

Formación del pensamiento crítico en la construcción de la mujer

Formation of critical thinking in the construction of women

Formação do pensamento crítico na construção da mulher

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Resumen

En este trabajo se presentan los resultados de un estudio cualitativo de investigación-acción-reflexión en el que se empleó un curso tipo seminario como espacio para analizar la obra *El segundo sexo* de Simone de Beauvoir con el fin de fomentar un pensamiento crítico sobre la construcción de la mujer. Los ejes de análisis se dividieron en cuatro dimensiones: biológica, sociocultural, psicológica y profesional. Los participantes en este proceso investigativo fueron 27 estudiantes de la licenciatura en Educación (CINE 6). Para el desarrollo se plantearon preguntas reflexivas como las siguientes: ¿qué significa ser mujer?, ¿cómo se llega a ser mujer?, ¿por qué se mantienen ciertos prejuicios o estereotipos?, y ¿cuál es el propósito de su existencia? Estas cuestiones cognitivas se integraron en las cuatro fases de la investigación: 1) análisis, diálogo y reflexión teórica; 2) exploración de la situación personal; 3) reflexión sobre lo actual y lo ideal, y 4) formulación de un plan de acción hacia la libertad y la trascendencia. Los resultados revelaron que la etapa más desafiante de la vida de la mujer es la adultez temprana, etapa donde se presentan miedos relacionados con el actuar y el ser. En tal sentido, más del 42 % de las estudiantes admitieron haberse adaptado a los estándares sociales o familiares para continuar con sus estudios, mientras que el 33 % asoció la femineidad con tareas como la maternidad, el cuidado del hogar y el arreglo personal. A través de un análisis crítico y colaborativo se identificaron y evaluaron los estereotipos presentes en

cada relato, lo que permitió la elaboración de planes de acción individuales. Estos planes estaban diseñados para que las estudiantes pudieran establecer metas progresivas con el fin alcanzar una autonomía intelectual, emocional y económica que les permitiera tomar decisiones conscientes y libres.

Palabras clave: Estereotipo, feminismo, igualdad de género, pensamiento crítico.

Abstract

The results of a qualitative action-reflection research study are shared here, where a seminar-type course was used as a space for analysis of the work: *The Second Sex* (Spanish version) by Simone de Beauvoir to foster the formation of critical thinking about the construction of women. The analysis axes were developed along four of women's construction dimensions: biological, sociocultural, psychological, and professional. The main characters of their own research project were 27 students of a bachelor's degree in education (*ISCED 6*) and the reflective questions: "What is it to be a woman?", "How did I turn into a woman?", "Why do I follow certain prejudices or stereotypes?" and "Why do I exist?" were the cognitive stimuli used for the development of the four phases of the research: 1) Theoretical analysis and reflection, 2) Approaching my real situation, 3) Reflection about what is and what should be, and 4) Action plan for my liberty and transcendence. The findings in the stories of the participants point to the young adulthood as the toughest stage they have had to live as women, along with the existence of the fear of acting and the fear of being. Also, over 42 % of the students stated that they have had to adapt to societies or parents' standards in order to continue studying; 33 % of the participants related the meaning of being a woman with having a child, cleaning a house and personal appearance. Through a critical analysis based on contrast and collaborative reflection, the stereotypes detected in each narrative were assessed, and eventually they developed an individual action plan leading students to establish progressive goals for the acquisition of intellectual, emotional and financial autonomy that reminds them they are conscious beings that freely make their own choices.

Key words: Stereotypes, feminism, gender equality, critical thinking.

Resumo

Este trabalho apresenta os resultados de um estudo qualitativo de pesquisa-ação-reflexão em que um seminário foi utilizado como espaço para análise da obra *O Segundo Sexo*, de Simone de Beauvoir, a fim de estimular o pensamento crítico sobre a construção da mulher. Os eixos de análise foram divididos em quatro dimensões: biológica, sociocultural, psicológica e profissional. Os participantes neste processo de investigação foram 27 alunos da licenciatura em Educação (CITE 6). Para o desenvolvimento foram levantadas questões reflexivas como: o que significa ser mulher? Como se tornar mulher? Por que se mantêm certos preconceitos ou estereótipos? E qual a finalidade de sua existência? Estas questões cognitivas foram integradas nas quatro fases da pesquisa: 1) análise, diálogo e reflexão teórica; 2) exploração da situação pessoal; 3) reflexão sobre o atual e o ideal e 4) formulação de um plano de ação rumo à liberdade e à transcendência. Os resultados revelaram que a fase mais desafiadora da vida das mulheres é o início da idade adulta, fase onde surgem os medos relacionados ao agir e ao ser. Nesse sentido, mais de 42 % das estudantes admitiram ter se adaptado aos padrões sociais ou familiares para continuar os estudos, enquanto 33 % associaram a feminilidade a tarefas como a maternidade, o cuidado da casa e a preocupação com a aparência. Através de uma análise crítica e colaborativa, foram identificados e avaliados os estereótipos presentes em cada história, o que permitiu o desenvolvimento de planos de ação individuais. Estes planos foram desenhados para que os alunos pudessem estabelecer metas progressivas de forma a alcançarem autonomia intelectual, emocional e económica que lhes permitisse tomar decisões conscientes e livres.

Palavras-chave: Estereótipos, feminismo, igualdade de gênero, pensamento crítico.

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Introduction

Fully using the potential of education to challenge gender stereotypes and eradicate violence against women requires promoting a culture of peace and working collaboratively from the classrooms in the training of future education professionals. This involves reconstructing the teacher's identity to cultivate inclusive, equitable and diverse educational knowledge and practice. Given that it is the new generations of educators who will influence various areas of society, for the authors of this document it is a priority to contribute with active methodologies that put those who experience violence due to their status as women in the center of attention.

Indeed, according to the National Survey on the Dynamics of Relationships in Households (ENDIREH) carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Inegi) (2022) in Mexico, 70.1 % of women aged 15 years and older have suffered some type of violence, whether psychological, economic, patrimonial, physical, sexual or discrimination throughout their life. In fact, in the state of Campeche, where this study was carried out, the lifetime prevalence of violence against women reaches up to 67 %, compared to the 70.1 % recorded nationally.

Furthermore, according to the survey (Inegi, 2022), the level of schooling at which the highest incidence of violence is experienced is the upper secondary level (75.8 %) and higher (77.9 %), and it is observed that violence psychological and sexual are the most prevalent types of violence among women over 15 years of age.

In this sense and based on the survey carried out on women in the municipality of Carmen within the framework of the Observatory of Social and Gender Violence of Campeche project, Frutos (2013) identified that the main perpetrator of violence against women is their husbands, couples and ex-partners. The most reported type of violence is hitting (68 %) and insults (25 %), and it is highlighted that violence occurs in relationships and families at all educational levels.

Likewise, at the Women's Justice Center (CJM) in Ciudad del Carmen, an increase in complaints of violence against women has been observed. After the lifting of isolation measures due to covid-19, cases of domestic violence have been the most frequent in records, with manifestations of physical abuse, psychological pressure, economic violence and property damage (Graniel, November 25, 2022).

From these findings, the need arises to redefine the role of women through studies with a gender perspective, since our students face various conflicts of violence in their daily lives, both from their partners and from their family environments.

In this regard, Ehrenfeld (2016) points out that women experience violence in considerably greater numbers than men. This shows that society and families are environments where violence is frequent, which has an impact on academic performance during university studies. In addition to this, the normalization of violence makes it difficult for students to recognize situations of gender violence “both in the university context and in relationships” (Tapia Hernández, 2015, p. 3).

Therefore, education is required to promote critical training processes that dismantle gender prejudices and stereotypes that endanger the lives and dignity of girls, young women and women. In this sense, at the university level, institutions are called to promote the integral human development of students, with special emphasis on the construction of knowledge through critical thinking, which is based on freedom, analysis, reflection, dialogue, argumentation and the elimination of prejudices. with the aim of transforming society and contributing to its improvement (Official Gazette of the Federation [DOF], 2021).

In the case of the Autonomous University of Carmen (UNACAR), it offers opportunities and environments that promote a comprehensive and human education to ensure the balanced and harmonious development of its students (UNACAR, 2022). To do this, it integrates a generic competence on universities, science and humanism with the purpose of promoting practices that stimulate critical thinking, reflection and sensitivity.

According to Mackay *et al.* (2018), for a student to become a critical thinker they must be able to question and test new ideas, as well as develop the ability to revise their own established concepts. For this reason, the contributions of this research become important, since educational institutions must provide cognitive tools that allow women to examine and question their own construction of identity, as well as the foundations of their decisions. Having explained the above, the objective of this work is to influence the formation of critical thinking in relation to the construction of feminine identity. Analyzing the products obtained from the seminar-type course “Is a woman born or made?” as an intervention strategy and horizontal dialogue with the students of the Bachelor of Education, an educational program in which 98 % of the enrollment is made up of women.

Method

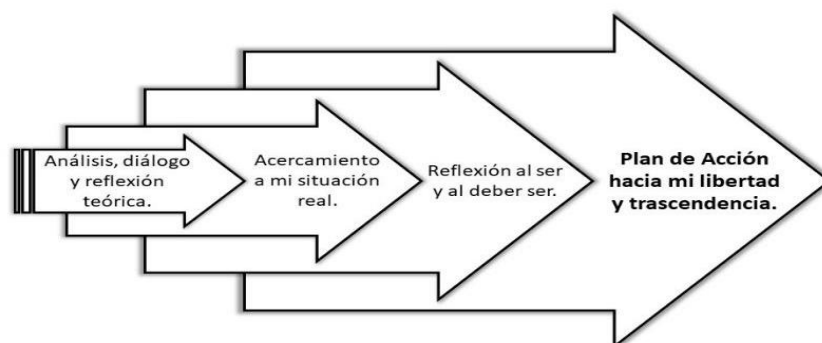
Participants

27 students from the Bachelor of Education participated in the research-action-reflection study, 100 % female, of which 30 % (8) combined work and study, while 70 % (19) dedicated themselves exclusively to study. The ages of the participants ranged between 18 and 23 years. Regarding their marital status, 81 % (22) indicated that they were single, 14% (4) were in a common law union, and 3 % (1) were married.

Design

The study was based on a reflective-action research design based on the critical-reflective paradigm. Promote the training of critical thinking within the framework of the seminar-type course “Is a woman born or made?” The four phases proposed by Iafrancesco (2003) in qualitative research were used as a guide. In each of these phases (figure 1), the construction of feminine identity was analyzed with the aim of causing changes in the cognitive structure and generating new knowledge and sociocultural practices in the lives of university students.

Figure 1. Phases in the formation of critical thinking about the construction of women



Source: Own elaboration based on Iafrancesco (2003)

In this design, participants are considered active subjects who reflect and dialogue about the actions they perform, why they perform them, and for what purpose they perform them. This reflective process and its different phases served to encourage critical thinking about the construction of feminine identity during the seminar sessions.

Materials and procedure

The seminar-type course “Is a woman born or made?” It was used as a training strategy. This title was used in the form of a question to stimulate critical thinking, dialogue, analysis and active reflection on the part of the participants. The modality in which it was taught was online and synchronous, through the Microsoft Teams learning platform. In this virtual environment, tools were available that facilitated collaborative work, verbal and written dialogue through videoconferences, the use of chat, interactive presentations in various formats, the electronic whiteboard and the socio-emotional evaluation using emoticons in each session.

In total, five sessions were held with a cumulative duration of 15 hours, from February 26 to April 23, 2021. The seminar was scheduled within the schedule intended for institutional tutoring, on Fridays with the aim of promoting the development of activities that contribute to the comprehensive training of students. The coordination of each seminar session oversaw four full-time professors-tutors, whose professional profiles belong to the area of education and psychology. The development of the seminar was the result of collaborative work that promoted horizontal communication between students, between students and teachers, and between teachers. The researchers assumed active roles as participants, so they participated in the various activities designed to facilitate dialogue, discussion, analysis and reflection.

During the course program presentation, students were informed about the various activities that would take place in the four phases of the seminar, and it was emphasized that they were free to leave the sessions if they felt that their privacy was violated. Likewise, it was explained that the products generated outside the scope of the seminar would be analyzed together and used for studies with a gender focus.

Instruments

For each phase, data collection and analysis instruments were used that served as a basis to begin the reflective processes during the seminar (table 1). The gender perception diagnostic questionnaire was designed following the proposal of Pacheco (2017), which focused especially on the dimensions of the distribution of activities in the home, the distribution of time dedicated to domestic work and social representations related to roles and gender.

Table 1 details the materials and activities used in each of the phases, in which the research group guided the reflective processes and dialogue on the construction of the meaning of being a woman.

Table 1 . Materials and activities by phases of the training process

| Phases in the formation of critical thinking | Instruments | Individual and collaborative cognitive activities |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Analysis, dialogue and theoretical reflection. | Questionnaire: Diagnosis of gender perception aimed at university students. The work: <i>The second sex</i> , Simone de Beauvoir (1949). | Analysis based on the results of the diagnostic instrument. Reflection on the meaning of being a woman. |
| 2. Approach to my real situation. | Use of narratives “My story as a woman” Use of drawing or image to represent yourself. | I read, listen and give advice to my partner, collaborative strategy. |
| 3. Reflection on being and ought to be. | Chat with a leading woman in higher education management. mind map | Use of chat to identify stereotypes present from the biological, sociocultural, psychological and professional construction of women. |
| 4. Action plan towards my freedom and transcendence. | Format: Strategies for building action plans. Use of slogans: travel to the future and planning activities that impact life. | In this phase, the students communicated their goals in writing, considering three types of independence (intellectual, emotional and economic). |

Source: self made.

Data analysis procedure

In phase 1, called “Analysis, dialogue and theoretical reflection” (table 1), the results of the gender perception diagnostic questionnaire were processed and shared with the participants. Through the observation of frequencies and percentages, the different situations, tasks and phrases of social representation that the group shared were visualized, which led to discussions about the disparities in the perception of gender construction between men and women. The presentation of the data in a plenary session allowed for a deeper reflection on the beliefs internalized since childhood and reproduced in daily practices through education.

During phases 2, 3 and 4 of the seminars (“Approach to my real situation”, “Reflection on the being and the duty to be” and “Action plan towards my freedom and transcendence”), a dialogue exercise was carried out participatory to collect the interventions

and productions of the participants. Fragments recovered from chats, recordings of interactions and written narratives were used to carry out a line-by-line analysis to establish codes and create categories that reflected the meanings in the construction of feminine identity among university students.

To evaluate the progress in the formation of critical thinking, the types of arguments expressed and written by the students in phases three and four were contrasted (table 1). In all activities, the researchers promoted open, horizontal dialogue and attentive listening to prioritize the voice of students.

Results

Findings were obtained in each of the four phases developed in the seminar-type course “Is a woman born or made?” The first survey made it possible to identify the priorities that students had when pursuing university studies. In this sense, 55 % (15) mentioned studying for professional reasons, 22 % (6) did so to seek economic independence and 22 % (6) were looking to find a better partner. The exploration of the motivation and purpose of the university in their lives allowed the coordinators of each phase to emphasize the training processes through the productions generated by the participants themselves.

Phase 1. Analysis, dialogue and theoretical reflection

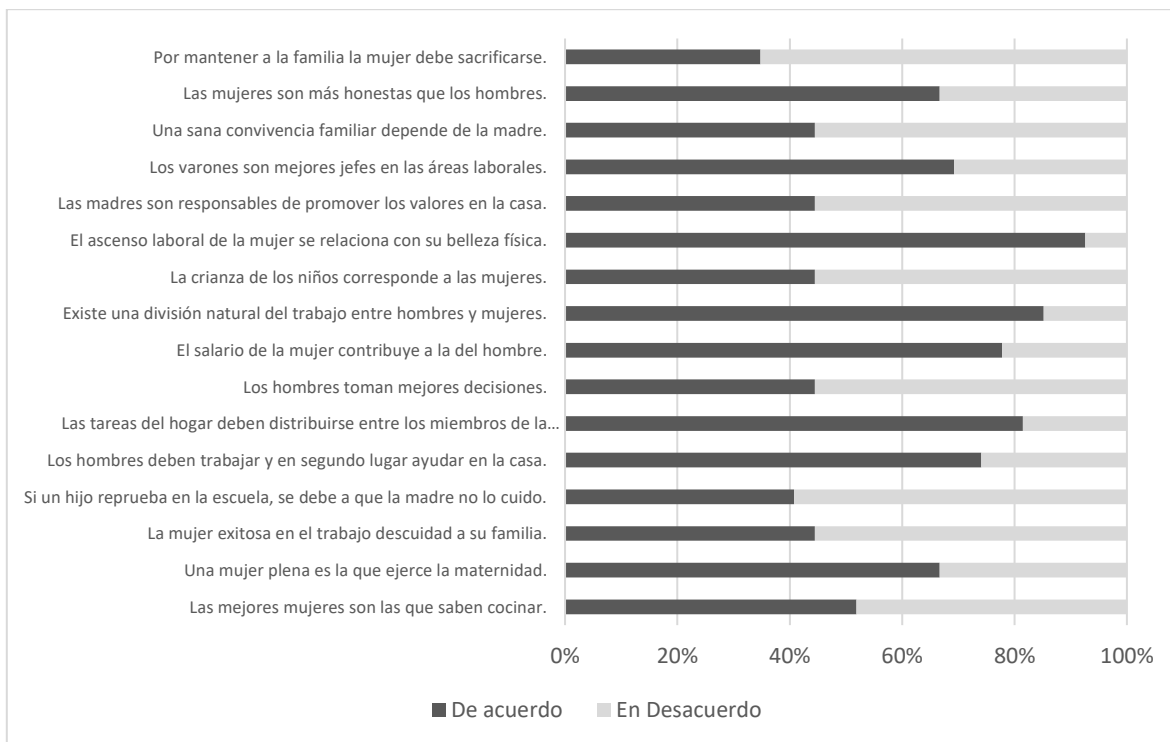
The results of the gender perception diagnosis allowed us to characterize the students, with respect to the distribution of activities in the home, it was observed that 70 % (19) consider that they themselves are the most important people to clean the house or home, while 30 % (8) mention their mothers. Regarding the task of preparing food, 74 % point to mothers as the most important, followed by themselves with 26 %. This same trend is reflected in the care of clothing and care for the sick at home, where students and their mothers are identified as the most relevant people to carry out these activities.

In addition, data analysis revealed greater participation by the father and siblings in tasks such as transporting relatives, making purchases, and completing errands. Regarding the time dedicated to household chores, more than 50 % of the students indicated that they spent between one and three hours per week on tasks such as taking care of clothes, preparing food, cleaning the home, and caring for family members. Likewise, it was identified that at least 18 % of the sample surveyed involves all household members in household chores.

On the other hand, regarding the economic provision of the home, 52 % (14) of the students identify the father as the main provider, followed by 26 % (7) who mention both the mother and the father, 11 % (3) who mention only the mother, and another 11 % (3) who mention the couple as the main provider.

In the dimension of social representations, structured by 16 statements in which the students marked as true or false according to their own criteria, preconceived gender stereotypes were explored (figure 2). The findings revealed that 92 % of the students perceive that women's career advancement is related to their physical beauty, while 85 % indicated that there is a natural division of labor between men and women. Furthermore, 77.7 % of female students consider that a woman's salary contributes to that of a man, and 74 % think that men should work first and then help with household chores. Likewise, 66 % of the students perceive that a fulfilled woman is one who exercises motherhood, and 51 % agree that the best women are those who know how to cook.

Figure 2. Social representations: gender stereotypes of university students



Source: self made

The socialization of the results of figure 2 during the seminar served as a basis to encourage the analysis of the work *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir - sixteenth edition, translated by Martorell in 2019 - allowed for dialogue on three main themes:

- Meaning of being a woman.
- Construction of the feminine.
- Biopsychosociocultural implications of gender.

The work *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir was published in 1949 (more than 74 years ago) and remains a crucial reference for analyzing the female condition and promoting gender equality. The author poses challenging questions such as the following: “what is a woman?” and “why don't women question male sovereignty?”, questions that force us to reflect on our own existence and the construction of female identity.

Reading this work becomes an effective device to analyze the biological elements that have significantly influenced the historical construction of women. Furthermore, it makes us question how our body acts as an instrument to relate to the world and how from a young age we interpret and understand our environment based on our experiences (Beauvoir, 2019).

In the fragments recovered from the students during the reading and presentation of the topics, it is highlighted that many of them had never asked themselves the question of what it means to be a woman. Likewise, in their reflections on what it means to be a woman, they expressed opinions that highlight the complexity of this identity. Many mentioned that being a woman is complicated, since they have grown up under a sexist culture where harassment is normalized and the idea that marriage and motherhood are the only purposes they have is perpetuated, to which is added having to deal with stereotypes.

Of the 27 students, only 29 % (8) wrote contributions that were listened to by their peers with attention, solidarity and respect. Reactions in the chat included heart and sad face emoticons, suggesting an empathetic response to shared experiences. Additionally, during the synchronous session, the microphone was opened so that students could share motivational phrases with each other, with emphasis on the importance of overcoming the stigmas imposed and moving forward.

Phase 2. Approach to my real situation

In this phase of the seminar, 20 narratives were created by the students, for which the strategy called “My story as a woman” was used. This writing exercise allowed each participant to recover their own individual story and promote self-reflection on their identity throughout the different stages of life: childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. Likewise, participants were provided with a semi-structured guide to guide the opening of the written narrative, and they were encouraged to explore their personal past and their construction as women.

Table 2 lists the codes with which the students attributed meaning to their construction as women at different stages of their lives. In these narratives, they frequently expressed their experiences, emotions, feelings, and the situations that have defined them. The narratives were written 88 % in the first person and 12 % in the third person. Furthermore, the use of indirect language was observed in the recovery of experiences. For example, the phrase "Little Bee was a very happy girl... until..." was used to introduce the dialogue with the author of the story. When discussing the use of the first person in writing, some participants indicated that they found it difficult to put themselves in the foreground, so they used analogies to express themselves.

Table 2. Codes extracted from the narratives (being a woman)

| Codes by stages | Stages | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|-------------|
| | Childhood | Teen | young adult |
| Feeling of happiness | x | | |
| No worry | x | | |
| Game | x | | |
| Well-being mom, dads and family. | x | | |
| Cheerful | x | | |
| Social adaptation | | x | x |
| Take care of the image | | x | |
| Engagement | | x | |
| Friends | x | x | x |
| Painful | | x | x |
| Difficult | | x | x |
| Clean the house | | x | x |
| Have children | | | x |
| Have a profession | | | x |
| fear of doing | | x | x |
| Fear of being a woman | | x | x |
| Responsibility | | x | x |
| Independence | | | x |
| Live the present | | | x |
| Stress | | x | x |
| Quiet, shy | | x | |
| Obstacles | | x | x |
| Live reviews | | x | x |

Source: Narratives of university students from the seminar “Is a woman born or made?”

The students' narratives reveal that the most difficult stage of their lives as women is that of being young adults, since it is where they must face fears related to doing and being. Furthermore, more than 42 % of them expressed having adapted to the social standards imposed by society or their own families to continue their studies. 33 % associate the meaning of being a woman with having children, doing household chores and taking care of one's own image. Likewise, 51 % of the narratives pointed out the perception of inequality in their environment, even within their own families, where the belief persists that women should only be in charge of household chores, while men should not.

In the students' stories they also express how they have overcome adversity. Those who expressed having harmony in the three stages of their construction as women (childhood, adolescence and youth) identified having a support network that includes their parents and acquaintances. The fears detected in the narratives are more frequent in the youth stage, where they sometimes doubt their abilities and feel limited by the fear of the judgment of others.

The collaborative strategy “I read, listen and advise” allowed the students to exchange their stories about how they have constructed themselves as women throughout the three stages. This activity was carried out in pairs privately, using sub rooms on the learning platform. For 30 minutes, the students generated a dialogue and exchanged experiences based on their life stories.

Phase 3. Reflection on being and what should be

At this stage of the seminar, a leading woman in the educational field of higher education management was invited to share her life narrative, as well as talk about the challenges she has faced throughout her personal and professional career. Since the activity was carried out virtually, students were encouraged to interact with the guests through chat and express their feelings, opinions and perceptions. Table 3 compiles the fragments recovered from the chat during this session.

Table 3. Critical reflection on situations and stereotypes experienced by women

| Analysis dimensions | Fragments written in the chat |
|-----------------------|--|
| Distribution of tasks | <p>We can all perform various tasks at home, in society regardless of whether you are a woman or a man.</p> <p>...and in some circumstances the woman who is in charge of the housework does much more, she has to see the children, clean the house, make food, wash clothes, see what is missing in the house and an endless number of situations.</p> <p>I feel that it is not given enough value when a woman is in charge of the housework.</p> <p>Men must be taught to cook and clean, not just girls.</p> |
| Role Play | <p>I have heard people say that because we do not have children or perform each household duty we do not fulfill the “role” that corresponds to us, which is why they are more surprised when a woman achieves greater professional success and it is normalized for men.</p> |
| New practices | <p>From a young age they should be trained in a good way, so that when men grow up they can support women in work and in everything, and not because “it's up to the woman” “she only has to do it.” That idea has to be changed.</p> <p>They should be educated from a young age, without telling them “you have to wear blue because you are a boy and because you are a girl you should wear pink”, there are women who have great professions and men have them in the same way , it is good to educate children so that they do not feel that a man or a woman is worth more.</p> |
| Culture of equity | <p>Generating change in society is a difficult task, but with patience, dedication, dialogue and respect, I am confident that we will go far as a society by minimizing these thoughts in people, as my colleague mentioned, every grain of sand is important to achieve equality between men and women.</p> |
| Prejudices | <p>It bothers me when a woman goes missing and the first thing they say is “She's probably with her boyfriend” and comments that are out of place and it becomes normal for a woman to be considered missing.</p> |
| Violence | <p>Violence in the home has become common and I also consider that it is a point that is reflected in adolescence, with the couple. Boys can hang out with several girls and if girls do the same they are told that they are “anyone.”</p> <p>I think that because we are women, men discriminate against us.</p> |
| About care | <p>Yes, many times the girls are left to take care of their siblings and if something happens to them they are always blamed and the parents do not assume responsibility.</p> <p>...girls have been taught that they always have to take care of men and it is frowned upon for a man to want to take care of a woman.</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <p>Labor inequality</p> | <p>Many women who were housewives do not have the financial resources to survive and are forced to continue working or depending on family members. While men, because they work outside the home, have a greater opportunity to have a pension or the means to live a dignified and independent old age.</p> |
|-------------------------|---|

Source: Narratives of university students in the seminar “Is a woman born or made?”

The students' interventions reflected a critical stance in relation to eight dimensions (table 3). It is observed that broader arguments were recovered in the analysis of the distribution of tasks and gender equity stands out as one of the greatest concerns. According to Beauvoir (2019), the emancipation of women will be linked to their ability to intervene significantly in social, economic and productive development, which implies a democratic distribution of domestic work among family members.

On the other hand, the students' perceptions highlight those prejudices, violence, and the unequal distribution of domestic tasks complicate their situation as women. This point coincides with the findings of Ortiz-Henderson (2023), who indicates that the patriarchal social structure not only allows, but normalizes violence against women, which highlights the need for educational proposals with a critical and gender approach in schools. schools. institutions.

Another aspect pointed out by the students is the role of women as caregivers, since, from their perspective, they have been educated to care for men from an early age (table 3). This observation agrees with what was stated by Lione (2023), who points out that socially the responsibility for care has been assigned to women, especially in the roles of mother and daughter, which perpetuates traditional gender roles. Furthermore, Arroyo *et al.* (2021) suggests that, by being part of the family, directly or indirectly, women assume or are assigned the responsibility of care due to family ties.

Phase 4. Action plan, towards my freedom and transcendence

At this stage, the importance of developing projects that avoid dependency was discussed, as Beauvoir points out, with the aim of positioning the role of women as professionals and decision makers. To guide the students in developing their action plan, they were provided with a detailed guide format in Table 4. In addition, they were given the following instruction: “We are going to take a trip to the future (5 years) from 2025.”, and you will write advice to your present self. This advice should be able to sustain you in life.”

- Concepts that were analyzed decision making.
- Assume my existence.
- Transcend with projects.

The objective of the plan design was to lead the participants to visualize goals that would allow them to transcend through their own existence, so that they could create and develop their own projects and thus affirm themselves as free and conscious women. The structure of the plan involved completing a table where three dimensions were presented in which the students could propose strategies to achieve their intellectual, emotional and economic independence. To do this, they were asked to detail their goals and activities in a five-year projection.

Implications in the development of action plans

25 action plans were developed. The most outstanding activities proposed by the students mainly affected the dimension of intellectual independence, which coincided with the objective of continuing their studies until obtaining the degree. In terms of strengthening emotional independence, they focused on working on their security and self-esteem. Regarding economic independence, students mentioned activities related to carrying out projects or businesses while completing their studies.

In the action plans, the students reflected on the influence of gender roles in establishing their goals and life projects. It was identified that more than 60 % of them selected the bachelor's degree in education due to the influence of their family members, who told them that this career was suitable for them, since it would allow them to take care of children and fulfill their responsibilities. at home and it would be easy to do. play. This aspect shows the persistence of gender stereotypes in the choice of professional careers, which is why the seminar promoted reflection to demystify the professional tasks and skills that women can aspire to, through action plans that challenge the reproductive tradition of gender prejudices.

Qualitative evaluation of the seminar

Table 4 shows the evaluation that the students made of the seminar through testimonies collected in the notes space of the learning platform (Microsoft Teams) where the training process of the seminar took place.

Table 4. Evaluation of the seminar “Is a woman born or made?”

| Categories | Ratings |
|-----------------|---|
| Self motivation | <p>Planning made us think about never losing the desire and spark of life.</p> <p>Fight for my dreams and eliminate negative people.</p> <p>The seminar led me to imagine a space that I can fill, remember that, despite everything, I am brave and strong to achieve my goals.</p> <p>It motivated me to not let anyone tell me that I can't do things, to fight for my dreams and to always work hard.</p> <p>Never doubt the greatness of your dreams or goals, everything is possible and there is no excuse greater than the desire to have it.</p> <p>Don't let people's opinions affect you, keep fighting, I believe in you.</p> <p>Never give up in the face of obstacles that arise, keep going, even if your days are not the happiest, and trust in yourself.</p> <p>Never give up, you are strong and will continue to be, fight to achieve your goals</p> <p>Don't let the difficulties that arise make you let your guard down.</p> |
| Recuperate | <p>It helped me to continue fighting against adversity, and above all to plan how to help parents, because they are the guide to our goals.</p> <p>Don't forget that despite what I did, good or bad, I must always move forward with a smile and with my head held high.</p> <p>Now I think about always taking care of myself, building myself is my highest priority, because at the end of the day, yourself is all you have.</p> |
| Stereotypes | <p>To make decisions for myself, and not to satisfy others.</p> <p>It made us reflect, we took a journey into and what we can be, in the way that makes us feel most good, leaving aside labels or stereotypes.</p> |

Source: Narratives of university students in the seminar “Is a woman born or made?”

Derived from the evaluation, three categories of impact on critical gender training are observed (Table 4): self-motivation, recovery and reflection on stereotypes. The usefulness of the action research methodology used promoted reflective learning about the students' own experiences; Likewise, knowledge was built to create new situations from the analysis and recognition of the condition of being a woman.

Discussion

As a result of the use of the seminar-type course as a strategy for the formation of critical thinking about the construction of female identity in university students, it was observed in the first phase that gender stereotypes originate in family dynamics, where roles and responsibilities based on gender. This is the result of an education often led by mothers, who instill “the feminine virtues most valued by their society: being docile, chaste, modest, honest, always willing to obey the tasks entrusted to them” (Castellanos, 2021, page 32).

Likewise, it was noted that both our students and their mothers mainly assume the responsibilities of caring for the sick at home, which reflects the existence of different values for women and men within the family context. This phenomenon, as Tarullo and Frezzotti (2022) point out, demonstrates how women apply the knowledge schemes of the dominant group, men, as part of common sense. Therefore, it is necessary to continue promoting spaces for dialogue and reflection that encourage changes towards more egalitarian practices within homes.

The belief among young university students that a fulfilled woman is one who exercises motherhood is worrying, since it suggests a certain resignation regarding their biological destiny as women, where “the female regains autonomy in motherhood” (Beauvoir, 2019, p. 21), apparently imposing their dominance through the raising of children.

Phase two, “Approach to my real situation”, facilitated a rich dialogue using narratives under the “My story as a woman” strategy, which allowed collaborative knowledge sharing and analysis of prejudices and stereotypes that are internalized throughout life as women. The findings from these students' stories highlighted the need to have more training spaces with a gender focus, especially because the evidence reveals (see table 2) that, during adolescence and young adulthood, our students face significant changes in several aspects of their lives, which hinders their harmonious development.

On the other hand, phase three, “Reflection on being and ought to be”, provided a favorable environment for critical analysis, contrast and reflection among the participants. The fragments recovered about the “should be” in the distribution of tasks, role representation, culture of equity, prejudices, violence and new practices laid the foundations to guide a pedagogy with a gender perspective. As Buquet points out *et al.* (2020), this pedagogy questions “the language, categories, methods and assumptions that, by definition, make women and other people feminized by social imaginaries invisible” (p. 185).

In this sense, writing an action plan is crucial to encourage critical thinking in the construction of feminine identity, since it lays the foundations for assuming a commitment to projecting a future of possibilities, as established in phase four: “Action plan towards my freedom and transcendence.” The development of this plan made it possible to identify three forms of independence in women: intellectual, emotional and economic, conclusions that emerged from the experiences of the students and the concepts analyzed in the work *The Second Sex*. This integration made it possible for them to make judgments about the daily challenges they face and, at the same time, devise strategies to overcome them.

Conclusions

The development of the seminar-type course “Is a woman born or made?”, using the research-action-reflection methodology, has contributed significantly to the formation of critical thinking around the construction of feminine identity, since it has been converted into an effective space to facilitate horizontality. Dialogue between women. The results obtained highlight the urgency of implementing a pedagogy that promotes the transformation towards more egalitarian societies, so that disparities between men and women are eliminated, in this sense, it is considered that through teaching and research we can continue promoting women's awareness of their own identity, especially in the context of the southeastern region of Mexico, where many women have not yet managed to completely emancipate themselves and take autonomous decisions due to daily practices that subject them to entrenched gender stereotypes.

Likewise, the creation of dialogue spaces focused on exploring the construction of the meaning of being a woman opens new opportunities to cultivate critical thinking among university students, since the findings of this research reveal that when women share and discuss their experiences of injustice based on their gender, a sense of community is strengthened that allows students to take concrete measures to change their situation through a well-founded life project.

Future Future lines of research

In future research with gender approaches, it is pertinent to expand the scope of this critical thinking training methodology to other university programs. This would allow us to delve into the problems that women face because of the social processes of construction of meanings that influence education and, therefore, our interactions in different work, professional, family and personal areas.

Finally, it is necessary for higher education institutions to continue with gender studies to incorporate more equitable, inclusive and reciprocal pedagogical practices in the mainstreaming of the curriculum, which could generate profound transformations in the social structures of our country.

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