance with established policies. It is both an obligation and a challenge for social media platforms to assume responsibility and take on their role as controllers of user behavior (John et al., 2023).

To this problem must be added another equally relevant challenge: prevention. Without denying the value of legal and psychological interventions, gender-based violence in the digital sphere represents a growing challenge if it is not addressed with strategic preventive measures (Abir & Zrizi, 2023). Providing digital education, media literacy, and consent awareness are ways to empower them and reduce their risk of becoming victims of violence. Also, reconceptualizing and strengthening solidarity support which backs victims alongside institutional bodies and support groups would reinforce the culture of reporting (Hall & Evans, 2020).

Finally, combating gender-based violence on digital platforms requires the integrated action of psychologists, legal experts, sociologists, and the platforms themselves. It is imperative that a legal framework be complemented by the restructuring of social norms and psychosocial support to enable women to express themselves without restriction in a safe digital environment (Almeida et al., 2023). Addressing online gender-based violence in a sustainable manner requires protecting women's rights and dignity in the digital space through an effective multidisciplinary intervention (Vanegas & Pinzón, 2025).

## CONCLUSIONS

Gender-based violence in the digital sphere is a contemporary phenomenon that constitutes an assault on human rights and has a terrifying impact on the psychological and social well-being of victims. Social cyberbullying and virtual abuse carried out through threats and psychological harassment on social media impact the self-esteem and pride of women who suffer these aggressions, leading in the long term to anxiety, depression, and even post-traumatic stress. These situations make it clear how important it is to implement psychological support programs to provide meaningful help to victims, while also making it necessary to genuinely enforce legal reporting and redress policies.

Digital gender-based violence encompasses and reflects racial, ethnic, and indigenous violence, as well as all forms of social inequality that exist in the world and that we have been reproducing since time immemorial. Gender-based violence in the digital sphere is an extension of the violence perpetrated against women and has a sociological basis. It has been shown that social media are under the control of the male segment of society, where aggression and the silencing of women continue with the sole purpose of sustaining asymmetrical power relations. This normalization and stigmatization is associated with the patriarchal culture that denies reports of sexual violence, deeply rooted in societies that minimize violence and in the violence they normalize, thereby strengthening online violence.

From a legal perspective, it is concluded that Colombia still needs to address technological and gender-based violence crimes, given the undeniable advancement of technology. There are laws such as Law 1257 of 2008, which addresses gender-based violence in broad terms but does not cover digital sexual gender-based violence. It is evidently urgent that Colombian law evolve in its doctrine and provide legal tools that effectively prosecute digital offenses and protect victims, ensuring their access to justice and preventing impunity.

To design and implement public policies addressing the phenomenon of gender-based violence and its manifestation on digital platforms, it is evident that judges, psychologists, sociologists, and the digital platforms themselves must be part of the solution. The awareness-raising and education on gender-based violence that must be provided should be accompanied by improved digital security conditions. All stakeholders must contribute to eliminating this situation and ensuring that women can fully exercise their rights in the digital space without fear of being attacked.

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