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**LOST LEADERS: Situational factors that impact
leadership of women in Mexico.**

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ABSTRACT

In Mexican culture, traditional gender expectations play a significant role in influencing women's perceptions of leadership. The concepts of *marianismo* and *machismo* establish social roles for women that affect their self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy. The introduction of women's suffrage in Mexico has allowed women to participate in politics, but cultural influences such as the Virgin of Guadalupe and traditional values still perpetuate inequality and stereotypes. Observational learning, self-efficacy and social expectations have a profound impact on women's expectations of leadership. Overcoming gender stereotypes and fostering self-efficacy are crucial for Mexican women to meet the challenges of leadership. Gender stereotypes and societal perceptions can limit women's leadership opportunities due to traditional beliefs about appropriate leadership skills and characteristics.

Through an interpretative phenomenological analysis, the study discusses the expectations of women leaders in Mexico and the potential for observing successful women leaders in their environment to cultivate leadership role expectations and develop confidence in one's own abilities. The theory also posits that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to assume leadership roles and effectively address challenges. Consequently, fostering a sense of self-efficacy is of paramount importance for Mexican women to overcome gender stereotypes and effectively navigate the challenges associated with leadership roles.

Interviews conducted in the study confirm the influence of gender stereotypes on social norms and expectations, which prevent women from achieving leadership positions. Female leaders face additional pressure to demonstrate their abilities and may be judged more harshly for mistakes or failures. Emotional adjustment to gender roles, self-efficacy and self-esteem are situational factors that influence women's leadership decisions.

Cultural and gender expectations have a significant impact on women's perceptions of leadership. To address these issues and promote equal opportunities, cultural and educational change is needed that challenges gender stereotypes, provides gender equality education, promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and implements mentoring programmes and gender equality policies.

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Keywords:

Leadership, ambivalent sexism, expected roles, social cognitive process, cultural influence

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In memory of Juan González, tireless promoter of women's leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Over time, women in Mexico have made progress in their participation in politics and leadership. From gaining the right to vote in 1953 to the present day, there has been an increase in women's representation in decision-making positions at both local and national levels.

It is crucial to comprehend the historical context in which women were granted the right to vote in Mexico. This necessitates an examination of the feminist struggle and movements that advocated for women's suffrage, as well as the obstacles and challenges women confronted in attaining this recognition.

The obstacles and challenges that women faced in obtaining suffrage recognition in Mexico were considerable (Estrada & Zárate, 2019). In numerous instances, women encountered social and political resistance, as well as opposition from conservative sectors that perceived women's political participation as a threat to the patriarchal structure. They were confronted with entrenched gender stereotypes and systemic discrimination that constrained their access to education, employment and decision-making. Furthermore, women were subjected to repression and violence by the authorities and opposition groups. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, women persisted in their efforts to secure women's suffrage and made significant strides in advancing gender equality in Mexico (Cano, 1996).

The feminist struggles and movements that advocated for women's suffrage in Mexico were diverse and spanned a broad period of time. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women such as Hermila Galindo, Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Elvia Carrillo Puerto, among others, spearheaded the campaign for women's rights in Mexico. These pioneers of feminism demanded the right to vote and gender equality in various areas of social life. (Escandón, 1993)

The Mexican Feminist League, established in 1912, played a pivotal role in the campaign for women's suffrage in Mexico. It advocated for women's education and civic awareness, as well as legal reforms to guarantee women the right to vote. (Escandón, 1994)

The National Feminist Party, established in 1917 by Hermila Galindo, was a prominent advocate for women's suffrage and the advancement of women's rights in the historic 1917 Constitution.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the feminist movement in Mexico was reinforced by women's participation in politics and the advancement of women's rights. Notable figures such as Elvia Carrillo Puerto and Matilde Rodríguez Cabo played a pivotal role in this endeavour. In the context of the 1968 Student Movement, women in Mexico collectively asserted their

political and social rights (Hernández, 2023) . This movement served as a catalyst for greater feminist awareness and mobilisation within the country.

Despite the different social and cultural changes that have taken place in Mexico, there are still many reasons for talented women with technical and leadership skills to reject leadership positions within the working environment (Ortiz and Kamara, 2017). The percentage of men and women in management positions is still unbalanced, which is more noticeable in higher-level managers and specific sectors or activities. According to the Global Gender Gap report 2020, Mexico has the lowest participation of women in the labour force in the Caribbean Regions and Latin America, only after Guatemala. At the same time, the report states that although significant progress has been made in the political empowerment of women, 26.4% of them are part-time jobs. Studies have demonstrated that the income level in Mexico has increased, but female presence remains lower at higher levels within the organisational structure. Women are under-represented in decision-making positions, citing different expectations of success between men and women, discrimination, exclusion, inequality in domestic work between men and women, and long working hours incompatible with family life. (Kuper, 2015)

The aspects that this research will mainly address are the impact of social influence on barriers perceived as existing and the power influence enough to reject leadership positions of women in Mexico, exploring the internal and external elements that hinder participants

in leadership positions in a sector traditionally linked to the male gender according to the congruence of their perceived gender role (Wang et al., 2013)

Since people join organisations with different expectations, hopes, needs, and desires, their beliefs, values, perceptions, attitudes, circumstances, and backgrounds are diverse. Therefore, the environment must have appropriate goals to satisfy needs and promote and maintain the necessary motivation. It is essential to meet the needs of specific groups, each with differences, and identify that the generalisation of men and women is unreal (Garrin, 2014). In Mexico, the idea of achieving gender equality has been gaining force, impacting government actions by developing laws to care for and guarantee gender equality. Still, even with these efforts, women in different positions decide to leave or reject leadership positions because of various situational factors. Mexican society is changing in terms of internationalization with more possibilities to interact with people from different cultures, different educational levels with more people within universities, and competencies to face the competition (Davila and Elvira, 2012). Although leadership in Latin America studies are not extensive, preferences in terms of leadership style are a significant subject for analysis in organisations.

Specific implications of demographic changes can increase university enrolment and recruitment within organisations from various profiles and for diverse positions. Mexican society is working to create long-term gender stereotypes, but, even in Mexico, there have

been advances in gender quotas in political jobs in spaces such as the legislative power. In addition, laws are being re-analysed and modified. There have been several cultural factors present with relevance in organizations and society that are essential in these matters. Still, men and women must have representation and participate in leadership positions (Karevel and Atkeston, 2015).

Impediments for women to reach high-level leadership positions are caused by discriminatory processes that affect the confidence, relevance, and perception of women's competence. Not only can men impact the development of feminine leaders inside organisations, but the effect of the "queen bee" phenomenon mentioned by Staines, Jayaratne and Tavis in 1973 can also be present in organisations with male dominance, where female leaders can be promoting discrimination within the organisation and stopping the development of women, generating bias and impacting the growth of female leaders. Women's underrepresentation affects many decisions inside organisations and groups; that is why goal-setting targets in female representation are now the cause of policies and laws in public and private goals.

For women, there are differences related to the reasons to get or avoid role guidance and the way to interpret success and failures; different events in the household, classroom, job activities, and contexts affect leadership development and identity.

Some efforts can help address this, an example being leadership programs throughout life that can create holistic leaders with a practical focus on a relevant aspect in guidance for people and leadership. In addition, factors such as analytic skills, emotional intelligence, or spiritual domain can engross competencies and, during working life, can engage employees in different positions or levels within the organization directly or indirectly (Scott et al. 2007).

Based on that premise, this research considers the analysis of roles assumed by Mexican women and their perception of the expected position for the female gender and how this affects their identity as leaders. This work shows a detailed analysis of how figures within Mexican culture, such as the "patrón" and the Virgin of Guadalupe, represent a close link with the "marianismo" within the construction of the role expected by society for women in this country.

Understanding social phenomena in specific cultures, segments, or sectors (Flores, 2011) could help develop programs and strategies that provide information for possible reinterpretations of meaning or learning in a social context. This framework is soaked in traditions, cultural limits, concepts, and ideas that can help increase leaders' participation in various activities.

About de researcher

The researcher's interest in this topic is in her relationship to the development of training projects that impact leadership competencies from an early age.

The analysis of specific elements within the cultural context is relevant for the strengthening of programs that promote gender equity within different industries in Mexico. The study of experiences that allow identifying relevant aspects in idiosyncrasy, education, role models and environments could facilitate the development of the competencies.

Identifying situational factors is of interest to the researcher, with her experience of 24 years in a prestigious private University in Mexico. The researcher has a bachelor's degree in international business and a master's degree in administration. She has taught in the areas of organisational behaviour and administration and innovation in business models and is currently part of the support to academic areas for the implementation of a new educational model in Mexico within the university in which she collaborates, having as its central axis the resolution of challenges for the development of skills.

The beginning of everything

The selection of the methodology was undoubtedly relevant to the context that I have as a researcher contemplating my experience within an educational institution under different roles both in the academic area and in support services. It seems pertinent to discuss some elements within this story that make me identify the qualitative methodology as a way of approaching a problem from a deeper perspective that allows me to understand what exists in the stories of women living in a similar culture.

My first job application was at the age of 23, it is necessary to say that by this age I had become a single mother. My first experience in an interview made it clear to me that the compatibility between work and family life for a woman is not easy.

The interviewer looked at my CV and remarked that he needed to ask me to omit the fact that I had a young child as this would limit my ability to continue in a recruitment process within a global company. I remember that the whole word was confusing for me. How could I hide the most important motivator for employment in my life, which was my son and his needs? I came out of that place convinced that the idea of lying about a family context to get a job was not the solution and from that moment on I considered that an important contribution was to work strongly with example to show that family life and the responsibilities as a mother and later on the responsibilities as a wife cannot limit the professional growth of a woman.

For women, 2020 represents an important time in work and family life, considering that careers and aspirations were affected by the dynamics caused by the pandemic. Studies show that the difference between Burnout and the changes in routines that women had during this difficult time in the world shows the vulnerability that the female sex has in a context of expectations and prejudices about the roles that men and women should play.

Understanding the phenomenon of women in Mexico requires a deeper analysis of the human experience by understanding the meanings women determine for key concepts such as leadership, family, or expectations towards them.

The understanding of women's values and how they fit into organisations, the opportunities for growth that a woman can visualise having a cultural frame of reference, the effective support for women's development or the development of female talent are aspects to be studied in depth in order to understand why there are not yet equal opportunities worldwide considering the prejudices and barriers placed by external parties but also by women, can be analysed not only from a numerical analysis but also from the stories that show much more than statistics.

AIM OF THE STUDY

More than a biological or individual condition, leadership seems to be a consequence of a mix of conditions developed over time, including the personal identity that is dynamically modified throughout life by developing skills to cope with different environments or situations.

Relationships and identity are vital for leadership management. Demographic trends suggest that organisations in the future will present elements of multiculturalism and globalized thinking, ushering in cultural changes and promoting new connections or interactions. This will represent new opportunities and expectations for leaders where social cognitions are fundamental to the understanding of the context (Lord et al. 2016)

Based on what the author previously mentioned, the concept of leadership contemplates the process of perception by others as a leader. The author based his proposal on an information processing model proposed to deepen through this study how motivation, relevance, and perception of efficacy that people have concerning concepts such as leadership are affected by situational factors that impact the development of identity through the construction of expected roles according to the social identity shared by the group.

Within the line of research aimed at understanding the low participation of women in a leadership position, the idea put forward on leadership based on influence (Rost, 1993) or depending on the specific aspect of leadership interest to the individuals (Bass, 2008) can analyse from perspectives such as the role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau, 2002) showing bias towards women and giving a gender-relevant role in the face of predispositions that influence the behaviour of female leaders. Individual influence and interest seem to be affected by external elements. The preconceptions or presumptions about women promote less favourable attitudes toward them, more pressing difficulties in achieving leadership roles or being recognised as effective in their interactions with others.

Literature reviews the concepts of leadership (Bass, 1981, Bass, 1985), style (Cairns, 1996), basic concepts (Dickinson et al., 2021), behaviour (Hoyt and Blascovich, 2010), traits (Robinson et al., 2019). Still, few literature reviews consider the loss of leadership or the loss of leaders.

This work is based on the idea that the relevance of the leadership role (Chaluvadi, 2015) is different for people according to a social learning process. The social learning process can be impacted by various reasons and can be linked with some background generated by traditions of cultural figures or icons. It is possible to identify the main reason that can be related to the impact of icons, images or symbols that influence the development of the social identity, impacting the perception of roles or expectations in the population of a

particular group (Fedi and Rollero, 2016). The loss of leaders affects the development of a leadership identity compatible with the necessary leadership within organisations, and this affectation is differentiated by demographic aspects such as gender (Garcia-Leiva, 2005). This work considers all those women whose leadership potential is decreasing due to internal or external factors because of a limited view of the factor or elements that motivate a woman to take the role of leader.

Generating and real incentive collaboration is a job that not everyone is willing and ready to accept. Whereas influencing is not a simple action, this work represents finding share goals and the possibility of giving a common purpose to promote and stimulate changes (Sheldom and Elliot, 1999).

Leadership is much more than collaborative work, and talent could be lost if some critical factors are not considered during leaders' development. For example, the loss of female talent due to identities developed among ideologies, stereotypes, or prejudices limits leadership based on the creation of synergies that can integrate a relevant number of factors and perspectives.

The meaning of leadership is variable and depends on the context and situational factors (Lord, Brown and Hall, 2001). However, in some cases, personal and social characteristics influence have tried or explain the differences in professional development between men

and women, such as family or the influence of the company or organisation in which they work (Matínez – Pérez and Osca, 2004)

The trait approach may appear unreliable and simplistic in some situational leadership models (Cairns, 1996). In some cases, personal and social characteristics, along with situational factors such as family and the influence of the company in which they work, have tried to explain the differences in professional development between men and women beyond the traits (Martínez – Pérez and Osca, 2004).

Although the subject of leadership has been addressed through different positions and approaches, these lines try to identify the characteristics of the leader, some from the historical perspective (Spisak, 2020) and others from an evolutionary perspective (Van Vugt and Von Rueden, 2020). More recently, the focus has been on the relationship between leaders and followers or transcultural studies through the identification or comparison between countries and regions. Intercultural differences are present; it exists with the same cultural differences arising from different conceptualizations. The cultural domain is relevant for understanding beliefs and meanings, and between the two concepts (intercultural differences and cultural domain) there is a debate about how each affects social elements, where analysis by age or gender composition provides important information (Robles, 2008). Any cultural behaviour is the result of these elements.

In a country like Mexico, where regional diversity is more strongly reflected in specific activities and sectors that affect the absence of women in leadership positions (Robles, 2008), the concept of leadership is constantly confused with a concept related to power or hierarchical positions, and not necessarily with the ability to create synergies and influence people or employees with a strong identification with the group or organisation in which they work.

Analysing these considerations from a perspective of the social cognitive theory that gives a central role to cognitive, self-reflective, and self-regulatory processes (Bandura, 1989), and based on the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971), considered some psychological functions where behaviour and its controlling conditions have a significant interaction, based on the idea that people learn and absorb knowledge from the interactions with others in a social context (De Jaegher et al., 2010). In this context, each person observes the behaviour of others. In this observation, people learn or develop similar conduct, assimilating and imitating that behaviour, especially if the experience of observations has a positive reward or experience.

The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) considers how individuals through life acquire and maintain behaviour while also considering and is relevant to the social environment or context in which individuals perform. This theory studies that learning occurs in a social

context with each person's dynamic and reciprocal interaction, taking into account the environment and behaviour.

Each person has a history and reacts and construes, and interprets situations based on these experiences; past knowledge influences the probability of acting according to lived experiences (Van Manen, 1997). At the same time, this experience affects the expectations, necessities, or hopes about activities or situations impacting the participation or conduct of individuals. Although the analysis of the theory in the learning process is profound (Gnyawali and Stewart, 2003), it has limitations insofar assuming that adjustments to the environment will lead to changes in the person just as it does, but not to be considered in a relevant way, aspects such as biological conditions, age, or gender that can impact behaviours.

In this research, the aspects that will mainly be investigated are the impacts of social influence on barriers perceived as existing and that influence behaviour and the social learnings that could trigger barriers perceived as existing and that represent influence enough to reject women's leadership roles. The identification of the internal and external elements that hinder the participation of women in leadership roles in different roles and activities according to the congruence of their perceived gender role through the following objectives:

Explore the influence of self-efficacy in confronting leadership barriers according to the gender role congruence perceived by Mexican women.

Explore the influence of society's expected roles for women in leadership positions.

Discover the level of impact on ambivalent sexism identified by Mexican women related to leaders' self-efficacy, social support and other women's efficacy linked with Mexican women's perceived expectations of society.

Analyse the influence of the figures of the "patrón" and the Virgin of Guadalupe as female "patrón" of Mexico in the social construction of the gender role among Mexican women.

The following research questions, based on the literature review, are posed to explore the participants' experiences, and develop an interview in which the participant can actively engage in the conversation:

How do self-efficacy and self-esteem influence Mexican women's ability to overcome barriers to employability and leadership in the private sector?

From a female perspective, what is the influence of the roles society expects of women seeking employment and leadership positions?

How do Mexican women experience ambivalent sexism and how does this affect their self-efficacy and social support?

How do representations of the male 'patrón' and the Virgin of Guadalupe as role models in Mexican society influence the formation of gender roles among women and how is this reflected in their lives and perceptions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

1 Identity construction

Identity is a concept that has been explained and used in many ways. It has been mentioned in social psychology and sociology, but this panorama has changed by relating identity to leadership. Identity theories observe how individuals define themselves to others and how they identify themselves. (Lührman and Eberl, 2007)

The word identity is addressed at the individual and group level; it has a different meaning for each context, although intricately linked. From identity, importance and value were given to things; it feels different for each person; identity is what I am. (Taylor, 1996)

Identity process theory recognises that there is a process of assimilation, accommodation, and balancing of identity over time. Throughout the lifespan, there is the ability to incorporate age-related changes within identity. Balancing identity is positively associated with self-esteem. (Sneed and Whitbourne, 2003)

Because of its implications in an organisational environment, the study of identity has been approached from different philosophical positions, optics, and perspectives. It has been the

subject of study in various disciplines, from multiples perspectives and positions (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, Deaux, 1993, Ding et al., 2017)

Leadership is a process that involves social interactions between people within specific contexts where each person brings to this relationship a set of characteristics or traits. Each person is unique and has specific features impossible to imitate. Personal qualities, knowledge and past experiences influence the perception of each member within a group (Bass, 1981, 1997, Porter et al., 2016, Neve et al., 2013). This perception affects how the exterior identifies the traits of each member of a group (Braun et al., 2018)

1.1 Understanding the self.

The manner a person copes with multiple positions and changing situations is critical in creating identity through the observation of the self in the social world. (Henry and Mollstedt, 2021). It reinforces previous works that self-identity is a process and a product of tense relationships between multiple active positions.

Religious figures are relevant in the construction of the individual's identity (Dávila, 2022). Studies show that children's spiritual or religious identity impacts identity development is intertwined with the education process and reflects socio-cultural processes.

Identity is the socially constructed self; people continuously create and reconstruct in their interactions with many elements within this process, such as beliefs, religions, values, cultural understanding, or ideologies. (Behnama and Mozahebb, 2013)

Knowing where we are going as a person and knowing how we fit into a context is part of identity development and impacts the choices we make and links to the values and things relevant to the person and affects the roles that we carry out in life (Bouman et al., 2021).

Identity is created in social interaction and, during life, is constantly constructed (Goffman, 2001). In his introduction, he talks about how individuals interact with others trying to acquire information without putting at stake what they already have.

According to the social identity theory, individuals develop their identity by being associated with social groups, and it predicts that people derive their self-concept from membership in various social groups. (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, Mittal et al., 2022). Social identity is the part of people's self-concept that is derived from knowledge of social group membership (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel argued that the groups to which we belong define us and are an essential part of how we value ourselves and is the basis for our self-esteem. It is from the identity with the group that people feel secure and seeks the valuation of that group, so this theory explains how people can account for who they are through the group they belong. Still, their way of acting varies according to the group in which they are.

The self-categorisation theory of self-complements is the idea developed by the social identity theory. This complement focus on the categorisation that comes from identity formation and the cognitive process (Tuner, 1985). The self-categorisation theory of the self-complements the ideas developed by the social identity theory by focusing on the cognitive processes and categorisation that emanate from identity formation (Tuner, 1985). The concept of the self-based on comparison with other people is relevant in social interaction and is the basis of self-categorisation theory and arises from social group affiliation and social self-concept. Personal identity is subordinate to variations in the context in which they interact and determine the type of categorisation in the individual and their behaviour.

According to Riesch (2014), there is a relationship between sociology, philosophy and the history of science, and this relationship is linked to the development of social identity interdisciplinary. Social identity has generated hypotheses about the way groups behave and its relationship with areas such as gender, cohesion, stereotypes, social influence, or leadership.

Based on previous research, a meta-theory was proposed to understand groups. This meta theory allows relating social identity with different topics. That is why based on the idea of Tajfel and Turner (1976), social identity theory has been studied or analysed on its effects

on the self-concept and performance of the person (Lentz et al., 2000) or since its impact on personality and social psychology (Hogg, 2001), and even recently on attachments and intentions (Mittal et al., 2022)

There is a strong association between a person and the behaviour of the reference group. From the perspective of social identity, even commonplaces issues such as eating habits (Liu et al., 2019) are impacted by social factors. These associations are essential, traditions and customs influence behaviours and social forms.

The human being judges through the collectives; that is why groups are relevant in identity development. Identity contemplates the perception that a person has about themselves, but it is too impacted by the expectation of others. The interpretation of the external motivations, understanding and following the rules that society imposes are part of individuals' development. Each human being acts according to what visualises is expected of the role they play. People follow the rules dictated or times imposed by society (Ryan et al., 2000).

The result of social interactions where the way of using meanings and even modifying them occurs through a process of interpretation for each person. According to expectations and purpose, in an active way, the personal self, in conjunction with the environment, gives things meaning through a dynamic process with the selection, organisation, reproduction

and transformation of things. Therefore, this proposal envisages or visualises that things are not necessarily what they appear to be. Expectations and purpose are determinants by interpreting things through a dynamic process (Sheldom and Eliot, 1999)

In addition, changes in self-perception will create a new identity; the person who visualised him/herself as unique in independence disappears to become a part of a group, making it possible that behaviours that were not related to personal identity can appear within a social identity.

Some models have explained the development and change of identity in the face of traumatic situations. These situations represented turning points in the development (Park, 2019). Impacting relevant aspects such as clarity of self-concept, and negative or adverse experiences in childhood alter identity. Tolerance to uncertainty is another concept that can be affected. This situation could be a predictor of relevant disorders such as anxiety or depression (Hayward et al., 2020)

Under the idea that different identity parameters constitute the individual, space and time are relevant, considering that identity is different depending on the time, the person that is at a specific time, the logical reasoning is that a specific intervention during a specific space and time of the person's history results in the modification of identity.

From an individual or social perspective, and in addition to the biological, psychological or natural aspects, identity is associated with the construction of society and culture. Some relevant elements are social rules and norms. Both elements are part of a person's way of living. Language is another relevant element in this aspect. (Iñiguez, 2001). All these elements are interlinked to conform to one's individuality in the present. At the same time, identity is confirmed for the future on account of its dynamism.

1.2 Models

Historically, various authors have contributed to social identity from different perspectives. Based on the ideas of Tajfel and Turner (1976), social identity theory has been studied on its effects on self-concept and performance (Lentz et al. 1999) or its impact on personality and social psychology (Hogg, 2001), and recently on linkages and intentions, (Mittal and Mottiani, 2022)

An understanding of the construction of group identity must consider the individual needs of its members. According to Vignoles (2011), people are motivated to a group for reasons like self-esteem, differentiation or distinction from others, belonging, sense or meaning, efficacy or continuity. Thomas et al. 2017, considered previous studies to argue that identity is affected by personal and social identity motives and by individual and group levels of analysis so that identification with a group can have personal identity, social identity, or collective identity motives.

Identity formation is linked to the development process wherein one gradually acquires a style and identity from the immediate environment in which one lives. Parents, family, teachers, nannies, friends, and partners, among others, are essential in constructing identity (Amiot et al., 2015). The identity result from the interpretation and adaptation to norms and values instils since childhood by people close.

A different perspective arises from considering that identity can be developed from understanding the individual as a unique being. Since childhood, each person constructs their identity from their essence. Depending on the context in which people live, the identity can be multiple. Even changing depending on the environment (Jones and McEwen, 2000)

These two perspectives are, in essence, an axis to visualise from where we could intervene in the development of identity. If we consider that identity develops due to the environment, it is necessary to intervene in everything surrounding the individual, family, school, and friends. Let us assume that it is within where this development takes place. It is then elementary to collaborate with the person to understand how they perceive themselves and their beliefs. These perspectives, far from being contradictory, complement each other.

Life history generates a unique sense of self (Bontempo et al., 2012). Previously, an approach to identity has been considered an insightful and reflective process through the construction of identity where history is significant. This perspective contemplates a balance between the individual and the context as an essential part of the development of the individual's identity, generating a link that allows understanding how each individual is inserted into society in an active way where their reflective capacity accepts or rejects the information found in the environment.

Identity development is influenced by gender (Stynes et al., 2021) or by socio-cultural aspects (McLean et al., 2019) that impact people's self-perception from an early age. For example, people who play a role in parenting have an impact on perceived acceptance and control from childhood; this relationship is different according to gender.

According to Pittman et al., (2012), how acceptance control is present and exists in the relationship between children and their parents (father and mother) influences and impacts the self- perception of son and daughter differently.

Additionally, identity and self-concept are closely related, socially and psychologically. Both concepts impact and influence interactions, contacts, and relationships with others. Aspects as age, gender, sexual orientation, status or social level, physical health, and mental and cognitive aspects impact others (Páramo, 2008). The contemplation that everyone has a

personal identity, visualising the individual as capable of defining and directing his or her behaviour, looks impossible when there are social interactions.

Blumer's proposal (1969) contemplates that social interactions through the formation of the self-conscious self constitute in a relevant way the human being. The premise of this proposal is that people act on the things in their world and interact with people through the meaning that things and people have for them.

Based on Blumer's proposal mentioned above, the social world cannot be understood from scientific analysis, unlike Meade's proposals (1953). That is, the proposal of phenomenology can analyse particular aspects within a group through a methodology that can seek information about life experiences, and personal perceptions can provide information, avoiding generalisations, to help to interpret the actions and behaviours of individuals, identifying social elements that could limit people to perform specific activities.

Meade (1934), the idea of social behaviourism raised by his researchers and Blumer (1969) with a proposal of symbolic interactions and relations have had an important influence on qualitative psychology. The comparison of the methodologies of both authors has made it possible to reflect on the relationship not necessarily methodological but within pragmatic psychology. The basis of symbolic interactionism is the subject, while behaviourism is constructed and based on society. (Forni, 2003)

The study of identity development can be complex. There is no way to avoid the impact and effect of the investigators during the research because they are immersed in the construction of identity. They are immersing in the construction of elements that make up the identity of the individuals under study (Tang and Naumann, 2016).

As a set of specific traits to an individual, several researchers have studied identity; based on the model developed by Erikson (1986), this set of traits characterizes him or her from others. With essential implications in the interactions between people, the search for the socio-cognitive theoretical framework affects to execution of roles and social situations and environments.

With necessary implications in the interactions between people, execution and performance of roles, and the effect of social situations and environments, the search for the socio-cognitive theoretical framework as a basis for the definition of identity in specific professions (McClellan, 2017) has shown evidence on how the construction of identity is related to relevant aspects such as self-efficacy and self-concept. According to Erikson, identity develops in stages, giving relevance to the effect of culture, society, and history on the impact of personality development. The approach that history and context are more relevant than biological elements generate a different perspective on the malleability of personality throughout life. Elements such as hope, or purpose are developed through lived

experiences and do not have as their only origin the biological aspects with which we were born.

As part of this categorisation, some stereotypes describe the performance and each interaction with others and construct reality. Through the cognitive development approach studied, Piaget (1968) and Kohlberg (1976) analysed the social perspective from a psychological theory. This perspective considers the acquisition of typified behaviours and the manifestation of these acquired conducts, providing importance at various contextual levels to motivation and social identity functions, where motivation is impacted from an inter-group perspective (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, Eagly, 1987)

The person addresses the cognitive model with continuous feedback and reaction between biology and context or environment. As part of the theoretical review of a model that has tried to explain the gendered self as a social phenomenon, García - Leiva (2005) conceives of gender as dynamic development.

1.4 Group identity

Moreover, considering that individual identity can be modified due to interactions with others, belonging to a group is of greater importance because each group's identity poses specific characteristics.

Group membership is relevant to the individual. Rather than thinking about individual and social identity, social identity construction is due to individuals' interaction. According to Deaux (1993), personal and social identity are related, providing important arguments that this is due to the interactions or exchanges of individuals, the context they share, and the functions they perform.

Self-perception is a dynamic concept (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) where social interactions play a relevant role in constructing this. As previously mentioned, it is necessary to consider that belonging to a group affects identity development (Zheng and Muir, 2015).

Family, schoolmates, teachers, friends, political and civil organisations, and religious congregations to which one belongs can modify behaviours in different areas of life, in the personal or in the professional field.

There are significant implications for the human resources process and talent development within organisations, considering that professional identity is affected by self-concepts (Lord et al., 1999) being part of an internal dimension. On the other hand, in a social dimension, professional identity is affected by social identity where expectations, hopes, aspirations, objectives and goals can also be modified (Hotho, 2008).

1.5 Leadership Identity

The leader's understanding of their own identity affects organisational performance because the perception of the leader role and the leadership behaviours that constitute the leadership style are part of the personal values and beliefs that the individual considers consistent with the task to play (De Neve et al. 2013).

The research focused on leader identity views leadership as an individual-driven process where one has a well-developed personal understanding of oneself as a leader. There is another approach in which leadership is entered into as a group process focused on the ability of leaders to integrate a social identity that they share with the collectives they lead. (Haslam et al. 2022)

Behind every leader, a group of followers recognize them as such, implicitly or explicitly. This group has its own identity, which is reflected in the characteristics and objectives of the group. The group members are part of it as they feel identified with these characteristics. Leader effectiveness derives from a potential leader's ability to create, promote, and integrate a shared group identity. (Sewell et al. 2021). Understanding who they are allows the individual to better develop their role as a leader by impacting their confidence and self-esteem. Group performance is affected when leaders have a clear sense of their own identity.

Undoubtedly, mental models and roles instilled or taught from a young age affect identity development. People face problems and personal processes depending on the conceptual framework, taking a risk and making decisions depending on this background. Within this context, individuals develop and generate values, biases, perceptions, prejudices, predispositions and other elements relevant to how to act (Garcia- Leiva, 2005).

The general principles of social learning consider that people can learn by observation. Consequently, role models' can affect behaviours. According to Bandura (1977), the behaviours are modified by imitations; role models can be near the person. But too, representative figures in the cultural context or environment can act as specific models that touch and affect the actions of individuals.

It is relevant to remember that people are surrounded by conditions that impact their identity even before they are born. The friends and peers who surround the person while growing up impact the way that people interpret situations. Some of them are the family in which people are born or the school where an individual was raised (Park, 2019).

Several elements can impact identity development. Difficulties or problems in the family in a familiar context or problems within the work environment as interaction with a boss, or the profile of the company in which a person collaborates, in an organisational context, are

part of this development. Even the name or nickname of the person identified is relevant in this aspect. (Páramo 2008)

Some aspects that build up our identity are not necessarily controlled by personal decision-making. For example, for an individual, the family where they were developed or where they were educated in childhood, nationality that possesses cannot be selected. However, these elements impact how individuals observe and perceive the context. The filtering and processing of information are linked with past experiences and, therefore, generate actions, positions and behaviours according to the personal decision process (Sumarto and Permanasari, 2013).

Some individual factors and situational elements, such as social pressure, social structures, national gender, and even language, influence the construction and modification of identity.

Leadership is affected by the native language and the cultural background. A qualitative study carried out among English, and German employees made by Jepson (2010) show this, arguing that these elements affect an individual's theorisation.

The study above analysed the discourses of leaders from the mentioned nationalities and found a solid relationship between leadership and management and linguistic use as a

relevant element impacting collaborators. It is reasonable to consider that the context in which a person grows up is critical and decisive in developing a leader's identity, and at the same time, consider that team identity and expert identity also impact (Tang and Naumann, 2016)

As a complement, the analysis of identity development in a specific context with the aim of generating information to identify relevant traits about specific members within the group offers the possibility of focusing efforts on specific people, those considered "outstanding individuals", to facilitate the alignment of beliefs and values of a group within the organisation, based on the theory of social identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), a social perspective that considers that identification with groups is derived from the categorisation of individuals, in such a way that the analysis of identity development in a specific context in order to generate information about the most relevant features of outstanding individuals within the group has been proposed as a way to facilitate the alignment of beliefs and values within the organisations, under this consideration, working with key people within groups in a strategic way could have an impact on the whole group.

In the same line of thought, steadily, the outstanding members or affiliated groups are visualised by those members of other groups. This visualisation defines, to a significant extent, the characteristics that people from external groups perceive of any group (Lord et al., 2016).

Therefore, this group member is relevant for the association with a group because the identification of individuals allows for generating identity, and this facilitates the incorporation of organisations in the way people attract each other.

The internalisation and incorporation of values and beliefs occur to the extent that these elements are compatible with the individual identity (Piaget, 1968). Under this premise, the study of specific cases could generate relevant information. The analysis of those members considered outstanding can help to develop information that can even impact the entire group (Tajfel and Turner, 1986)

There are relevant implications in this regard. The idea of not being able to take a broad way and generalise the results by considering each person as unique establishes a significant questioning of strategies and plans of generic or homologated training programs. This is because, under this perspective, the personalisation of programs for staff development could have better results based on the idea that the unique event does not generate a leader's identity.

A multi-faceted process, according to previous studies (Zhen and Muir, 2015), can result in leadership development and the identification of the relevant factors and moments in the construction of people's identities.

Relevant figures inside this development, impacting organisations and groups, can help to promote the expansion of limits and barriers that the individual considers existing and, with this achieve the understanding of the personal context and the relevant elements that motivate the individual. At the same time, being able to detect aspects of their individual and social identity and develop strategies with specific groups and not necessarily in each person because it could be impractical inside organisations but considered by group elements according to specific cultural context (Axtle, 2009).

Social identity theory is linked to the concepts such as leadership, viewed as a group process in which members adjust their behaviours, and these members are influenced through social attraction processes; social identity theory can be linked with leadership because followers receive, accept, and comply with ideas a leader suggests in search of status.

Considering that leadership prototypes are diverse because they are sensitive to multiple factors linked to affective o emotional elements and cognitive schemas, a subordinate can act to constrain this concept (Lord et al., 2001). Under the idea that prototypes change because experiences can modify perception, the analysis of different backgrounds could better understand the context and some elements and factors affecting the motivation to lead teams (Braun et al., 2018).

1.6 Gender and identity

Gender is a relevant element in the creation of the construction of social identity (Burn et al., 2000). In this context, women and men vary in how each defines themselves in their social world. In this context, women and men may vary in the way they define themselves in relation to their social world; that is why gender is a relevant element in the construction of social identity.

Aspects such as self-esteem arise in men and women from different sources linked to individual experiences and contexts. The meaning that concepts such as achievement or relationship can have gained a different significance; therefore, studies show differentiated behaviours between men and women linking, for example, men to conduct with a tendency to autonomy and independence while women, on the other hand, behave with a trend toward interdependence and sensitivity (Joseph et al., 1992)

Additionally, Eagly's studies have exciting contributions to the difference in social behaviour between men and women. Eagly develops, in the foreword of her book "Sex difference in social behaviour" (1987), an examination of the concept of gender and the gender–identity relation. She argues that, although in the 1970s, experts in psychology considered that the difference between men and women was unproven, this stance changed in the 1980s under experts' stance of the differences between men and women as minor differences. However,

stereotypes in this decade played an essential role because of their relationship with people's beliefs.

These two postures are uneven in the arguments that support them. The disparity between both perspectives is the reason for new research. From a new perspective, there are arguments about how the difference between men and women exists and clarify how the research process is affected and can bias the researcher (Wang et al., 2013)

Qualitative studies could be of high value to broaden the scenarios in which people develop, where the context can change the results because time and space are different, and each situation can change behaviour. Therefore, based on this argument, the same experience may impact on a different level or in a different way to women and men, and the context and time in which this experience takes place.

2 The social cognitive theory

The importance of adaptation toward social behaviour and efficient communication is evident, considering the idea that any process of acquiring skills from early childhood starts a conscious and deliberated process. This process gains importance in adaptation towards social behaviour and efficient communication, beginning with a mechanism of learning but is assimilated and suitable for an automatic operation by recurrent use (Bargh, 2012).

According to Wang and Olson (2018), there is a necessity for rapid implementation of multiple skills within a complex environment. Inside contexts where there are changes and unpredictability, some elements such as actions, reactions in the body or face, language or decisions that are part of the interaction with the world integrate many mental processes associated in an organised way.

Interactive processes are more than a context for social cognition because they can complement individual cognitive mechanisms. As a result of previous works, it has been empirically demonstrated that social cognition can complement and even replace unique mechanisms (De Jaegher et al., 2010).

This posture is consistent with what was proposed by Bandura (1989). He argues that organism not only replies or responds to environmental incentives and stimuli. Reaction in an intuitive or automaton-like way is not the unique response; the environment, as well as personal and behavioural factors, are not separate entities that, in a continuous model, interact mutually.

The influence of society has been relevant in continuing to strengthen the image of the female gender as the weaker sex by promoting ideas that impact the sense of self-efficacy (Bandura 2006). Some of these ideas affect confidence in personal capabilities and impact

standards. Since childhood, there are beliefs ingrained that link women to specific roles (Baird, 2008) within the family where individual capabilities are not sufficient for women to be considered successful if they do not comply with the stereotypes associated with them.

The perception of self-efficacy plays an important role in the attitude and possibility of achieving objectives. This is consistent with the works of authors such as Bandura (2001), who argue that people's abilities and skills —their cognitive abilities — are related to the way they see themselves and, thus, can respond to the different challenges to generate the necessary actions to face the situations that the role of leader brings with it, having an impact on women's motivational behaviours.

The Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura (1971, 1977) offers insight into the potential influence of observational learning, self-efficacy, modelling and reinforcement, as well as social and cultural expectations on women's leadership role expectations in Mexico. This is achieved by focusing on how people learn and acquire knowledge through observation and interaction with their social environment.

The information handled for each person establishes their behavioural limits and parameters. Based on the fact that an essential part of behaviour results from learning by imitation and that during life, the way that people think is a constant and continuous

construction of the reality that each person builds, each constructs their existence from a continual interaction between cognition and the context.

Although some work on the social-cognitive process demonstrates that the automatic acquisition of skills is a learning mechanism from an early age, this process starts with consciously and deliberately appropriating automatic operation with frequent use (Schwader et al., 2012).

However, according to recent theories, social cognition has two forms of information processing: the implicit and the explicit. The implicit is based on a more straightforward process that is outside of conscious control, such as attitudes and stereotypes or aspects such as self-concept or inclusively self-esteem, and the explicit or verbal is based on deliberative planes (Paulus et al., 2017)

Additionally, in a compilation of Bruner's works, an influential psychologist and scientist in the field of education, in 2009, Guilar summarised the author's work through a narrative that contrasts early ideas with modified approaches to his work. He summarised Bruner's work with an initial idea of a process of understanding the impact of cognitive processes starting from the mental process of learning, where human intelligence is in search of generating classifications within its environment to generate decision making, developing inferences, and forming concepts.

The process of knowledge is affected by the knowledge, experiences, values and even aspects need of each individual, and this is the beginning of a revolution in how we understand the processing of knowledge. According to Bruner's ideas (2006), there is a strong impacting the process of education.

Bruner's work shifted towards an approach to the relevance of education under a vision where the exchange of meanings was determinant for the appropriation of knowledge, arguing that cultural elements have a high impact on the ability to create understanding. By considering Bruner's ideas as part of the development of identity, we could explore the possibility that the individual processes for the generation of concepts learned by each person are not only a product of individual learning but a consequence of interactions with the context in which they live.

Previous studies that demonstrate relevant aspects of trust between co-workers linked with implicit and explicit processes support the idea that the cognitive process detects elements such as ability, generosity, integrity, compassion, and other behaviours.

The emotional process is present in developing emotional skills (Christie, 2015). The emotional process and the relationship while exchanging information with partners, and

according to the actions, a person evaluates the degree of confidence they can have with peers.

It is proposed to visualise the analysis of the theory from a gender perspective, considering the expected role according to a specific profile in a given context, based on the idea that the human decision-making process considers a vital level of cognitive bias. Cognitive skills, resources, and aptitudes are restricted or limited when executing some reasonings during cognitive activities (Kahneman, 2003, DeCaro et al., 2017). This process only considers parts because people have incomplete or partial knowledge.

Cognitive skills, resources, and aptitudes are restricted or limited when executing some reasonings during cognitive activities (Kahneman, 2003, DeCaro et al., 2017). This process only considers parts because people have incomplete or partial knowledge. The cognitive task is extraordinarily adapted to integrate concepts and, through the socio-emotional process, link emotions through the behavioural process (Robinson et al., 2019).

Under this idea, personal traits are informative in reference to a structure of personality, as complete perspective traits are linked to emotions and behaviours, bearing in mind that these elements occur between people where personal influence work within a structured network with social influences, where each person produces elements for the system.

However, according to Bandura (2001), at the same time, everyone is the product of a social system

Under the above context, there is an argument that the social cognitive theory discriminates between three modes of influence that contemplate personal influence, a substitute for this influence that relies on others to act on the individual to guarantee or ensure the desired outcomes, and a third that considers a collective influence that arises from a social interdependence and organises efforts.

It becomes relevant to explore further whether the above-mentioned arguments can be complemented with the ideas exposed by Vogeley y Roepstorff (2009), saying that each person who participates in a dynamic system and under pre-determined cultural roles impacts the categorisation or classification emanating from culture-generating feedback into social practices and identity process.

3 Gender

The elements of gender identity development have been analysed, attributions by gender, the conceptualisation of concepts such as power, how to perform a job, roles, and many other elements that are part of constructing this identity.

Gender socialisation theories (Hanish & Fabes, 2013) that promote behaviours and characteristics associated with specific genders, such as masculine, perpetuate stereotypes and limit opportunities for women. At present, gender diversity goes far beyond a binary vision, considering the existence of non-binary identities, so the idea that gender socialisation is the only element that influences the development of the identity of women leaders in Mexico is unfounded, as it would ignore the influence and interaction of factors such as culture, family, education and the work environment, among others.

Margaret Meade (1935) argued that more than a biological concept, the individual qualities people are born with are independent of sex and may vary in different environments. Gender thoughts are relational with cultural partners. People are shaped, prepared, and moulded by society since birth. The behaviours that society considers appropriate are inculcated within this social order, and it is possible to differentiate behaviours by sex (Castaño et al., 2015).

The understanding of how women and men live and the relationship between them reflect behaviours and stereotypes with which gender identifies within a culture. According to the context, people have been educated, taking as a dynamic reference specific that may cause imbalances between men and women, some prejudices, or can even be the cause of discrimination in different aspects that cause inequalities.

The participation of women worldwide in activities in various disciplines, careers and fields has increased throughout history. In spite of this, especially being more evident in some countries and cultures, participation in economic and social activities is still limited (Kuper, 2015)

4.1 Gender stereotypes and their relation to leadership

Personal judgments about leadership and aspirations impact intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Stereotypes incise gender roles and identity. These elements affect how leadership is perceived and the level of relevance in each person related to an individual's decision (Baker, 2014)

Gender stereotypes and social perceptions may influence expectations of leadership roles, including entrenched beliefs about the skills and characteristics that are considered "adequate or appropriate" for a leader, which may limit women's opportunities for leadership roles.

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Some social phenomenon has been studying gender and leadership; for example, the "glass ceiling" concept shows the invisible barrier limiting organisational growth above certain structural levels. Another concept is the "glass cliff effect", which considers that women are more likely to reach leadership positions in times of crisis or within weak organisations

where the probability of failure is high. These experiences and knowledge are associated with failing instead of increasing performance (Pinar, 2015).

Similarly, gender-based socialised roles influence people from an early age: young people and their aspirations can be affected by the message found in the environment or extremely discouraging given attributes, which can be stigmatising to specific roles, activities, or behaviours (Shapiro et al., 2015), where self-esteem, confidence, and perception of danger or fear can be affected, impacting leadership aspirations in a given gender (Boatwright and Egidio, 2003)

Although, indeed, a transition process is currently taking place in Mexico in relation to the visualisation of gender roles, according to studies such as “Expectations and gender stereotypes in the father and daughter relationship” (García et al. 2010), the construction of meanings about gender is complex and is affected by various factors in the context, such as economic and social conditions. Parents definitely have a relevant influence on the development of gender visualisation, where their identity and their visualisation of the conceptualisation of gender are part of the upbringing stereotypes that are present in daily actions and conform to the ideas that can be transmitted generation after generation, transmitting traditional models that display, consciously or unconsciously, the difference between men and women. Relevant education stereotypes impact aspects such as

autonomy and the idea of success in this gender, even when parents try to create professionals who give better education to women (Flores, 2011)

To better understand the impact of this idea, it is pertinent to delve deeper into the concept of gender and comprehend the expectations and roles related to leadership and the difference between both concepts of men and women.

Theories such as role congruence (Eagly and Karau, 2002) suggest that some gender-related personality traits may impact the perception and understanding of leadership. Gender becomes important because expected behaviour may differ depending on the person analysing or being analysed. The perception of leadership can be affected by finding congruence or incongruence in some personality traits.

The role assigned by society has a significant effect on gender expectations, but, at the same time, gender expectation has two relevant effects on the assigned roles. Considering that traits found in leaders are perceived differently depending on the gender of the leader being analysed or evaluated, a vision of androgynous leaders would seem improbable or unrealistic (Kim et al., 2012).

Linked to this concept, it is also important to consider that the construction of gender begins from past experiences. This construction is related to motivation and self-regulation throughout life.

Being gender the product of elements such as social influence and network, people in the environment contribute to the self-development of individuals. The environment can provide a change in society to structure the relationship between genders (Busser and Bandura, 1999).

Authentic leadership does not appear to be gender-neutral (Braun et al., 2018). Within organisations, socio- cognitive process impact women's advancement. Sex and gender identity are determinants of career aspirations. Studies with university students have shown how sex and gender can be relevant to aspirations and expectations of self-execution and the degree of achievement motivation, finding that aspirations and self-execution are lower in women than in men. (García – Ratamero, 2006)

Nonetheless, to develop competencies and build career capital that can give a network and provide emotional maturity, discrimination, prejudices, and stereotypes are relevant obstacles and impediments to creating opportunities for women (Arai et al., 2016). Systematic thinking in problem-solving and learning concepts need to be developed during leadership development.

Career capital can be developed from an early age, and formal studies, sports, artistic activities, student government, and debates, but increasing competencies and personality attributes must influence aspirations and expectations.

In addition, social and cultural aspects have created stereotypes that impact aspirations, self-perceptions of leadership abilities, styles, roles, or activities perceived as acceptable for women. Confidence and self-efficacy are affected too. In impacting the participation of female leadership, several aspects can affect the group structure; some elements are personal histories, life-related practices and past experiences, family background, team composition, gender discrimination, context and environment, and work; the group personality composition has a relevant effect on the emergence of leadership. (Eagly and Heilman, 2016).

Research on women as leaders has been an increasing interest. However, knowledge on the subject has not necessarily been reflected in the leadership positions that women occupy in countries like Mexico. A woman as president of the country is not possible in the mind of the majority, considering stereotypes and prejudices that remain in the cultural context. However, for the 2024 elections, two women are considered the main candidates for this position. This could bring an unprecedented paradigm shift to the country.

As mentioned above, gender stereotypes and women's experience change depending on the context; race, social class, and culture are part of the context that affect roles such as leadership roles. Therefore, social context and women's experiences as leaders play a critical role in leadership aspiration for women. Gender stereotypes will continue to impact behaviour for male and female roles. Achievement in typical roles plays a part in social expectations (Eagly and Heilman, 2016); socially, women and men have a different distribution of social roles.

Negative stereotypes affect self-efficacy and leadership (Hoyt, 2005). Without a doubt, this has important implications for perceptions of leadership. Although gender stereotypes vary across racial groups and these stereotypes threat can result in actions or behaviours that create vulnerability for people and impact concepts such as leadership self-efficacy (Hoyt and Blascovich, 2010, Hoyt and Murphy, 2016). The categorisation that results from this situation affects the reaction to women as a leader and can influence women's leadership opportunities.

Men and women leaders are compared according to leadership roles, but this comparison is influenced by stereotypical gender roles. Specific behaviours linked to gender, human female leaders with benevolent behaviours expect stereotypical female gender roles, so any behaviour that may go against this leads to adverse effects because people expect these preconceptions. Evaluation for effectivity and performance can be influenced if their

incongruence in the gender roles and have different effects on subordinates (Wang et al., 2013)

Contextual elements can modify the outcome of how groups perceive specific styles. These elements impact roles and expected behaviours. In recent years, gender differences and leadership styles have become one of the most studied research topics (Chaluvadi, 2015). It is still necessary to delve deeper into how gender stereotypes in specific contexts and how this invisible label generates different scenarios within the organisation.

Given the evidence, group members may believe that a woman is a good leader. However, good results for a woman may be evaluated as individual results but may not necessarily help a general conceptualisation of women's work. Member teams are not automatically convinced that the rest of female leadership is adequate compared to male leadership (Offerman, 1986)

Therefore, further analysis is still needed, considering that daily actions and symbols that reflect the perceptions that affect women in their leadership roles could inhibit the acceptance of such roles. It is necessary to broaden the different efforts to deepen the relationship between gender and leadership under the consideration that there are studies that propose a perspective that considers performance-related theories as a framework to

relate gender as an indirect determinant to leadership by impacting leadership processes in personal and interpersonal relationships. (Shen and Joseph, 2020)

Men and women have a significant impact on their aspirations as leaders (Fedi and Rollero, 2016). Stereotypes and prejudices towards women influence feelings, behaviours, emotions, and aspirations, being their personal and professional context is determining factor in the generation of experiences that allow them to develop experiences that strengthen their ability to adapt emotionality and increase their perception of motivation and self-efficacy to lead teams.

4.2 Leadership traits and their relationship to gender

Although some studies on gender stereotypes reflect few differences in the leadership behaviour of male and female managers under matching criteria, there is evidence that women show an interpersonal orientation and a democratic style more than men. (De la Rey, 2005). Women leaders act in a transformative way by developing leadership around cooperation. Women leaders act in a transformative way by developing leadership around cooperation, tending to solve problems through the use of intuition and rationality (Eagly and Carli, 2003).

Besides that, personal identity and the traits that define it impact the development of leadership identity, developing relationships that determine actions for leaders and

followers, generating influence on leaders' perceptions and their effectiveness (Van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2003). Identity, socialisation processes, and achievement experiences are relevant elements once analysing motivation, where gender gaps since early stages as the scholar period and moments of incentive mark the sensation of success and incentivize the participation of women in specific activities.

According to the research formulated by Deaconu and Rasca (2015), women show specific abilities such as the capacity to listen to people and the aptitude to develop relationships in an efficient way with partners and employees, in addition to receptivity towards others. Even though gentleness and orientation to reach goals are part of the skills linked to females, and even when expectations about people and themselves are high for women, high hopes in the familiar aspects represent a barrier that can complicate women's advance in career evolution, considering that family responsibilities are typically more than men's tasks, resulting in limited experiences in managerial roles. A few quantities of feminine role models that are successful cases and surrounded by stereotypes, organisational policies and rules generated from a male perspective affect current training, schedules, and possible promotions that impact gender discrimination. The inconsistency is that having characteristics such as kindness increases the likelihood of having a leadership role in men but harms women in leadership positions (Rollero and Fedi, 2014).

Previously, Eagly and Carli (2003) displayed relevant results about feminine leadership where women have an advantage in a typical leadership style in a masculine context; however, people may perceive women who demonstrate clear-cut leadership ability as unfeminine. At the same time, these authors showed in their investigation less effectiveness of women in holding leadership positions was male-dominated, less effective than men when the proportion of male subordinates increased and more effective than men in educational services, social services or governmental services. This investigation was performed considering middle-level leadership positions. All these arguments make it a necessity to increase the number of women in leadership positions; however, doing so is complex based on studies such as Smith (2002) that show evidence about causes to avoid leadership responsibilities due to familiar or domestic responsibilities pointing to the persistence of racial and gender disparity. Based on Smith's concepts, a discrepancy in race and gender demography in the workplace reflects the tendency of top authorities to reproduce exclusionary ideas.

In addition to this, research by Girdauskiene and Eyvazzade (2015) on the profile of effective female leadership, considering multicultural context, shows different ideas that people can adopt about gender and female leadership, reinforcing the idea previously posed that empathy and flexibility are characteristics that stand out from female leaders. As part of the aforementioned work, some feminine typecasts quoted from previous works mention aspects such as a woman likely to use transformational leadership or feminine preferences for interpersonal skills, these consistencies being with other researchers mentioned during

this work. Based on this information and contrasting this idea with the profile previously exposed for Mexican women, some of the characteristics that deploy women in Mexico could be strengths in a leadership role.

Nevertheless, even if the inference that women endowed with leadership enjoy attributes that make up a differentiating profile towards others, the implementation of internal management practices may improve the motivation of talented female employees to take leadership roles, where these practices can evidence the capacity of women to perform specific roles, by making this practices a way for accept new challenges. Based on research such as Porter et al. (2016), motivating people to take a leadership role depends on personal attributes plus perceived critical aspects of the work environment.

As additional information, the effect of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and their relationship to gender has been examined from different situations or stages of life; for instance, Basco and Ho (2016) observed the level of self-esteem, motivation, and anxiety in a group of English learners in a sample from a Korean university, looking for differences generated by gender, scholar year, or level of English ability or testing levels, finding significant differences with respect to self-esteem and anxiety within the gender analysis, where women showed a lower level for self-esteem accompanied by a higher level of anxiety with regards to men. Also, Aregu (2013) observed the effects of self-efficacy, and self-esteem relative to gender during the first year in the university in a university sample, finding

variations in gender difference on academic success, identifying that, in particular, on aspects such as language performance, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are determinants for speaking tasks, where gender seems to be correlated to the results in speaking tasks, where men showed better results.

The above examples can be joined with the idea posed by Aftab and Aslam (2014), considering gender standards for socially-constructed roles. Bias or prejudices, experiences, behaviours, actions, and characteristics of men and women are different by culture. The socially constructed roles impact the result and performance of people and are impacted by gender, and, notwithstanding, it is imprecise to deliver generalisations based on studies on small-scale research.

It is relevant to generate more in-depth studies to learn more about this variation in behaviours in countries such as Mexico to find out if the behaviour in other contexts in terms of self-esteem affects human resources, identifying the way in which social constructs affect relationships, the perception that is linked to self-efficacy or capability, the definition of success, confidence, leadership style among other things.

The expansion of studies that demonstrate significant differences between men and women in specific aspects of self-esteem could help to identify, according to the social context in which a person lives, those tasks in which people feel comfortable. The basis for

this argument can be found in studies such as the one presented in 2007 by Kundu and Rani, who analysed a sample of 1835 people comparing self-esteem in three attitudinal components: affect, cognition, and behaviour, comparing men and women on five different characteristics. The results showed that the male managers showed high levels of self-esteem, personality, performance, and emotional aspects; in the case of entrepreneurs, women were higher in persistence, conscientiousness, and comfort.

As a complement, self-esteem is associated, in other studies, with leadership preferences. As an example, in 2011, Schoel, Bluemke, Muller and Stahlberg analysed the impact of ambiguity on leadership preferences. People with high and firm self-esteem display preferences for the democratic leadership style under uncertain conditions compared to people with low and unstable self-esteem, who prefer the autocratic leadership style.

Causal agents can influence intrinsic motivation, such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982), self-worth (Covington, 2000), self-enhancement (Shrauger, 1975), self-affirmation (Steele, 1988), self-concordance (Sheldom and Eliot, 1999), self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970) derived from the determination of psychological and social elements. Instinctive and biological pressure reactions for the aspiring leader can be reduced because of the creation of models and social support during the establishment of leadership attributes (Garrin, 2014).

Considering the implication of consistency in the decision-making, understanding the rules that govern the environment for obtaining results can affect people's reactions to the leadership of men and women (De Cremer, 2003). Although investigations on this effect are relatively unexplored, the importance of this aspect is high because it definitively influences interpersonal relationships. Therefore, leadership styles consider that situational factors impact confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth, among others, previously mentioned.

Just as several studies focus on the relationship between leadership behaviour and self-esteem (Butler, 2008), there is a proven relationship between self-esteem and transformational leadership (Matzler et al., 2015). Significant relation exposes both of them, and innovation success and, even so, not all people have the predisposition to inspire, stimulate, and challenge followers by becoming a reference or role model and providing confidence. The identification of people with characteristics to enhance this task is of utmost importance, that is the importance of the detection of talent and, based on the arguments that link women with transformational leadership, more and more demanding in the organisations, hence the importance of not losing talent with this character regardless of gender.

Gender differences in transactional and transformational leadership have relevant implications for effective leadership; therefore, leadership style and team performance impact gender differences and promoting the incorporation of women into leadership roles

contributes to creating equal opportunities within private and public institutions. The specific components of transformational leadership used by women described by authors as Kelloway et al. (2003) demonstrate a relation within an influence that displays inspirational motivation, where intellectual stimulations and personal considerations are an advantage for women due to their communal nature (Eagly and Carli, 2003).

Female leadership represents a new type of leadership that requires effectiveness, collaboration, and synergy, building different role models and organisational practices. It is also relevant to consider that macro factors, such as the national culture and multicultural environment, and micro factors, such as at an organisational and individual level, conform to effective female leadership (Girdauskiene and Eyvazzade, 2015).

As part of the research focus on leadership training programmes, the evidence argues that training programs are not necessarily adequate for improving self-esteem and self-efficacy (Wong et al., 2012). Even when women may have the talent, as previously shown, factors such as culture, ethnicity, self-motivation, life experiences, and social roles can motivate or inhibit leadership aspirations. The gender perspective in Mexico refers to the conceptualisation of the differences between men and women and points out that the differences between them are not only in the biological context, where the differences are given by the culture assigned by individuals according to an individual perspective building from social identity within cultural assignments. The development of leaders is rising as a

business strategy, but not necessarily from the perspective of how investment in this development can measure investment or business impact by preventing the loss of female talent becomes complex from personal identity.

4.3 Female leadership in organisations

It has been discussed whether gender defines the leadership style or whether it is the result of organisational culture. Displaying leaders as a group of people with specific characteristics by trying to standardise profiles becomes complex from the personal identity; hence, the same concept of personal identity reflects those characteristics that differentiate the individual from the rest and make him or her unique. However, it would seem feasible to establish characteristics of followers recognised by followers as leaders, either implicitly or explicitly.

Some theories analyse the leader's behaviour and interactions with the followers; a different point of view also has been analysed on the social role of leaders within the organisations. A further approach is contemplated by situational theories that refer to leaders adopting different leadership styles bestowing to the level of development of the team members or by attributions that followers give to the leader by what is perceived of him or her.

A significant amount of research and literature has been published on people's schemas in identifying and classifying others as leaders. Implicit leadership theories consider the personal assumptions about the traits and abilities followers expect of the ideal leader (Epitropaki and Martin, 2004; Graves, 1982; Nichols, 2008; Rydberg, 2016). Based on the ideas put forward, it has been suggested that previous works have shown that women tend to develop a leadership style congruent with female stereotypes when they work in companies related to areas traditionally associated with women, such as education or the cosmetic industry (Lupano and Castro, 2011).

People who lead increase the motivation, engagement, and satisfaction of followers via personal and social identification with the team. However, leadership cannot be studied as something abstract or as an isolated phenomenon, considering that there are no leaders without followers. This relationship makes it necessary to visualise the leaders considering the social identity that allows them to influence others; it is within this perspective that people can lead and be led (Epitropaki et al., 2017). The focus on social identity in leadership has moved away from an emphasis on prototyping to considering other aspects of leaders' identity management. Leaders create and embody a shared social identity and represent it (Steffens et al., 2014).

To this effect, some studies argue that gender characteristics within the organisational context influence some of the leadership styles adopted by men and women in conjunction

with variables such as the sex of the leader and the sex of the subordinate evaluating the leader (Cuadrado et al., 2004). Other studies on applied leadership have sought to understand implicit leadership even from childhood, showing that positive implicit follow-up theories have relevant repercussions on the outcomes shown in the workplace (Epitropaki et al., 2013), confirming the relevance of social identity between leaders and followers.

The mapping of literature has flourished by creating analyses of leaders at various levels, such as the individual, relational, and collective, as well as generating analysis for followers (Epitropaki et al., 2017) as a result of this investigation on the identity of leaders and followers that identity can be visualising as static. It is affected by the interaction between them, affecting from an interpersonal and group perspective, enabling the approach that it is possible to develop different identities to create variations in their power influence (Yeo, 2020).

Nevertheless, the leader represents the attributes and qualities that characterise groups and differentiate themselves from others (Reicher et al., 2018); the antecedents and theories of leadership require detailed and careful examination because, particularly in the recent decade, there has been a lot of information and assumptions from researchers that reinforce the idea that leadership style often reflects the context in which it is executing. The association of leadership with genetic code is small, so the suggestion that specific

environmental factors can help develop leadership skills is latent (De Neve, 2013); the idea that "a leader is born and not made" seems to be unsupported. Thus, based on the above assumptions, and taking into account the classification proposed by Gómez Rada in 2002 that summarises the theories of leadership related to personal characteristics, it is possible to consider that there is a link with the surrounding context taking great relevance in the development of leaders within organisations. It can be modified through interactions with different people or groups, considering that members of a group have expectations or assumptions that are not necessarily verbalising about the personal characteristics, qualities, or traits that are, in their opinion, essential for a leader. The unbalanced participation of men and women in senior management positions is mainly due to female stereotypes, contrary to the accepted leadership roles of most cultures (Contreras et al., 2012), impacting these expectations.

Additional to discussing the theories that focus on the leader's behaviour and interaction with followers, it is necessary to mention two types of leadership considered by Bass (1998), known as transformational and transactional. The theory expresses that women's transformational leadership style focuses on social relationships and has been traditionally gender-stereotyped with aesthetics, emotions, and personal relationships (Caceres et al., 2015). Transformational leadership can build commitment to organisational goals and empower followers to achieve, motivating people to do more and exceed previous results by raising the level of awareness and importance of the outcomes, getting from people the transcendence of the team and the organisation rather than the individual results by

touching the needs and desires (Miner, 2007). It is also positively related to the working committee of subordinates (Ding et al., 2017), the sociology of charisma (Weber, 1946), and the Charisma leadership theory (House, 1976) as relevant antecedents for this theory.

In this leadership style, social identity plays an essential role in empowering followers to identify with the leader the characteristics and objectives of the group that are similar to them, and the change of the motivation in followers converting self-interest into a collective interest can be the essence of charismatic and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). The effectiveness of charismatic and transformational leadership has their origin in effect on follower identification with the collective (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

Evidence suggests that female managers have been linked to the transformational leadership style, which has a positive impact on the individual, group, and organisational performance (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Although some natural traits of women provide them with this type of leadership, empowerment is necessary within individual development to maintain female talent within organisations considering that the transformational leadership style gives a vision that considers changing the status quo by appealing to idealism, encouraging and stimulating people.

However, it is necessary to understand whether this occurs due to personal identity. It is assumed that leaders have excellent abilities to lead, manage, and motivate others,

providing them with specific characteristics, such as charisma, without considering other situational elements.

From a situational leadership theory, leadership is proposed to understand the situation and the specific responses. This theory has been classified as a behavioural theory by authors such as Bass in 2008. In addition, Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory focuses on the interactions of the leader's behaviour and follower maturity level to limited leader effectiveness and the leadership's effect on followers where, to understand leadership, it is necessary to devise theories of the psychological processes that interpret leader behaviour in relation to follower actions.

When comparing these theories, while it is necessary to have specific profiles and competencies for leaders, these profiles cannot be generalised to all leaders, as the different prototypes are different for men and women (Lupano and Castro, 2011). It is necessary to consider the situational factors because, sometimes, existing talent within organisations is ignored due to age, race, and gender, among other limitations created by different factors.

According to Cloud (2010), the personal qualities required by employees who become leaders can have the ability to listen rather than talk, a high degree of emotional intelligence, the capability to share a vision, support and influence the team, being modest

and recognised in their positions as a boss by the collaborators. Men and women alike could develop such characteristics in order to guide and aid team members. However, some studies have shown that elements of charismatic and transformational leadership are positively linked to a leader's affinity (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Prototypes and biases influence this affinity, so men and women may be perceived differently by these archetypes.

4.4 Gender and cultural impact

In the workplace, the difference between men and women results from multiple and invisible barriers, where gender and structures from a cultural view promote men in leadership positions (Baker, 2014), resulting in masculine standards with gendered leadership characteristics and values. Usually, the most valued leadership characteristics are related to masculine traits (Koenig et al., 2011), and female role models can necessarily occupy an important place to compensate for this and protect women from the pressure of acquiring masculine characteristics by not finding female counterweights to gender, thus affecting their identity in leadership roles. Although gender stereotypes of leaders are changing, many factors that affect expectations reside at situational levels; some of the factors that may accentuate the difference for women concerning leadership can be a numerical minority, cultural signals, or a male environment (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016).

On the other hand, gendered responsibilities within a family are too limited against women and occupy representation in management. The conservation of ideas linking women with a primary function as responsible for the assigned family culturally builds negative attitudes of male colleagues against women due to the confrontation with conflicts between work and family compatibility, reducing the motivation to engage in activities such as team leader to avoid these fights. A strong patriarchal culture in the work environment reduces women's motivation to lead, as women seek to be consistent with the environment and traditional roles (Sumarto and Permanasari, 2013).

Even researchers study how leadership style differs from male to female: authors like Eagly (2013) have studied in depth the difference that could be considered insignificant; however, there is evidence that leadership styles are highly situational, and these leadership styles obey internal and external elements around the groups' environment (Chaluvadi, 2015). Rather than looking for differences, the integration of feminine and masculine behaviours in an androgynous leadership style can be more appropriate to achieve better results within organisations and better performance for leaders, but this is difficult because the meaning of leadership differs across cultures. In 2012, Dickinson and a group of authors carried out a literature review on the relationship between cultural dimensions and leadership, taking as a reference the five cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede (2011) above, reinforcing the idea that leadership varies across cultures and, although these variations are different across industries. The impact of culture is significant and is present in how leaders emerge and how this leader can be identified as a reference. Gender differences can help to

understand expectancy patterns constituted by what is believed to be possible or impossible to obtain, levels of concern or anxiety about success, and difficulties in overcoming adverse situations, frustration, or pains through learned vulnerability as aspects that may suppress female success. (Meece et al., 2006).

Additional to this, studies such as the one conducted by Castaño et al. (2015) mentioned how Latin American leadership attributes are linked to autocratic and paternalist relationships, wherein the family background is a fundamental piece and determinant for social respect, existing at a high level of importance for personal relations as a way to find the protection, where people are evasive with the conflict. As part of this study, leadership based on charisma includes relevant elements for leaders to inspire and anticipate giving vision and future orientation to centralised traditions related to government and religion. In this study, historical origins mention relevant elements; a fundamental root is the named "patrón": a concept within Latin American leadership that has generated a centralisation of authority.

4 Being a woman in Mexico

In Mexico, a significant part of the female population does not join the labour market due to the role that is expected of them within the family. This is consistent with previous research such as conducted by Dildar in 2015 for developing countries, which tended to

take on activities that could be part-time or informal in order to generate income to achieve a balance between family obligations and personal needs.

Cruz et al. (2013) define the personality of Mexicans according to different studies reviewed, mentioning some of the characteristics of Mexicans as hard-working, cheerful, supportive, macho, drunken, lazy but intelligent, patriotic, conformist, proud, ingenious, creative, with a taste for parties.

The urban context of a society in Mexico analysed through studies such as Mandujano-Salazar (2019) that compared Mexico with Japan, in a limited way, provide information on traditional gender roles that significantly impact adult identity, with men in a patriarchal role, economically independent, with self-sufficiency and responsibility as providers. At the same time, women show that becoming mothers in adulthood constitutes unhappiness, thus, the role of the caregiver as mother and wife, with implications of sacrifice and dependence on the decision of others.

Previous studies, such as the one conducted by Ortiz and Kumara in 2017, suggest that many of the levels of support given for gender equality are different for working women and those that are homemakers. Differences such as women's age and education are considered relevant because it would seem that there are more barriers for older women, married or children, and with more education, there is greater exposure to ideas about gender

equality. Even in comparison with countries in the Americas considered economically emerging, such as Brazil, a lower involvement of women in the labour market has been identified, which confirms Mexican society as a patriarchal society due to the status traditionally given to women as producers and caretakers of family members. (Cacciamali and Tatei, 2013)

In a context where the maternal figures are impregnated with stereotypes related to childcare that require even personal sacrifices, under a context of lack of education for women, it becomes evident that such beliefs detrimentally support women's development promoting even, in some cases, the lack of male responsibility (Cerruti, 2000).

Cultural studies associate Mexican culture with a belief in external control of things with an emphasis on mutual obligations of family and friends, having an important impact on the responsibility that these groups place on the Mexican in terms of the importance they place on the expectations, desires, and welfare of the family. (Mirowsky and Ross, 1984)

The economic role of women has been studied for decades; the change in the dynamic of Mexican couples was analysed in 2000 by Cerruti and Zenteno, showing that the change in the dynamic of couples seemed to be more the product of a complex economic situation than the result of a change in culture towards real conditions of equality for women.

The issue of women in Mexico has been addressed by previous studies showing the inequality the gender faces in different areas. In 2013, Moctezuma et al. published the document *Women in Mexico, inequity, poverty, and violence*, by shedding light on some statistics that show the reality of Mexican women.

Reality confirms that the structures of discrimination and exclusion that have historically accompanied women's lives are not easy to eradicate. These practices impede the recognition and full exercise of women's rights, especially in rural and indigenous areas. Women spend more time than men in unpaid work. The Demographic Retrospective Survey 2017 (EDER) reveals that domestic work across generations is borne by women.

For a long time in Mexican culture, masculine stereotypes have characterized men as providers of the household, heads of the family and, to a certain extent, decision-makers. Consequently, when productive work is considered the responsibility of men, it gives them a position of control by managing economic and technological resources, granting them power in public and private contexts. In contrast, the work performed by women at home becomes invisible and is socially and economically valued little or not at all.

While detailing the effects of the pandemic on the country's demographics, according to statistics shown by INEGI and the National Institute of Women in 2019, Mexico ended 2018 with a population of 124.9 million people, where women are 51.1%, and men are 48.9%.

Women's presence in schools and in labour, the market has increased significantly in recent decades, especially in the productive and service sectors. According to this report, in 2019, women represented just under 44.9 % of the economically active population.

The following statistic on the employment of men and women may be relevant to help clarify the current context of women in the country.

Socioeconomic selection of employed women and men (Second quarter of 2019)

Concept	Women	Men
Level of education		
Incomplete elementary school	9.1	11.2
Completed elementary school	15.5	17.7
Completed Secondary school	34.1	34.7
High school and above	41.3	36.5

Occupancy groups		
Merchants	25.4	13.3
Personal service workers	22.8	9.2
Industrial workers, artisans, and helpers	18.2	31
Office workers	11.9	6
Professionals, technicians, and art workers	10.6	9.6
Educational workers	5.5	2.1
Agricultural and livestock workers	3.4	17.8
Other occupation groups*	2.1	10.9

* Includes officers and managers, protection and surveillance workers and transportation operators.

Position in the occupation	Women	Men
Subordinate and salaried workers	67	68.8
Self-employed workers	24	21.9
Unpaid workers	6.6	3.1
Employers	2.4	6.2

Level of income	Women	Men	
Up to two minimum wages	59.1	47.1	
More than two up to 5 minimum wages	19.5	30.4	
More than five minimum wages	2.4	3.9	
No income *	6.7	5.3	

** Includes the unpaid working population and those who only receive non-monetary income (self - consumption)*

Length of the working day	Women	Men
Less than 40 hours	41.8	24.1
From 40 to 56 hours	45.4	55.3
More than 56 hours	9.2	17.5
The temporary absence from the employment relationship	2.9	2.1

Source:

INEGI Encuesta Nacional de ocupación y empleo INEGI

Tabuladores básicos in www.inegi.org.mx

This statistic is congruent with the UN Women, mentioning some of the causes that explain the difference between men's and women's salaries, such as part-time work. In these statistics, the percentage of women working part-time is higher comparing with the percentage of men working part-time. In many cases, women reduce their working hours due to their role as mothers, which impacts their income as a consequence.

Statistics also confirm that socially less valued jobs are strongly linked to women. These jobs are usually associated with caring for someone because society perceives that jobs that involve love and dedication are related to women. Still, these jobs are not linked to high wages.

In the same report, eleven out of every one hundred heterosexual marriages registered in 2017 had a woman under the age of 20. These statistics show the negative consequences that early marriages can have on women's and girls' lives. Some of these consequences include fewer opportunities of receiving an education, separation from education, separation from the social and family nucleus, teenage pregnancy, increased health risks, and the violation of the effective exercise of the human rights of girls and adolescents.

The participation of women in the total population registered to vote reveals that in 29 states, the percentage of women exceeds the percentage of men. The rate of women exceeds 50.0%.

Gender differences showed that in 28 of the 32 states, women outnumbered men. In recent years, the population's life expectancy has risen, mainly due to a decrease in the infant mortality rate. Although the life expectancy of men has increased, the life expectancy of women is still higher, which brings an important moment for women towards the last period of their lives in terms of economic and health issues.

The overall community rate in 2018 considered at the national level during her reproductive lifetime, the average number of children (sons or daughters) a woman will have to be 2.2, varying by age group.

According to 2017 data from the National Household Survey, 90.6% of girls and 90.5% of boys between 3 to 14 years attend school; however, in 20 states, female school attendance exceeded male attendance.

In 2017 the female secondary education rate was slightly higher than the male rate; however, when analysing higher education, the male rate appeared to be higher than the female rate, although this situation has been changing in recent years.

The presence of women in universities has not been sufficient to gain more positions at the highest levels of organisations. Although education, commerce and services are occupied by women, the industrial sectors still fail to achieve equity in the number of men and women.

The statistics on part-time or flexible jobs are an option for combining work and family activities due to the role expectations that society has for women.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Mexico have disproportionately affected women. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), the number of unemployed women increased by 56% between March 2020 and January 2021. In addition, the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES) reports that the increase in unpaid domestic work has mainly affected women, as they assume the majority of family care. These numbers reflect the need to promote gender equality in Mexico to reduce gender inequality and ensure women's economic security.

4.1 The "patrón" and its link with the leadership

Being Mexico part of Latin America, Mexican culture is a mixture of traditions: a consequence of a rich history where family roots, religion, friendship, and economic differences within society, in conjunction with other factors, offer to the organisational environment different elements that provide the basis for a cultural context that has an impact on the development of leadership identity. In the case of Mexico, the aforementioned study generated by Dickinson and his group of researchers refers to the analysis between different countries carried out by Dorfman et al. in 1997, pointing out attributes and styles accepted by Mexican leaders.

Some consider universal leadership based on the charisma that supports and uses rewards with followers and others more related to culture as a directive style, participatory, and conditional punishment.

The concept of patrón has been mentioned as an essential piece for the description of Mexican leadership (Riding, 1985, Dorfman, 1997), linking a relative perception of omnipotence to the idea of leaders in this country generating a solid relationship between superiors and subordinates that prevails in our days, developing a deep dependence and loyalty that affects the value system by being incorporated in people's behaviour.

The conceptualisation of authoritarian leadership based on the idea emanates from concepts such as patrón and impacts on subordination-oriented behaviours, where the visualisation of followers with autonomy and independence is unsuccessful. Under this scenario, decision-making is a task for the leaders, and the inclusion of employees or followers in the decision-making process is unexpected, misperceived, or misunderstood.

Castaño et al. (2015) described the role of the leader as a figure with respect for and from followers, giving an elementary level to good interpersonal relations, where authority and hierarchy are essential aspects, with high power distance within the relation between leaders and subordinates. For Mexicans, dishonesty, aggression, and risk-taking are aspects that affect the perception of effectiveness.

In addition, leadership style in Latin America considers a balance between individual and economic perspectives where social relations impact social promises. Specifically, in Mexico, the sense of community has been entrenched since pre-Hispanic times, where the sense of community emerged from the colonisation process, and the hierarchical relationship dates to colonial times. Therefore, Mexican managers can accept the consensus, the idea of equality and can work in collaboration, but revert to hierarchy in decision-making (Davila and Elvira, 2012)

According to Avolio et al., 2009, situational factors enhance leadership, but they can also neutralise or substitute it; that is why situational factors are crucial for leadership theories. Axtle (2009) wrote about how aspects such as geographic regions, industry segments or size of organisations have statistical significance as factors determining the mass of intellectual capital.

Within the socio-cultural context, the term “patrón” may be associated with machismo in certain circumstances. It may evoke the idea of a leader or boss, in some situations, this authority figures may be associated with attitudes that reinforce male supremacy. In some Mexican environments where machismo is prevalent, the concept may be used to perpetuate traditional gender roles, where men are expected to exercise power and authority over women.

Men often occupy leadership and decision-making positions, while women may face barriers to accessing roles of authority and leadership.

It is important to note that this relationship between the concept of “patrón” and gender inequity is not universal and may vary depending on cultural context and individual attitudes. However, in certain environments where traditional gender roles persist, the concept of “patrón” may be associated with power imbalances based on gender.

The analyses of the interviews identifies several elements of machismo, including gender stereotypes and social expectations that limit leadership opportunities for women and create perceived barriers to their professional development.

Additionally, women are often perceived as the weaker sex and are expected to be caregivers, which can further limit their ability to take on leadership roles. Violence and discrimination against women in Mexico may reflect the prevalence of machismo in society.

Additionally, the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe is often viewed as imposing and respected, which may contribute to the perception of women with similar characteristics.

The interviews stand out the influence of machismo on gender roles and perceived barriers to women’s leadership in Mexico. It also acknowledges the existence of violence and discrimination against women in society.

4.2 The figure of the Virgin Mary in Mexico and its impact on the female role

Women's economic, political, and scientific spheres vary considerably; cultural elements can explain this variation. In Mexico, the presence of a culture of "machismo" is linked with the performance of masculinity, and the "marianismo" is linked with the idea of self-sacrifice stemming from the figure of the Virgin Mary with women affect professional life (Englander et al. 2012). Machismo involves disdainful behaviours towards women that are seen, as usual, having. As a result, an effect on aspects such as a lack of women in leadership positions. According to a press release issued, INEGI (National System of Statistical and Geographical Information in Mexico) showing statistics for the international day for the elimination of violence against women in November 2019, 66% of women have faced violence of any kind, and by any aggressor at some point in their lives. The normalisation of behaviours under machismo and marianismo affects different scenarios, one of them being the workplace.

Consequently, examining the family context is also vital for the analysis of women's participation in economic aspects because of the role that they have with the family as a central axis of family stability. In February 2011, Gauss and Lexia presented the results of a survey of 1,749 people, which found that 81 out of 100 Mexicans consider that if a family is doing well, the benefit of the country comes later and state that they would do anything to benefit their family even if that would mean damaging Mexico. Based on this thinking, many

women's priority is vigorously conditioned by the role they are expected to take within the family context in a combination of sacrifice and macho thinking.

In its majority, the Mexican population is a mixture of different races and several in American continents; as a relevant symbol of these roots, the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe represents a national symbol that has been deeply worshipped by the population for centuries (Hernandez, 2003). The figure of the Virgen of Guadalupe is loved by Mexican and Mexican-American Catholics and has a critical formative role in shaping the theological and social imagination, intervening in the gender dynamics through the use of this figure by important Catholic figures such as John Paul II (Grimes, 2016) the figure of the virgin being understood for its importance within critical social movements, (Bantijes, 2014) the providential vision of Guadalupe during essential movements in history such as Independence movements, the revolution, the Cristero War, and even as an image in political movements (Arnal, 2010).

The impact of the Virgin figure within Mexican culture is evident in everyday aspects. Many women in Mexico bear the name "María" (Mary in English), and another critical number of other people, both men and women, bear the name of Guadalupe. According to Mexican traditions, the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared on December 12, 1531, to an indigenous named Juan Diego. The image of the Virgin with brown skin has generated special identification among Mexican because of the affinity of her physiognomy with the Mexican

population. From its iconography, the religious figure has been studied for its relationship with the Mexican identity; its importance in everyday life of Mexicans is not only a matter of faith.

Despite the broad discussion about the role that religion should occupy within the Mexican context generated by different governments throughout history and the legal status that the churches had before the Mexican State, the Mexican people have had an important influence on the clergy and Catholicism. According to Gabriela Díaz (2018), the inclusion of devotional images of the church has been continuous, where the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Mexico emphasised Mary's mission to save the world from the error of all times by emphasising the "Marian" presence by visually and doctrinally linking the Marian images of the most significant devotional tradition in the country with the religious image about the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

The Catholic religion has played an important role in Mexican culture since colonial times. The central tenets of the Catholic religion in Mexico include the worship of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a symbol of faith and hope, devotion to family and community, the importance of religion as a moral guide, respect for life and nature, and belief in life after death. These principles form the basis of Mexican culture and are reflected in its art, music, literature and traditions.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is one of the prominent figures of Marianism, a devotion to the Virgin Mary as Mother of God. The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe dates back to 1531 when the apparition of the Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Juan Diego in Mexico. Since then, the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe has become an important symbol of the Catholic faith in Latin America. Marianism is reflected in devotion to the Virgin Mary as Mother of God, and the Virgin of Guadalupe is a central figure of this devotion.

5 Ambivalent sexism.

Ambivalent sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1996) has many consequences. Fedi and Rollero (2016) studied the effect of ambivalent sexism on predicting oneself as a leader, finding that self-esteem in men and in women had a significant main effect on leadership aspirations, even though sexism was not recognised as a form of prejudice. Under conditions of sexism, women with the ambition of leadership roles mark negative stereotypes and biases, which can influence their feelings, emotions, behaviours, opinions, ambitions, and aspirations.

According to ambivalent sexism theory, there are specific factors that structure the relationship among men and women in societies that, according to Glick and Fisk (2011), create hostile and benevolent attitudes toward the other sex. Examples include patriarchy. In contrast, men confer more power than women, differentiating traits and social roles conferring gender differentiation.

Sexist attitudes in samples of Mexican American adults (Pearson, 2009) showed how the level of education as a predictor influencing the negative relationship between low-income level and the confirmation of ambivalent sexism toward women, and years of employment had no impact on ambivalent sexism confirmation towards either gender unless an individual was highly religious.

The legitimisation of gendered benevolent behaviours can have a more significant impact than hostility itself on aspects such as motivation to lead (Rollero and Fedi, 2014); that is, in a specific context, the prejudice of hostility is explicit in concepts such the “machismo” due to its hostile connotation within a culture. However, some concepts related to the kindness of women's actions have a harmful impact, as these stereotypes are more related to signs of weakness than to differentiating competencies linked with gender-specific strengths.

Concepts such as ambivalent sexism (Burns and Busso, 2005) perpetuate the roles expected of women and develop an identity in Mexican women leaders in which self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy are linked to roles predefined by society and reinforced through the social cognitive process.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research considers the planning and management of resources necessary for collecting the required information in a coherent manner and in a sequence that manages to respond to the stated objectives.

The elements considered within the segments of this chapter are the methodological selection, the description of the profile of the participants, the materials and instruments used, the description of the variables used, the procedure and analysis of the information collected, the ontological and epistemological debate, the restrictive and limiting conditions of the research, ethical consideration, and information treatment.

Discussion on the methodological approach

This document considers expanding the information to produce future theories according to the elements generated from this study. It is not considered a direct application to the resolution of any problem.

With the intention of achieving the study's objective and analyses context, particularly the methodological perspective with which this design was chosen, both a quantitative (Leman, 2010) and a qualitative design Long and Johnson, 2000) were explored, with the

understanding that, if the design is misconceived, the product of this design will impact the result and validity of this; at the same time, with complete awareness that the information obtained based on the research design may vary according to the chosen strategy.

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Both approaches contemplate similar phases of observation and evaluation of phenomena that may be appropriate as a research paradigm; however, human behaviour cannot be understood without references to the meanings and purposes humans provide to their activities, so qualitative data can provide valuable insight into these behaviours (Guba and Lincoln, 2002) as well as the establishment of assumptions that follow such process of observation and evaluation. Proving and demonstrating that the ideas or beliefs have a basis, revising these ideas or assumptions based on the analysis, and proposing new ways of looking at or evaluating the phenomenon in order to clarify or substantiate the arguments that have been evaluated differently (Vega et al. 2014) was part of the analysis for the choice of research methodology.

The following summarises the main paradigms of both approaches presented by Vega and a group of researchers.

Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach
Analyse data collection to answer research questions and test hypotheses.	Used to discover and clarify research questions.
Based on the numerical measurement and uses statistics to establish patterns and behaviours.	Based on data collection methods without numerical measurements such as description and observation, flexible and moves between events and interpretations.
Based on a deductive and logical scheme and aims to generalise data using representative samples. It is based on the numerical measurement and uses statistics to establish patterns and behaviours.	Based on an inductive scheme to reconstruct reality. It does not intend to generalise data.
Based on an idea, research questions are generated.	These are conducted by significant areas or themes.

Hypotheses emanate from the research questions, generating a strategy to prove or disprove these hypotheses.	Research questions can be developed before, during, or after data collection.
Variables within a given context measure and define variables.	The emphasis is on understanding the phenomenon rather than measuring the variables.
Statistical methods analyse the measurements.	The methods used are not intended to measure or associate measurements with numbers.
Conclusions are generated based on the hypotheses.	The research is conducted in natural environments where those involved behave as they do in their daily lives.
Hypotheses are tested through research designs. Data collection and analysis generate information based on logical rules utilising experiments, surveys, or authorized measurement elements.	Ordinary events and everyday activities are observed using research techniques and social skills in a flexible way.

Table based on the concepts presented by Vega et al. 2014

Based on the characteristics of each of the methodologies, the qualitative methodology was chosen for this study.

The qualitative approach originated with Max Weber (1864 - 1920), who recognised the description and measurement of social variables where subjective meanings and the context in which the phenomenon occurs are relevant. The theoretical, methodological, and epistemic foundations of qualitative research are based on the trends that emerged with greater force through the second half of the XX century.

Some authors who promote qualitative methodology in research are Howard Becker (1998) who emphasises the importance of understanding the meanings primary the phenomena studied, John Creswell (2007) who stresses the flexibility of the methodology to adapt to specific contexts, and Robert Stake (2010) who emphasises the value of collecting rich and deep data to better understand the human experience.

More authors who push for qualitative methodology include Uwe Flick (2018) who stresses the weight of interaction between individuals to better understand the issues studied, Kathy Charmaz (2014) who emphasises the need to develop deeper theories and explanations, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2006) who stress the relevance of collecting rich and deep data to better understand the issues studied.

On the other hand, Jean Lave and Steinar Kvale (1995) emphasise too the prominence of understanding the meanings underlying the phenomena studied and Michael Quinn Patton

(2002) is an author who promotes qualitative methodology in research, stressing the need to develop deeper explanations of the issues studied.

Qualitative research offers an in-depth and detailed perspective, it is flexible and allows researchers to adapt their approach as needed, providing a framework for understanding social interaction between individuals by offering the possibility of collecting rich and in-depth data and allowing researchers to create models of behaviour that explain the results of the studies.

According to the definition of Taylor and Bogdan (1984), the objective of qualitative research is to provide a research methodology that allows an understanding of the complex world of lived experiences from the perspective of people who live it. Qualitative studies are focused on subjects from within the phenomenon to be studied through inquiry in which the researcher, through interaction with the participants, seeks to answer some questions based on the subject's experiences and the meaning that each person gives to that experience.

Based on the idea of Taylor and Bogdan (1984), the qualitative methodology offers the opportunity to understand lived experiences by considering people's points of view. Depending on the depth of the analysis, it is possible to design descriptive or interpretative studies.

In qualitative research, each subject is influenced by their social relations, which means that reality requires an analysis of these subjects' way of thinking, living, and feeling in order to be understood (Long and Johnson, 2000).

The construction of knowledge depends on concepts that seek to understand the reality where scientific processes are affected by the ideas of human beings according to their environment, where they are participating, and their relationship with others (James and Busher, 2009). The theoretical framework considers the scope of the research; according to Eisner (1998), there are characteristics within qualitative studies that contribute differently. These elements tend to focus on what they require in the natural and everyday context of events; the self as an instrument by considering the researcher as the principle of the measuring instrument in their participation in the research.

Medina Bermudez (2001) used Kuhn's definition to recall the meaning of a paradigm as a set of its interrelated positions regarding the social world, providing a philosophical framework for studies orientating a researcher to establish appropriate criteria for the appropriate use of tools that provide epistemology.

Within the qualitative research approach, it is based on open lines focusing on the natural environment as an important part where the meaning is extracted from the data in a

relevant way. It is not based on statistics; some of the benefits of this approach in the interpretative richness include the possibility of deepening meanings, extensiveness, and contextualisation of the phenomenon. This approach can be developed through the recurrent inductive process by analysing multiple subjective realities that do not have a direct sequence. Generally, the inductive method associates with qualitative research, while the deductive method is frequently related to quantitative research. (Fernández and Díaz, 2002)

The richness of qualitative studies does not represent a rivalry with quantitative studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, Sandelowski, 2010) neither for the understanding, analysing, and construction of valuable and reliable knowledge. A rigour within the research is possible to gather information and provide meaning to it based on previous conceptualisations and added findings that could be discussed and generate data that can answer concerns or generate new positions. There is the possibility of developing a study that allows going beyond the unlimited data by approximation. The increase of qualitative research is based on the benefits that this method recognises the role of the researcher as an important factor in deciding on an approach and understanding the information gathered by allowing different people to express their points of view in an open way to know in greater depth some perspectives that make up different social groups that allow a better understanding of the way of being in society (Balderas, 2013).

On the other hand, some of the typical qualitative studies have been shown by various authors from different perspectives or fields (Easter, 2016, Harding, 2018, Fargier and Guillaume, 2020). Qualitative research is a multi-method process of data collection, including linguistic symbols, verbal communication stories and texts, to understand processes aiming to achieve descriptions that reflect real-life concepts and behaviours. There are four paradigms within qualitative research: positivism, interpretivism critical as post-modern, qualitative positivism, and current scientific interpretivism. These could be considered paradigms that can produce scientific knowledge (Gephart Jr., R. 2018).

In summary, a qualitative study was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of the issues studied as well as collect rich and deep data allowing exploration of the underlying factors influencing the issues studied by providing a better understanding of the social interaction between individuals, offering the possibility of developing deeper theories and explanations of the issues studied with greater flexibility and allowing the approach to be adapted as needed, letting to understand the human experience from a deep perspective and providing a framework for understanding the meaning of the phenomena studied.

Qualitative analysis of the Mexican context of women provides a deeper understanding of the social interaction between genders and offers a unique and detailed perspective on

gender equality issues by allowing to explore the basic factors that influence gender discrimination.

It also helps to better understand the experience of Mexican women and provides a framework for understanding gender inequality in Mexico by having the possibility to collect rich and in-depth data on the topic allowing researchers to develop deeper theories and explanations of the situation of women in Mexico with flexibility and allowing the research to adapt its focus as needed.

Considering the research objectives, a first starting point for the development of the research methodology was an exploratory qualitative research since its application in situations where little is known about the investigated phenomenon is pertinent on uncovering new insights and knowledge and this kind of research has proven to be suitable for studying issues that can be understood by making sense of people's perspectives and lived experiences (Shakespeare, 2019) .

Since the information provided by the interviewees, the information obtained was analysed to generate new elements to be considered within the study, seeing that the experiences of the interviewees as well as the background of the researcher could provide information that would support new lines of research.

For this research, it was worked on a systematic design that would allow us to generate valid and reliable results in response to the research objectives. The data collection and interpretation were designed to create conclusions by identifying relevant data sources, the sampling design, and the way of collecting the information and the method of analysing the data (Devers and Frankel, 2000).

The Annexes section provides an overview of the analysis of the main concepts evaluated for the selection of the methodology.

Description of the profile of the participants

Within qualitative research practices, considering that existing social narratives or discourses are not so diverse (Mena 2017), this research contemplates the study of the meaning of leadership and its relationship with the expected role of women within Mexican culture.

It would be complex to generalise relevant elements of the phenomenon. Qualitative methodology was chosen under the idea that measuring or testing a hypothesis would not be within the intention of this research, but rather, the purpose of this research would be to identify as many relevant elements as possible. Based on the premise of qualitative research and considering the phenomenon as a whole, this methodology represents a holistic perspective where the validity of this study lies in proximity to the empirical reality

provided by the methodology, with flexibility allowing the incorporation of unforeseen findings.

This research looks at the essence of the projected role in this country of females and its impact on identity development leaders. Therefore, the adoption of a phenomenological approach that identifies the internal reference frame of the interviewed women and identifies the reference background is deemed pertinent, which is why a qualitative methodology through a phenomenological approach that permits the identification of the reference framework was planned.

The definition of the most appropriate methodology for the generation of relevant information to expand knowledge within the human and social sciences represents an exciting challenge for epistemology (Aguirre and Jaramillo, 2015). There is a debate as to whether qualitative methodology through a systematic investigation of observable phenomena can be considered as an option to generate objective research that can reflect what participants think or feel or whether the qualitative methodology can be sufficiently objective, coherent, credible and whether the interpretation of data beyond statistics can generate reliable information.

This research analysed in depth the narratives of Mexican women starting from their relationship with the contemporary context by analysing and interpreting their perception

of the different events within the lived context; after having analysed the different designs through a bibliographic review in a systemic way, the methodological strategy has been proposed for this thesis within a qualitative approach through the development of a qualitative methodological approach through a phenomenological model design.

The definition of the questions contained in the interview was the result of a bibliographic analysis as a basis for the development of the first guide using informal negotiation during the application to provide flexibility to the participants, considering that it is vital to grant interviewees the opportunity to expand their comments and listen to the participants as they discuss their perspective on the perceived reality.

The analysis of the data posed a challenge since the selected methodology did not formulate an initial hypothesis. The starting point was a group of initial questions linked to the social phenomenon studied, generating, through the object of study specific nodes that emerged from different narratives, which emanated from interviews through a combination of questions. Interpreting narratives of the women participating in the study through discourse analyses gave rise to classification and comparison, generating shared and individual contexts through the proposed methodology.

At first glance, phrases with elements in common identified the theoretical elements, followed by an individual analysis that allowed for the identification of different thematic blocks according to the narratives, allowing a systematic comparison process.

For the test group of qualitative research, there are several types of samples: volunteers, experts, case types, quotas, diverse or maximum variations, homogeneous, chain or network, extreme cases, opportunity, theoretical or conceptual, confirmatory, and important cases convenience. For this research, the selection of the samples emerged from a chain or network selection.

The sample considered the following discursive categories, or axes, taking into consideration that each individual searches for information from a different position due to different socio-structural representations.

An initial sample included six women who had at least one dependant and held managerial positions based on a categorisation related to functional activities divided into production or management activities. Elements were taken from an initial sample to identify the main barriers to perceptions generated from the social cognitive process concerning leadership, the meaning and relevance of these concepts and elements to avoid or securing leadership positions to carry out this study.

The sample for this qualitative research was determined with the initial immersion considering a chain sample, and even if it can be adjusted at any time, the selection proved to appropriate to obtain relevant information. A probability sample was not considered, as it does not seek to generalise results.

As a pilot test, the first group of interviews was applied to 6 participants to analyse the relevance of each of the questions, as well as the areas of interest of this first group, generating information to be able to refine a second questionnaire, which was used as a methodological tool in the second group of analysis.

A second group, which included 20 women, was selected to expand the profile analysed through chain sampling, seeking to select the profiles that could provide relevant information and looking to include women with diverse expertise from their daily activities.

This sampling seemed to account for diverse realities based on the research questions intentionally drafted and was proposed based on the available resources of the research and the context of global health pandemic restrictions still prevailing at the time of research (Clarke and Braun, 2013).

The thematic blocks addressed in the interviews were: personal information, the personal concept of leadership (status, importance, and expected behaviours in the leader), social identity and cultural influence on leadership, and motivation towards leadership.

Each of these dimensions is related to the topic under study. Notes considered relevant were observed and recorded by observing non-verbal language and studying the phenomenon from different perspectives using a non-representative purposive sample after having understood and evaluated the different types of samples to be used through this methodology.

The final composition of the sample is 26 women, starting from an initial sample and, as the sample provided relevant elements, it was increased until reaching saturation, considering the concept of parsimony within the sample. The sample selection contemplates the search for information from different perspectives based on both housewives and working women by inquiring into aspects related to priorities, identity, frame of reference, experiences, gender stereotypes, and expectations.

It is considered that, from a qualitative analysis perspective, each case examined is unique, although it can serve as a basis for future studies, considering different samples and methodologies that allow the result to be complemented (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, Given, 2008).

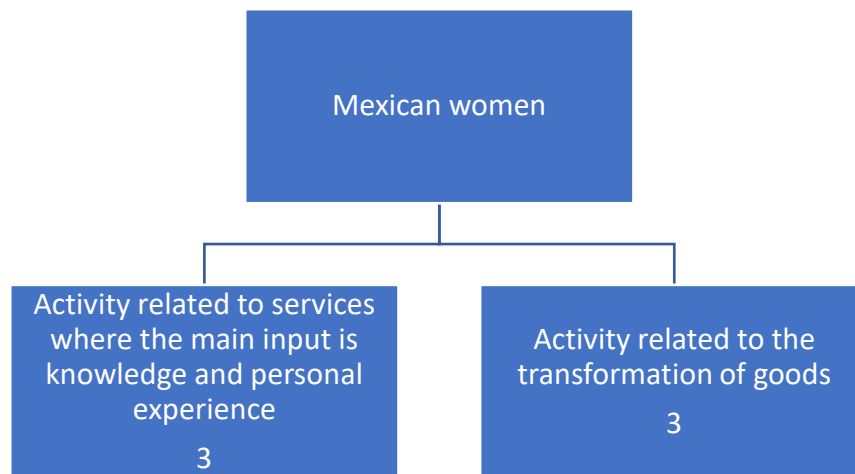
The automotive sector is usually related to masculine leadership, with few representations of women in top leadership positions where the situational factors could represent extreme conditions for women. That is the reason this sector was chosen for the first group in the first set of criteria for an initial number of interviews. The selected criteria for this first group were:

Women are working for a company within the automotive manufacturing sector in managerial positions.

Women in management positions are defined as team leaders in the automotive industry with at least one year of experience

Women who identify themselves as leaders within their team.

Two kinds of activities were considered for this sample, as represented in the following schema.
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The researcher assumed that positions at managerial levels have developed maturity in function and the generation of results through others and have obtained previous hands-on experience to study factors that affect motivation to lead work teams.

Because of that, critical elements found within the experiences narrated by team leaders constituted the basis for analysing a second stage of the research through a modified questionnaire based on selected elements obtained from the first group, which also allowed an extension of the theoretical framework initially established. The experiences described by the second group of women were employing interviews with a sample of 20 people via videoconference using the Zoom application. This sample looked for a diversity of experiences and complementary profiles that allowed us to identify some elements within the Mexican context that, according to the sample, could identify relevant elements for the

social construction of identity according to the narratives of a group of middle-class women with different profiles.

The identification of cultural influence concerning the expected role of women in society, the norms, and role models identified within this second group aimed to complement the information generated by the first group of interviewees. This perspective seemed to identify, through this methodology, the impact of the social construction of identity on the relevance, motivation, and effectiveness perceived by women, thus obtaining an analysis that would answer the research questions raised.

Since there is no way for the researcher to avoid the social world within the investigation, a second sample is considered effective in providing rigour and increasing the validation of the study necessary in qualitative research (Long and Johnson, 2000). To better understand the different situations from the analysed literature, the first group of interviews was carried out to determine specific elements to be analysed for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Considering the argument that an adequate sample with quality data and relevant validity of events is more important than the number of participants (Malterud et al., 2015) to determine the sample for the study, the arguments established by Sandelowski (1995) were

considered, contemplating a limited size, having representativeness for the aim of the study, but having the capacity to carry out a deep analysis.

Based on the arguments published by Draper and Swift (2010), this implies that the proposed sample was valid for the specific study and may not be valid for other studies, even when the universe was similar considering the purpose of research, because of specific characteristics related to the study within a specific context considering the sample is not randomized. Under this argument, socio-structural selection criteria represent the chosen population, looking for valid results, rather than absolutes, since each person interviewed provided different perspectives to the investigation.

Per the integrative proposal of Mena (2017), a sample is proposed in which each participant is represented by a position related to women in Mexico, considering different positions within society. Mena's proposal was based on the search for representativeness where structural heterogeneity exists and the different structural levels that define this heterogeneity related to spatial and socio-economic aspects.

The proposal considered different discourse categories and it was consistent with the practice of qualitative research, pointing out that existing social discourses are not so diverse (Mena, 2017); this work has been selected to establish different discursive positions, looking for a minimum number of units to be evaluated, considering between 3

to 5 interviews to identify the dominant meaning, even in the face of inconsistencies, and looking for different perspectives from a diverse socio-structural representation of meanings.

The participant samples within the second group included 20 women in the following categories:

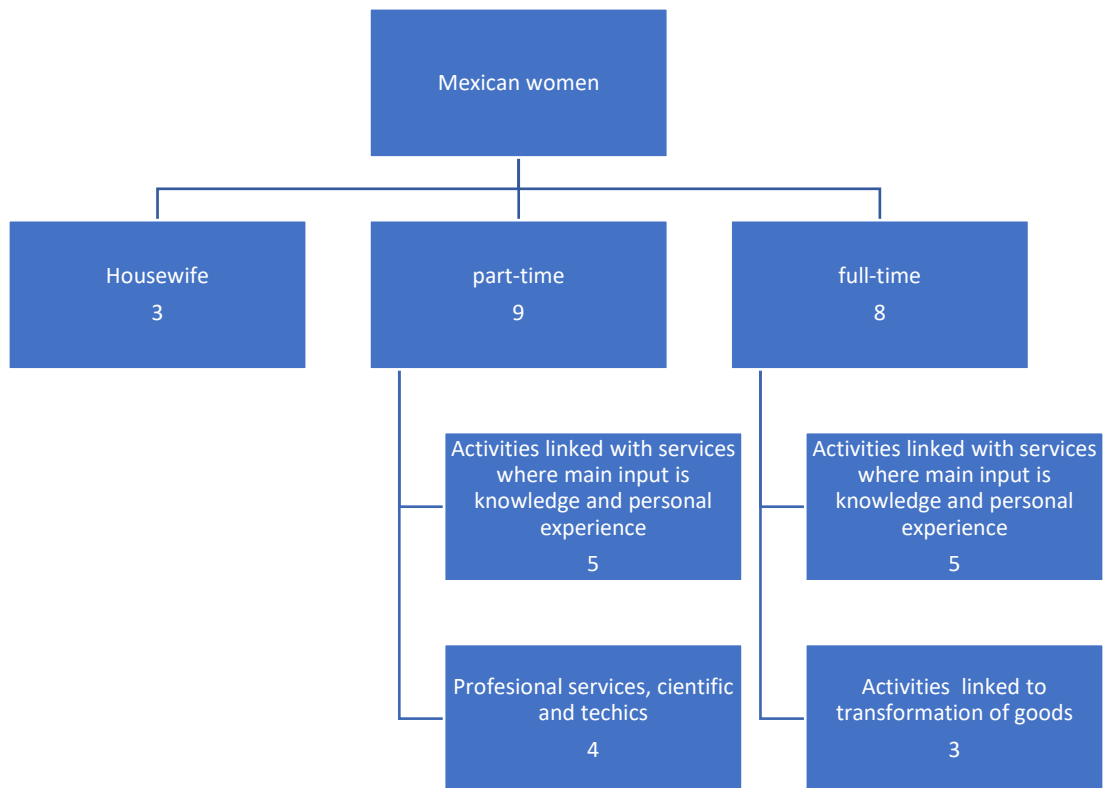
Categories — or axes — for the second group:

Household

Women with part-time jobs

Women with full-time jobs

For this stage, the establishing criteria are shown in the following scheme:



Location

The study was conducted in the United Mexican States (Mexico), whose official language is Spanish, although 66 languages are also spoken within its territory. According to INEGI (The Mexican National Institute of Statistics and geography), this country has a territorial extension of 1,964,375 km².

The capital city of Mexico is Mexico City, where the Powers of the Union (Executive, Legislative and Judicial) are headquartered. Mexico's political division is made up of 32 states. In alphabetical order, these states are:

Aguascalientes	Chiapas	Jalisco	Nuevo León	Sinaloa	Yucatán
Baja California	Chihuahua	Mexico City	Oaxaca	Sonora	Zacatecas
Baja California Sur	Durango	Mexico	Puebla	Tabasco	
Campeche	Guanajuato	Michoacán	Querétaro	Tamaulipas	
Coahuila	Guerrero	Morelos	Quintana Roo	Tlaxcala	
Colima	Hidalgo	Nayarit	San Luis Potosí	Veracruz	

The Mexican Republic has borders with:

United States of America	North
Belize and Guatemala	South

Mexico's political organization is a federal republic composed of free and sovereign states, with a democratic regime representative democratic federal republic composed of free and sovereign states. Each state is independent in all matters about their internal regime but united in a federation. Mexico has a population of 126,014,024 as of 2020, of which 48.8% are men and 51.2%.

Materials and instruments

Given this scenario, qualitative research was considered, contemplating that data collection through semi-structured interviews was a viable way. Because the investigation did not seek to measure or confirm any element, quantitative research was discarded for this work. The following is a more detailed description of the aspects considered for this analysis and the elements analysed to reach this decision (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The interview protocol was planned to allow the participants' interpretation of past experiences, emotions, and personal perspectives. The questionnaire considered the respondents' basic information, including name, principal activity, and the number of people in charge.

This work has been proposed not to focus on participants and their narratives or consider the researcher within a process associated with recognising biographical similarities between the researcher and the reflective process. This is to avoid the possibility of the construction of reality within the mind of a researcher in a solipsistic reflection (Thomkins and Eathough, 2010). The exploratory interrogation technique is used to discover women's perception of leadership through personal experiences. The research recorded personal interviews in digital format using a base questionnaire with basic questions, which allowed

the interviewee to answer open queries, add some questions during the interview, and the possibility of adapting the questionnaire as a result of the previously completed interviews.

According to Pozzebon (2004), interpretative studies can be validated based on their authenticity and credibility, considering that the studies generate a reflexive and critical perspective. Parahoo (2006) defined reflexivity as a continuous process of reflection on the preconceptions of the researcher, as well as those of the participants, so the researcher recognises that both participant and researcher are part of the social world studied, and that is the reason why values and behaviours are present and can affect the interpretation of the answer. This premise is fundamental, considering that interview research involves many interactions between the researcher and the participant, Salomon (2012) argues that qualitative interview research is unique because the researcher is the data collection instrument.

Based on the Haro and García Izquierdo (2015) study, to understand the social process, the research considers semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire looks for aspects related to personal beliefs, emotions, personal definitions, and thought patterns to infer what participants mean with a group of topics related to barriers to accepting leadership positions, but with the possibility of varying the order and details for the understanding and measurements of the factors that affect women's perspective in Mexico related to leadership.

The analysis of experiences through qualitative methodology provides for a vision of the phenomenon from a social perspective, where the design enables analysis from multiple perspectives, with the vision of reality being greatly impacted by the context in which it takes place, as stated by Clarke and Braun (2013).

By combining open-ended questions with some pre-defined questions, the semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions and opinions. This facilitated the collection of detailed and rich information that could enrich the analysis and interpretation of the data.

This type of interview encouraged personal interaction between the researcher and the participants, which created an atmosphere of trust and encouraged openness and honesty in responses. This interaction provided insights and nuances that would not have been possible using purely quantitative methods.

By allowing participants to express their views in their own words, the semi-structured interviews facilitated the contextualisation of the data within the participants' frame of reference. This helped to better understand the context in which the experiences took place and to interpret the data more holistically.

Semi-structured interviews allow us to adapt to participants' responses and to explore in depth themes that emerge during the interaction. This provides the flexibility to explore specific aspects, pursue unanticipated lines of enquiry and delve deeper into participants' responses.

Interviews were useful to validate and complement other data collection methods, such as questionnaires and documentary analysis. By allowing a deeper exploration of the issues addressed in the research, the interviews were able to enrich and validate the findings from other sources.

The Web QDA software was used to carry out the data analysis; after transcribing each of the interviews with the support of the application Transcriptor and listening to them on different occasions, keyword grouping was used to find similarities in the interviews during the stages.

According to the different thematic blocks, it was possible to identify short segments that linked the narratives to a specific category using the interviews through the QDA Web tool, establishing relationships between the different categories and giving information with the interpretative process.

Considering that the interviews were conducted in Spanish and due to the importance of the translation of each term, the use of the Deepl pro application, it was necessary for this work, while also relying on the Grammarly proofreading tool, premium version, to make grammatical corrections and identify better grammatical structures, since English is not her native language and this may be a limitation.

Description of variables

Tintaya (2015) argued that psychological variables could not be observed directly, as with physical variables. Therefore, to identify the constructs within this research, the research was based on an Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) with a group of six female leaders to initially identify some of the elements that form their lived experiences relevant to constructing their identity as perceived barriers for leaders.

Phenomenological studies display knowledge with an emphasis on experiences and the world as a person lives it without separating the person from perceived reality (van Manen, 1997). Qualitative epistemology is constituted as a way of understanding and constructing reality. The complexity of subjectivity with principles such as the defence of the constructive interpretative character of knowledge, the recognition of singularity in the generation of knowledge, and the need for a communication process between researcher and

participants as an important path to produce relevant information about the object of study (González Rey, 1997, 1999).

On this matter, Vygotsky (1987), as a precursor of social constructivism, proposed the human mind as a dynamic and integral system. Therefore, the effects between the psyche and external facts cannot be explained from a lineal effect, where through the interaction of individuals and their social context and cultural environment, the knowledge is built from the individual's schemes as a result of a personal reality being compared with schemes of people in the environment with their own perceptions.

Among the variables to be studied in this research, was the concepts of self-efficacy and self-esteem. In Mexico and elsewhere in the world, self-efficacy and self-esteem play a crucial role in how women overcome barriers. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to achieve goals and overcome challenges. It is assumed that when women have high self-efficacy, they are more likely to face obstacles with determination and perseverance. This enables them to face difficult situations with confidence in their abilities and skills. On the other side, Healthy self-esteem can help women become more resilient to the obstacles they face. Good self-esteem gives them the emotional strength to overcome adversity, learn from difficult experiences and move forward with determination.

Self-efficacy and self-esteem influence women's ability to make informed and assertive choices in the face of obstacles. When they are confident and value themselves, they are more likely to stand up for their rights, set healthy boundaries and seek creative solutions to the challenges they face.

In this study, the variable of autonomy was examined too. Identifying the degree of autonomy a woman perceives herself to have within Mexican culture was important because it can be an indicator of her sense of empowerment. A woman who feels autonomous and able to make decisions for herself tends to have greater self-confidence and confidence in her ability to influence her life and environment.

In Mexican culture, as in many other cultures, there are traditional gender roles and social expectations that can limit women's autonomy. Identifying the degree of autonomy allows us to highlight gender inequalities and the need to work to promote women's equality and empowerment.

Another variable was the ambivalent sexism because helps to identify the invisible barriers that women face in their rise to leadership positions in Mexico. Understanding how sexist attitudes manifest themselves in the work and social environment is crucial for implementing effective strategies to promote inclusion and diversity in decision-making spaces.

Other variable that was analysed was the perceived social support influenced by prejudices and stereotypes, which even consider taking on sacrificial roles in order to achieve congruence with the role expected of a woman.

As part of the analysed variables, the impact in expected roles as the result of two essential figures within Mexican culture were chosen, which could have some relation to the construction of identity among leaders in Mexico because of their apparent relationship with the behaviours expected of male and female leaders in order to deepen the idea of conceptualization of leadership constructed based on cultural elements of the environment.

The chosen concepts were the “patrón”, which represents, according to the Mexican Federal Labour Law (1970), a figure who employs the services of someone and is linked, in Mexico history, to a male figure; and the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which represents Marianism still prevalent in Mexican culture —and that is linked to the same concept of “patrón”, but from a female perspective by being considered the “*patrón*” (female patrón) of Mexico.

Procedure and analysis of the information

Based on the interpretative phenomenological analysis by (Smith et al., 2009, and Tompkins and Eathought, 2010), the research searched to identify relevant elements within a group of selected women, considering what Heidegger (1962) propounds about the relation between phenomenology and hermeneutics. From the argument that understanding the meaning of things is always accessible through interpretation where each interpretation is affected by experiences, preconceptions, filters, or assumptions as inevitable elements within this interpretative process, considering that these elements can be real only to the individual as part of unique construction.

By proposing a phenomenological analysis, this research focused on taking the narratives obtained through interviewees searching in each description for the words used in order to determine the meanings, and the in-depth analysis of the descriptions and stories narrated and, at the same time, to identify through observation additional information, considering relaxed environments for the participants.

An interpretative nature is attributing meanings by discovering connotations of events for the experiencer (Smith, 2017). The use of expressive language and the presence of the voice in the text, attention to the concrete by delving into the object of the study based on the existing to make broader statements and the criteria for judging information, considering

the elements of coherence and the usefulness for the instrument (Pozzebon, 2004) were part of the analysis of this work.

The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) focuses on personal experiences and considers the meaning through individual attribution to a phenomenon (Drinkwater et al., 2013). The approach to research from rational choice models based on the expectation that people can make choices according to rational thinking can limit the affective aspect in the process, considering a restricted number of options to express ideas. Robert Abelson (1963, 1979) points to the concept of hot cognition to humanise the cognitive process, considering that all human experiences impact meanings for individuals and how each person feels and expresses that meaning can be present through language.

Methodologies such as IPA may be able to more broadly identify the motivation that female leaders may have for accepting positions that involve coordinating teams and determining circles of influence throughout their lives, as well as possible barriers. The analyses of interpretative phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009) propose to analyse a group of semi-structured interviews, exploring how people involved give meaning to their experiences and generate a detailed analysis of personal experiences (Chapman and Smith, 2002).

IPA is an approach to finding out how individuals perceive the situation they face and how they make sense of their individual (personal) and communal (social) world by not

attempting to test any hypothesis but exploring within the scope of interest straightforwardly and flexibly. Smith et al. (2009) mentioned that IPA researchers should try to recruit a homogeneous sample where the demographic characteristics are not significantly different. The potential sample population is relatively small, which means that this sample comprises people who share a common experience and can offer a vision about it. Because of that, the sample considered women from the same industrial sector.

Based on the idea that people are vulnerable concerning the communities of which they are members since childhood, this study looks to find the impact of their communities' influence on the creation of their reality, this reality being affected by the idea this community has on aspects such as sexism, among other bias (Trout, 2010). While interpretative phenomenological analysis can be applied to many studies, participants must reflect on what happened since lived experiences try to give meaning and detect emotional baggage generated as a reaction within the brain due to mental processes, where emotions influence reasoning (Smith, 2017).

Although the purpose of this study is not to be regarded as a feminist study, it considers, as part of its methodological support, the theory of the influence of feminist theory in qualitative research methods whose approach historically seeks to eliminate the coldness, distance, and rationality of science (Fontana and Frey cited by Harding, 2018).

This methodology seeks to provide a more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under study, the possible variations within the experiences narrated, and the most relevant elements described by the interviewed group based on their meanings and their experiences and paradigms (Smith, 2017, Smith, 2019).

González Rey, cited by Macedo, Gandolfo and Mitjás (2016), pointed out the importance that the information emanates from informal exchanges. At the time of the interview, it was crucial to identify the meaning of some words or ideas narrated by the participant. Therefore, active participation from the researcher was considered fundamental.

The sample size in qualitative research has been a source of criticism since the lack of clear justification on the size of the research samples could be appropriate and valid according to the adopted approach (Sandelowski, 1995).

The identification of the ideal sample size is based on the context and it depends on the scientific paradigm the research is exploring, considering that, in the case of a positivist orientation whose paradigm sustains an absolute and measurable reality, a much larger sample is required than the one necessary for in-depth research generated through the analytical interpretation of information (Malterud et al. 2015). For this research, it was intended to use a representative sample of the examined population, considering the need to establish a theoretical saturation that can illustrate a relatively homogeneous population

by proposing a model that, although it does not pretend to generalise, can generate the possibility of deepening in some elements.

The idea of an investigation with only one case was discarded, considering that, although it could generate relevant and reliable information for future studies and it would also allow a better understanding of unaddressed topics, the inexperience of the researcher could represent, in this methodology, too much of an open investigation whose structure could be questionable (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

The population of this studio was composed of Mexican women. Participants complete a group of six interviews in a face-to-face visit to team leaders to identify, through a base questionnaire, their personal experiences as leaders, personal meaning of leadership, purpose and behaviours related to leadership, and situational factors that, according to their perspective, could be hindering the acceptance of leadership positions. According to Clarke and Braun (2013), a proposed sample between 6 and 10 people is considered appropriate to reach saturation in the first stage of qualitative research.

From this first analysis and theoretical elements mentioned in the literature review, a second group was interrogated, considering that the qualitative methodology integrates different perspectives. The second group of women included women from different profiles to identify how the unique construction presented by this group could relate to the

narrations of the first group of women and their answers related to the social construction of the role society expects from women. As the framework for this sample, participants were chosen from specific criteria to deepen their understanding of the research problem (Pozzebon, 2004). The sample used for this study was based on chain sampling and under a specific typology. The aim was to find and understand the situational factors that affect motivation to lead work teams and reflect on the phenomenon from different angles. The sampling strategy used is fundamental for a creditable qualitative study (Devers and Frankel, 2000), looking to find the best understanding of the individuals that comprise it.

As previously mentioned, this research was conducted by analysing the narrative of two groups of Mexican women, considering that both groups are complementary and required to answer the research questions generated for the study.

For the first group, each participant explained the nature of the study; once they agreed to participate in the research, an appointment was scheduled for the time and place that best matched their needs.

Due to the health conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, virtual appointments were scheduled for the second group through the use of the Zoom application so as to avoid physical contact but maintain the possibility of an analysis of reactions, change of voice, and non-verbal communication elements by the researcher.

For rapport generation is necessary during a research interview (Bolderston, A., 2012), the researcher made sure to express their appreciation of the participation of each of the interviewees, explaining how their previous experiences would contribute to building a better perspective of the problem analysed, and further explained to them that, in order to have a better transcription of their interview, the questions would be recorded.

Some of the participants showed a rejection of the questions focused on leadership among women, claiming to be against feminist ideology. To avoid bias, as the study progressed, participants pointed out which elements apply to their perspective of men and women and which questions are related to the feminine gender (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

This research considers a non-experimental design that seeks to identify the most relevant elements existing naturally within the reality perceived by the participants at a specific moment of their lives, being appropriate for the study of the identification of common factors shown in the narratives. This design considers the analysis of the data recorded through the interviews, avoiding the researcher's intervention in manipulating the variables (Sandelowski, 1995).

The basic idea of this research arises from the researcher's interest in exploring elements of leadership, especially in identifying factors that could prevent people with characteristics and talent to lead teams from considering leadership as a possibility. Furthermore, the idea

of approaching the topic from a gender perspective arises when analysing the first bibliographical approach (De la Rey, 2005, Chaluvadi, 2015, Eagly and Heilman, 2016, Braun and Frey, 2018), identifying the different research sources, and observing within the context to be examined that, although leadership is a subject addressed in a comprehensive manner, a more in-depth analysis approached from cultural (Robles, 2008) and gender perspective (Martinez-Pérez and Segovia, 2004, Rocha and Ramirez, 2011) would have a more significant impact highlighting sociological aspects.

As part of the analyses of the design of the research methodology for this project, the design of an exploratory study was evaluated and compared against a correlational study, defining that, although the idea of describing the analysed phenomenon by determining causes could be attractive, the possibility of doing so through a qualitative analysis could affect the validity of the study's outcome. The purpose of an exploratory study is to identify the concepts of variables present independently without going so far as to indicate how the variables are related to each other (Singh,2019). Since leadership is a widely studied topic, this research approach is based on the idea that some variables could be studied more deeply.

Considering that leadership has been analysed from multiple perspectives (Jago, 1982) and from a vast number of variables, the approach of an exploratory study generates the possibility of developing an analysis, placing special interest in the description of experiences where the context and the participants themselves are relevant.

This research considers a non-experimental design that seeks to identify the most relevant elements existing naturally within the reality perceived by the participants at a specific moment of their lives, being appropriate for the study of the identification of common factors shown in the narratives. This design considers the analysis of the data recorded through the interviews, avoiding the researcher's intervention in manipulating the variables (Sandelowski, 1995).

For this work, the observation and documentation of the sample within its social context are intended to generate conclusions that could be used for future research.

This research considers a constructivist paradigm, where individuals construct their realities through their experiences (Schwandt, 1994, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, Guba and Lincoln, 1994), arguing that knowledge can be objectively obtained through observation and experimentation (Given, 2008) in which the research interest is based on the understanding and reconstruction of the experiences taken from the narratives of the participants by reconstructing personal experiences. Although experiences presuppose subjectivity according to individual perception, each participant is a facilitator for constructing specific elements (Schwandt, 1994).

This work considers generating information by observing and recording the phenomenon under analysis while taking care not to intervene directly. Although it is planned that reports of observational studies are often of insufficient quality and have an impact on the generalisability of results, there are recommendations to increase the quality of work developed by this design (Vandenbroucke et al., 2009).

This research studies population groups. This type of study makes it possible to directly establish the influence or effect of the studied concept on an issue. However, it has the disadvantage of assessing a minimal number of cases.

A retrospective analysis is considered for this study regarding the time and cost advantages of this type of study based on small sample sizes, even though it may have the disadvantage of bias or confounding by relying on participants' recollections during the study interviews.

This research considers personal interviews, where the data gathered in the research must be analysed within the explicit content and its hidden meanings by continually comparing the information obtained against previously evaluated information.

Margarita Bartolomé (1992) studies on the contributions of the qualitative current in areas such as education, the study of phenomena from the perspective of individuals considers their frame of reference and the focus of this method for the knowledge of how people

experience and interpret their environment acting accordingly. The focus of this research is aimed at the interpretative grounds represented by de Heidegger hermeneutic (1962), which intends to find the true meaning of the narrative verbalised by participants, where the process of categorisation of the obtained data represents a challenge for this investigation to be able to capture reality appropriately in relation with behaviours.

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At the same time, considers generating information by observing and recording the phenomenon under analysis while taking care not to intervene directly. Although it is planned that reports of observational studies are often of insufficient quality and have an impact on the generalisability of results, there are recommendations to increase the quality of work developed by this design (Vandenbroucke et al., 2009).

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This investigation studies population groups. This type of study makes it possible to directly establish the influence or effect of the studied concept on an issue. However, it has the disadvantage of assessing a minimal number of cases. Too considers expanding the information to generate future theories according to the elements generated from this study. It is not considered a direct application to the resolution of any problem.

At the same time, this research considers a constructivist paradigm, where individuals construct their realities through their experiences (Schwandt,1994, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, Guba and Lincoln, 1994), arguing that knowledge can be objectively obtained through observation and experimentation (Given, 2008) in which the research interest is based on the understanding and reconstruction of the experiences taken from the narratives of the participants by reconstructing personal experiences. Although experiences presuppose subjectivity according to individual perception, each participant is a facilitator for constructing specific elements (Schwandt,1994).

According to this paradigm, the researcher creates interpretative practices for the materials, which can be analysed subsequently. Therefore, each woman interviewed represents a case that presents objects whose narrative has a meaning, so that, during the interview, data is gathered by taking into account verbal and nonverbal communication,

analysing the language and the interpretation that each word could have within the context in which it is studied; thus, resulting in a narrative that describes the results (Smith, 2019).

Ontological and epistemological debate

The ontological, epistemological, and methodological conceptualisation in the process of scientific research is relevant. There is a challenge in choosing the approach in order to validate the results and thus generate knowledge, providing a logical development and indicating whose content creates value.

The conceptualisation of the study phenomenon, the phenomenon of interest, and the proposed methodology to be followed all considered the ability to answer the research questions. (Ramos, 2017). The paradigms that support scientific research are positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

According to Piaget, epistemology is defined as the study of the passage from lower states of knowledge to more advanced forms of knowledge. It contemplates the transition from one level of expertise to a new one, focusing more on the process than on the learning itself (Cortés and Gil 1997), Dealing with the origin, transcendence, and purpose of understanding.

The search for reality tries to determine the categories that allow us to find answers about the studied phenomenon from a perspective that will enable understanding. The pedagogical value of qualitative research lies in the ontological nature of the processes.

The methodology and theory are based on ontology; in particular, phenomenology is the one chosen for this study to assume a contemplative role and produce information by means of interactions. Seen from a process rather than from the results obtained, considering the relationship between reality and truth. It is relevant to consider the relationship between subject and object and the problems that this relationship generates.

Knowledge is a matter of truths that require real-world experience to be justified. (Gaut, 2003). The disciplines of science form a body of knowledge that we call scientific. But this is not the only way of interpreting reality; there is also a common-sense approach to it. In this sense, Imari et. al, (2016) states that the relationship between language and knowledge is by no means clear and constitutes one of the fundamental dilemmas of today's epistemology.

The approach of generating knowledge from the understanding of the concept and the causes that originate it is what sustains the choice of a qualitative methodology that seeks such causes.

Ontology considers the way things are from qualitative ontology, research is a study of subjective dimensions where the researcher interprets reality through interactions.

In these interactions, the aim is to identify the fundamental relationships or categories of the people involved, concepts, ideas, and conceptions of reality, trying to identify the essential relationships or types of the people involved. Ideas and visions of reality, trying to determine whether the construction of reality is created from individual points of view or created by something external to the people. They consider each individual as a whole with their own ideas and meanings where the social world, language, symbols, and meanings are relevant for the generation of knowledge.

Qualitative research has generated a number of controversies about its validity, giving rise to several questions about the need to investigate what people do and think and establishing different answers, making the outcome of each interaction unpredictable.

Investigating what people think or feel requires recognising individual truths that cannot be generalised but endowing them with a scientific value that allows the interpretation of reality. The process of knowledge is complex, where perceptions are impacted by elements such as experience (Lambie, 2009), where verbal and body language (Winograd, 1983) are equally important.

Knowledge is not only built on the basis of practices or trials. Ontology interacts with epistemology from an ordered group of experts that must respond to reality (Lévano, 2019). The methodological choice is determined by the ontology and epistemology that characterises a scientific approach. A scientific practice that, to be solid, "needs coherence between its philosophical and social ontology and the techniques of methodology and research. Although there could be a diversified system of research techniques that could be used, each scientific approach prefers a methodology and a system of techniques that are coherent with its philosophical ontology" (Parada, 2004).

Within the great variety of perspectives, understanding what constitutes knowledge is fundamental, with epistemology being the essential element for understanding the nature of the source's portion of the research. (Mathison, 2005). Epistemology is not a dogmatic system made up of immutable and imposed laws; but, rather, it is that journey through scientific knowledge that moves in the imaginary of time; the reflections on it, and the breakdown or "crisis" of the norms that support a particular paradigm of a scientific community (Kuhn 2001).

Within qualitative research, epistemology contemplates the judgments that are made about things, making a journey through the subject's history concerning the construction of scientific knowledge (González Rey, 1997).

Each of us has an idea of reality. The perception of the same phenomenon is seen differently for biological reasons and for cognitive issues, where the perceived reality is different. Finding an absolute truth could be an unlikely possibility.

The search for this truth is analysed through an analysis from different perspectives trying to find common elements without an absolute position where the problem is analysed by examining discourses, expressions, and conflicts within the phenomenon.

The analysis of the circumstances using a qualitative investigation of the experiences that generate realities qualified as fact seeks to categorise what is essential and fundamental in these experiences. The rigorous and systematic enquiry for understanding reality in different scenarios starts from assumptions based on post-positivist epistemology (Alcoff, 2010).

Through this research, an epistemological reflection is carried out on the explanation of the experiences lived by the participants, seeking to identify characteristics, structure, or bias in each participant, keeping in mind that this cannot be considered universal according to the idea put forward by Schmidt (2009).

Restrictive and limiting conditions of the research.

A relevant point about the methodological approach of this study could be the choice of a qualitative methodology to address the research problem. While this methodology allows for a deeper understanding of social and cultural phenomena, it may also present limitations in term of generalisability of the results and objectivity of the research. In addition, the choice of a chain sample can lead to biases in the result and limit the representative population studied. Therefore, it would be important to consider these limitations during the interpretation of research results and during the planning of future studies.

The defined methodology allows for autobiographical narratives, granting this research a qualitative sequential analysis to identify multidimensional behavioural processes from the analysed group (Fargier and Guillaume, 2020). The sample considered has a limitation on the incorporation of studied subjects based on a strategy that can display a low level of credibility; however, the sample and methodology provide information that allows a deep analysis of aspects arising from the participant's contributions during the progress of the study. The sample choice was selected, considering the sample could obtain enough information to answer the research questions.

The presence of Covid represented a critical impact on the development of the research project due to the limited access to people for the opportunity to have a personal interview.

The change in family dynamics and routines represented a condition that impacted the way of seeing and living of the women interviewed.

The productivity and the way of life of the population have varied over time. The research development has involved a prolonged period; during this time, there have been significant changes that originated from the pandemic. This period caused a major change in daily routines, activities and in emotional elements that can be relevant for the processing of information of both the interviewees and the researcher.

Ethical consideration and information treatment

The research followed ethical and scientific principles, taking care at all times honesty and transparency in the presentation of results and to avoid any form of bias. As part of the ethical considerations of this research, care was always taken to ensure that participants were free to choose whether to take part in the research. Participation was voluntary in all cases.

The privacy and confidentiality of participants was guaranteed. The data collected was kept secure and only the study researcher had access to it. The interviews were digitally

recorded, with the permission of the interviewees, in order to ensure accurate transcription of the information.

In accordance with the research carried out and after analysing the various arguments that justify the validity of a post-positivist approach in order to be able to analyse the narratives of the different women interviewed, each of the interventions is marked with an identified number that maintains their anonymity.

Based on the arguments presented above, the research problem was addressed in this document seeks to identify and explore aspects related to the meaning that the leaderships have from the perspective of Mexican women, identifying, according to the narrative of a group of women, the position that this concept has within society and the behaviours linked to leaders and the difference perceived by gender, identifying the importance that the concept has for this group and the relationship that norms and cultural influence have on the social construction of identity, considering the effect of two specific elements such as the concept of "patrón", a concept used to identify the person who offers a job or hires a person and which has historical background and is related to religious traditions and accredited within society through an important symbol for the Mexican population with the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which is even called by the community the "female patrón" of Mexico under the "marianismo" (Fuller, 1995).

The objective of this research was to interpret social phenomena (Prevodnik and Vehovar, 2020), where the elements identified in the narratives of the first group was the basis for the phenomenological analysis to describe what a group of people do within a specific context by attributing meanings to these interpretations with the previously analysed literature.

This qualitative research approach used an interview protocol based on the identification of the social construction of identity considering the personal attribute frameworks, displayed behaviours and external influences perceived by the groups and to identify in this perception the consistency that these roles have with those expected by the society in which the person interviewed lives (Flores et al. 1999).

RESULTS

This chapter contains a data analysis according to the methodology defined and a summary of the findings. There is a focus on the role expectation that interviewees perceive from the social requirements and the impact on the consistency of expectations with women's roles as necessary for displaying leadership among women in leadership roles.

The data analysis of this study contemplates an inductive approach that looks for patterns and analysis by categories.

The researcher used coding to analyse the different interviews, examining the different perspectives and seeking to understand the phenomenon from different perspectives and the integrity of the study.

1 Influence of self-efficacy in confronting barriers to leadership

1.1 Self-efficacy as a relevant concept

Some of the interviews focused on identifying self-efficacy's influence in confronting barriers to leadership and how society affects perceived barriers to leadership display according to perceived gender role congruence for women in Mexico.

Self-efficacy is critical in overcoming leadership barriers related to perceived gender roles. According to the literature, self-efficacy determines certainty in task performance (Aregu, 2013) and is influenced by cultural biases, experiences and behaviours (Aftab and Aslam, 2014), which affects perceptions of ability (Bandura, 2006). Self-efficacy theory helps to understand career-related behaviours in diverse populations (Betz, 2000).

Perceived self-efficacy affects women's career projects, influenced by their developed personality (Bandura, 2006) and factors such as self-concept (Lord and Freiberg, 1999), emotionality (Christie et al., 2015), personality traits (Robinson et al., 2019), internal and external motivators (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and stereotypes (Hoyt, 2005). These aspects can facilitate or inhibit personal and professional projects.

Perceived self-efficacy modifies psychological processes and reinforces personality through relationships with intimate contexts and the community (Kim et al., 2020). This perception influences the ability to make decisions and take action, improving academic performance and self-esteem (Bandura, 1982).

Self-efficacy developed through experiences and overcoming gender adversity is consistent with previous studies and is essential for improving cognitive outcomes and processes (Hagan, 2021).

Developing self-efficacy in Mexican women can be achieved through a variety of approaches. These include building self-confidence, developing leadership skills, learning collaborative skills, fostering informed decision-making, developing practical communication skills, learning time management skills and developing problem-solving skills.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), 2018 the wage gap between men and women in Mexico was 28.7%. This figure means that, on average, women earn about a third less than men. This wage gap had narrowed slightly since 2000 when it was 32.7%. The pay gap is largely due to gender inequality in the workplace, education, and society.

The same Institute in 2019 provided data on the percentage of women in leadership positions in Mexico, which was 34.2%. This figure has increased significantly since 2000 when it was 22.7%. However, there is still a significant gender gap between men and women in leadership positions in Mexico.

INEGI is a Mexican governmental organisation that collects, processes, and publishes statistical data on the Mexican population, economy and society. INEGI is a reliable data source on the gender pay gap in Mexico.

The statistics mentioned above include the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES) and the National Institute for Educational Research (INIE). These sources provide accurate data on the gender pay gap in Mexico.

Mexican women need help accessing top management positions. According to INEGI, of the percentage of jobs held by women in top management positions, only 7% are board members in Mexican companies. The OECD stresses that Mexican women are under-represented in managerial positions, earning less than men.

Some obstacles Mexican women face in participating fully in the labour market include the burden of unpaid work (Mexican women spend 4 hours more per day on outstanding work than men), traditional gender roles and the lack of equality policies.

Some of the narratives that reflect the relevance of self-efficacy for the respondent group are cited in the following paragraphs:

L1: If you do not recognise yourself as capable, absolutely everything influences your actions and decisions; the same when you feel incapable: you change your mind a lot because you are waiting for someone else to tell you what to do or how to do it and accompany you...

To know you are capable or the feeling of capability is essential, even when you are scolded or when you fail in something. This is good: I can correct it and make it right, or achieve it the next time I try, so if I think it is extremely important.

L2: one has to believe it to reflect it; if I do not have confidence in myself, any person can make me doubt and can disrupt everything. I need to remain focused because there are times when things can get out of hand in terms of power and, instead of helping, it may hurt me. So, I have to think with a balanced, mature, professional, and ethical perspective and do it.

L3: Given that you create your own role since you know who you are and what you are capable of, never limit yourself or set a limit. You accept yourself as you are and, if you make a mistake, you do not reproach yourself but, on the contrary, analyse these mistakes and force yourself to learn.

L4: I know how to generate results for the company, and I know how to lead my team to have a stable operation: sometimes we are confuse and say that we have good numbers, but the end goal is not just based on numbers: it is also how far you can take your team to be running a stable operation, and they can allocate their time to look for savings or benefits that will then give you the numbers you are looking for.

L5: ... I do not understand how there can be people who are in a leadership position and do not believe in the things they do.

I have not allowed any decision to affect me because even with necessary layoffs, you can deal with the part of you that makes you feel uneasy and become a more calculating individual; this makes you assertive.

L6: So, feeling that you are capable and have the confidence that you have the capacity, the skills, and the attitude is basic at that moment if you believe it. And by believing it, you begin to make those around you believe it; this is essential.

From the previous narratives, we could identify the relationship of self-efficacy as an important factor for the generation of confidence, even in complex situations.

Within the narratives, it was identified how common stereotypes within Mexican culture for women include the idea that they should be submissive, responsible for the home and family, and that they should be virtuous. These stereotypes can limit women's participation in society, as they can be seen as a barrier to female empowerment.

However, there is a growing awareness of the need to eliminate these stereotypes and promote gender equality in Mexico.

The following interview excerpts show the emotional adaptation the participants had to confront. The construction of emotional responses to situations in their history has been part of the narratives heard, affecting the concept of self-efficacy within their construction of identity as leaders.

L1: I would say that when people from my team decided they would no longer be in my team, it was complicated for me to accept it precisely because we had such a good working and emotional relationship, as I understood that they had their own professional goals and that those goals were already different than being with me and that much of why they could not meet those goals with me had been my own decisions.

L2: In my professional practice, I thought I could do things the way they should not be done, and my bosses were very harsh and rude. Sometimes I used to ask how a person with that character could work in human resources. Then, they taught me how to do things properly, and I learned from the negative situations to know which methods were wrong.

L3: ...for me, it was a challenge to enter a company where all employees were men: where certain obstacles are set in front of you just for the fact that you are a woman. They told me, " Do you want this job? Earn it! And I said, "perfect; I have everything it takes; I feel like I do, and I know I can earn it".

L4: I believe that experience as a leader that impacts you is when you have to let a person go, not necessarily for having performed poorly but, rather, a matter of ethics, where you did not have control over the situation and a decision was made that maybe was not aligned with what you wanted but, in the end, it was you who had to see it through.

L5: I always knew — or for as long as I can remember in my professional life or whatever we want to call it — I always knew that I was going to be a leader, but I believe that the loss of the job I had was transcendental, and that taught me to set emotional limits and not put myself in a situation of incompetence, so I could be able to resolve situations without doing the work of another person, to value, to take care of, and to understand the situation of much more positive leadership.

L6: Moving from an area of computer analysis, or process creation, to the creation of instructions: when you change to an operational and action-packed department.

Taking to account that, according to Bandura, efficacy can significantly influence experience (1977, 1995), the question: Do you feel like a capable leader? Some of the dialogues that show experiences of impact to mastery and represent the feelings of effectiveness and ability to lead work teams are shown in the following conversations:

L1: ...So when you see the evidence that you are capable of, then you begin to absorb, I am sure I can do it if I am not at the optimal level now, it does not mean that I cannot become one.

L2: ...I have faced many situations that have not been easy and that, maybe, I could not judge or state that others cannot face them. I have not given up, but rather try to take the situations with a positive outlook to use them and be better.

L3: ... I can evolve, I am not afraid of a new challenge, I do not like to say no.

L4: I know how to give results for a company. I have been known for knowing how to lead my team to stable operation, sometimes we get confused, and we settle for having, but I think it is not merely the end, it is also important how much you can lead your team to have a stable operation and that they can also give their time to look for savings or benefits that then give you the number you are looking for.

L5: I believe that when you are doing something well, one of the feelings that come from doing something well generates is peace of mind, so the main indicator that tells me that I am doing it is because of the result of the efforts and the sensation of tranquillity that comes from it.

L6: I think I am a capable leader. I think I have skills and, above all, an attitude of being able to lead teams.

This research mentions that self-efficacy is crucial in overcoming barriers to leadership, as instils confidence in one's abilities to achieve goals. It also highlights that gender stereotypes and social expectations may limit women's abilities to lead in Mexico due to perceived gender role congruence. However, women can overcome these barriers by having gender role congruence. However, women can overcome these barriers by having

high self-efficacy and self-confidence, which enables them to challenge gender stereotypes and demonstrate their leadership capacity.

1.2 Self-esteem as a relevant concept

The concept of self-esteem contains not only cognitive but also attitudinal, behavioural, and emotional aspects. People translate perceived stimuli from the environment into an acceptance of approval, linking self-concept and what is perceived as the ideal. Self-esteem, as part of a person's perception of herself, is considered a dynamic process throughout life, which develops from the integration of everyone in a multidimensional way (Naranjo, 2007). The concept of self-esteem is related to self-fulfilment and the ability to identify significant goals, satisfaction and personal projection associated with the valuation of skills, giving value to abilities and a sense of personal fulfilment.

The analysis of the narratives shows a cognitive process that is fundamental for participants to develop relationships within their environment, generating social interactions that can create new realities. Self-efficacy impacts the perception of one's own capabilities. In daily interactions throughout life, each person acquires multiple cognitive and emotional tools depending on the surrounding contexts and individual needs. Energy dynamics have an impact on individuals' decisions and actions, on the perception of vulnerability within a context, on the management of emotions, and generating a conceptualisation of expected

social roles and beliefs that affect professional and economical job opportunities, and affecting cognitive skills.

The researcher asked about the experiences that had most marked them as leaders, finding elements that influenced their emotional coping and self-efficacy. This was based on the idea of Pfeffer and Fong (2002), that put forward the idea that the best way to develop leaders is to provide leadership experiences, and the proposal of Haro García and García – Izquierdo (2015), who linked emotional intelligence with leadership, conceptualising it as constructive thinking.

It is possible to extract information from the conversations about how women in Mexico often face entrenched cultural and social expectations about their role in the family and society. High self-efficacy and self-esteem can help women challenge these traditional roles and seek opportunities to develop their potential beyond pre-established expectations.

Self-esteem influences a person's perception of themselves and how others' perception impacts their actions favourably or unfavourably. The higher the self-esteem, the better the person can protect themselves against negative evaluation from a group by being less receptive to outside influence and acting more efficiently in the face of challenges and conflicts than individuals with lower self-esteem (Cohen, 1959). Self-esteem impacts the concept of oneself and a person's attitudes and expectations, allowing for greater

independence and greater capacity for assertiveness and creativity, as well as the possibility of expressing opinions that may even imply disagreement with the people with whom one interacts, thus helping the person adapt more effectively.

1.3 Past experience and its impact on performance

The proposition that past experiences influence the likelihood of acting on those experiences by affecting expectations, hopes, or beliefs about activities is manifested in comments such as the following:

L3: I believe, at least from my perspective, that having experience and arriving at a new company with a position where you are starting from scratch is not the same as when you have had previous experiences related to a position in the same rank you are going to hold. I feel that it does have a lot to do with it. Confidence goes hand in hand with experience. I feel that, maybe, if you have already served in a previous role and handled some situations and people, you are not “new” anymore, so to speak. If you begin working at a new company, it makes it easier for you to develop yourself, and this may cost you a bit of work, especially due to "the machismo" that is accustomed in society.

Situational factors such as environmental, political, economic, cultural, organisational, and family-related aspects affect the enthusiasm of leading teams for women in Mexico.

The visualisation of roles due to the interpretation of the context and the rules imposed by society generates judgments across the collectives, impacting a person's perception of themselves due to expectations created since childhood.

Within the interviews, different conversations point out the importance of experiences for leadership development:

L4: An important part of being a leader is also going through the stage of being an individual Contributor where there are a lot of things that depend only on you and how you can make other people who probably don't report to you be acting in favour of a project and an initiative that also gives you a lot of support to later be ready and take a team.

L6: I have held different positions and overseen different areas, and it's just like the first day of high school; we need to adapt quickly, and the faster you go, the faster you see how your team and other collaborators are led.

1.4 A deeper analysis

The perception of barriers within leadership has also been part of the experiences of each of the participants, generating reflections about how these barriers formed a part of their development as leaders in direct or subtle ways. The concept of benevolent or hostile sexism is immersed in the stories told by the participants during the interview.

Within the group analysed, beliefs associated with lower perceived self-efficacy are the result of socialisation and transition of roles as well as the traits traditionally assigned to men and women (Rocha and Ramirez, 2011), thus creating barriers to overcome even though these barriers may only exist in the minds of those who face them and are the result of their history. The narratives of the group are consistent with the ideas discussed by Rocha and Ramirez about how even with existing changes in roles, it is necessary to face obstacles that impact on self-concept and perception that people have about themselves as a function of gender.

L11: ...I think women have to be sure that whatever they set their minds to, they can do it, and they do not need approval from anyone but themselves to be able to do it...

L13: ... I believe that women have it more difficult because of that same social expectation that we have had our entire forces you to perform (to achieve it) in any conceivable manner, but it has to be done (has to be achieved).

L17: ... women hesitate a little more in, hey, did I do it right? Should I have worked more?

Men feel good about what they do.

L19: ... I believe that women are not aware of all that we are capable of doing; when you least expect it, you say, Was I able to achieve this? And I am telling you from my own experience.

L20: ...to remove a little bit of that shame of what will they say and just believe in yourself...

L23: ...people who question you more for the fact that you are a woman. Well, yes, you may have to do this. You have the same certainty, but you still need to “brainwash” women because they question you so much out there that you have to be cheering on your own.

L24: ... women are more cautious; I feel that women are more cautious in their decisions and in the way they deal with people

Ideas based on gender, class and race, and economic status influence women's early expectations about the development of women in the workplace, which is consistent with previous studies conducted in other countries (Damaske, 2011).

Some of the stories show perceived barriers that could be related to benevolent sexism characterised by an image of the weakness of women:

L8: the limiting factor, the children.

L11: ...the role as a woman does not go hand in hand with the professional development part. Society is not prepared for a woman to occupy leadership positions.

L13: in Mexico, you have to be a leader that is grounded, as they say, in your own tiny house.

L20: women are the ones who minimize themselves.

L22: we have more responsibility when we already have children.

L23: the cultural paradigm that women have to do a lot in the family.

L24: we still have not broken that barrier of knowing that they can work, succeed at work, and maintain a successful role at home.

The comments described above reflect the idea of justification of behaviours based on women's apparent need for protection. Benevolent sexism highlights the maternal role of women in some way by characteristics attributable only to women under a traditional

ideology of women in roles such as wives, mothers, or romantic ideas figures (Garaigordobil, et al. 2011)

Through hostile sexism, prejudices and attitudes against both genders are manifested, attributing to women derogatory or disqualifying characteristics, giving them a less privileged role than men.

Even when the words may be harmless, the tone of some expressions marks this type of sexism:

L14: Mexican culture is formed through sayings, those clichés that label you as a child. Imagine that there are still parents who tell you that you look prettier when you are quiet.

L16: Many (men) are brought up in an old-fashioned way; you could say that they think: how can she boss me around, and how is she going to have a better position than me?

L17: The man par excellence has power.

L18: In a man's world, suddenly, your authority is not respected very much.

Leader identity and followers' perceptions of leader effectiveness are influenced by leader identity development. There is a rejection of women in leadership positions due to the expectation that their primary role is as mothers. There is an expectation that women will work better in teams with their male colleagues. Mexican women experience ambivalent sexism that affects their self-efficacy, social support and perceived effectiveness of other women.

2 Social influence on behaviours that promote or inhibit social support for women in leadership.

There is a societal influence on behaviours that promote or inhibit social support for women in leadership according to the perceived gender role congruence of y Mexican women.

Societal changes in context, legislation and various social factors impact the proportion of men and women in leadership positions according to the report on the World Social Situation 2016 generated by United Nations Department of Economy an Social Affairs.

Society can affect women's entry into leadership positions by perpetuating gender stereotypes, limiting access to education and vocational training, and creating a hostile work environment for women. These barriers can limit women's participation in decision-making and working life. In addition, society can influence the creation of a culture of

respect and support among colleagues, which can help promote the inclusion of women in leadership positions.

Given that identity is the result of the interpretation and adaptation of norms, as well as the value to which one is exposed from an early age, family and social contexts influence the development of this identity of individuals (Amiot et al., 2015), and this identity can be multiple, depending on the context in which one is being immersed.

Some elements related to family experience generate an emotional coping mechanism, and role models were identified in the following conversations:

L1: In my case — in my house — my mom was always one of those who released her anger, and then it was over because she had already released it.

L2: We are human, and what reigns most in us are emotions; I have always said that behind us and our character and personality is a familiar background, and our entire environment influences what we are today.

As previously mentioned, since gender is a product of interactions with the social context, people around everyone play an important role in the way they interact with society and

the way genders act (Busser and Bandura, 1999). In the Mexican context, traditionally, a patriarchal society with the idea of a woman's role being caring for children (Cacciamali and Tatel, 2013) makes it difficult for women to be accepted in activities that involve women's time outside of this role.

Women who adopt feminine roles assigned by society regarding maternity, generosity, or femininity reinforce stereotypes that employ little value. In contrast, attitudes related to rationality, aggressiveness, competitive spirit, or authoritarian decision-making are related to masculine behaviours. Still, society finds little value in female leadership, as they are typified by male leadership, but are an obstacle for women.

Role models that reinforce the importance of feminine empowerment and environments that promote work and personal life balance and a balance in family roles and activities are crucial for creating a purpose that can combat existing role inconsistencies caused by existing social norms.

According to the interviews, some conversations were identified to show a significant impact on professional or familiar role models that are determining factors for the development of the leadership profile of the women interviewed.

L1: ...Definitely, my mom's style of handling conflicts has influenced me a lot. Obviously, it has been adapted and improved, but that was very determining, as I think it was also working with a co-worker from my previous job.

L4: ... the leadership role of a woman within my organisation is the one that really marked me in trying to get closer to what she represents throughout the process of team integration.

The interdependence displayed by the women interviewed is exposed in several conversations, confirming previous studies (Josephs et al. 1992). This interdependence generates a link with the environment and specific meaning to factors that impact the reference that they have on the world in relation to their social identity, as previous authors have sustained (Fedi and Rollero, 2016).

This is consistent with Singh's (2014) research on the importance of physical and psychological support for leadership activities.

L1: I have a brother and three sisters; women have all decided to stop working and dedicate themselves to their home or perform other activities but could not or did not want to continue working in such an environment because they all worked in the industry.

And then, at the end of the day, they are much older than I am, and they also see me as part of the job, and they respect a lot that I want to continue working, even if they have told me that I should not follow the exact steps they took; they told me they probably did it out of inertia. And I do not want to do anything out of inertia. I have done things out of inertia, but no more. And with regard to my family, I am married. I think that if I choose someone who respects that I want to continue working and I like to cultivate myself and continue growing and devote time to my team, that can even be personal time.

L2: I think the part about when you already have a responsibility, especially being a woman, a mother... you become a multitasking woman on the inside and outside in a way that you must organise your mind very well to know how to act in each situation.

L3: "For me, my family is the most important thing. If I ever rejected an offer that was not here in San Luis for the same reason that I had to move from one place to another, then I would be putting my needs first and say that I was never going to be able to fulfil myself personally, I was going to constantly look after my family"

L5: What is happening in your home can definitely set you out of balance...

L6: ...In my personal life, I have a very good relationship with my husband, and an excellent relationship with my two children, and the truth is that we know that every day we are two, we will both back each up; we always try to be in the best possible terms...

As part of the conversations, participants were asked about the expected role of figures such as: father, mother, brother, sister, male partner, female partner, boss (male) and, boss (female)

As has been reiterated, the methodology used in this study does not intend to generalize results but to identify some elements related to expected roles for women in their different social interactions.

Historically, structures of discrimination are part of women's everyday lives, making it challenging to establish practices that promote the recognition of women's rights, particularly in some areas of the country, thus excluding them from some activities or limiting their participation in some sectors.

Society can affect women's entry into leadership positions by perpetuating gender stereotypes, limiting access to education and vocational training, and creating a hostile work environment for women. These barriers can limit women's participation in decision-making and working life. In addition, society can influence the creation of a culture of

respect and support among colleagues, which can help promote the inclusion of women in leadership positions.

Considering the information obtained in the first interviews, the questionnaire was modified to focus the questions on elements related to Mexican culture that could generate a deeper understanding of the expected roles according to the context surrounding women in Mexico.

INEGI's 2016 Household Relationship Dynamics Survey shows that nearly 7 out of every ten women aged 15 and older have suffered at least one event or incident in their lifetime of economic, emotional, physical, sexual or some other form of discrimination. Almost 44% of this violence is perpetrated by their partner, husband, or boyfriend.

Among the aggressors of women in the family environment are brothers, fathers, and mothers. However, most of these abuses are not reported, mainly because they are considered unimportant and do not affect the victim, which is an important element for normalising this type of behaviour. Some other reasons for not reporting abuse are fear, shame, ignorance about the means of how to carry it out, or even the belief that it might not be heard or that the report might be reversed against the complainant.

2.1 Expectation of roles

Society may influence the perception of barriers to leadership, especially in relation to the perceived congruence of gender roles for women in Mexico. It is emphasized that gender stereotypes and social expectations can create barriers for women who wish to take on leadership roles, as society may have certain expectations about how women should behave and what roles they should play. These expectations may limit leadership opportunities for women and create perceived barriers to their professional development. However, it is noted that women can challenge these barriers by having high self-efficacy and self-confidence, which enable them to overcome social expectations and demonstrate their leadership.

Some of the women was interviewed to deepen the expectation of roles and generate more information for the research, to learn more about their perception of some important figures within the daily context of women.

According to the INEGI's 2016 Household Relationship Dynamic survey, violence in the workplace prevails against women aged 15 and older who have worked at some point during the year, occurring mainly in the workplace and to a lesser extent in the immediate vicinity, with emotional, sexual, or physical aggression. From 2011 to 2016, 11.8% of the women who worked were asked to take a pregnancy test.

L7: I think Mexico is still a very macho country; I think I have lived in different parts of Mexico, and it is very varied; in some regions, women are 100% employed as housewife leaders, but in other domains, I think they are still relegated or put aside as if women can't do anything.

L12: ... talking about our country, even if it is said that it is not, we are still a country with a macho culture where it is believed that women cannot, should not and have no reason to, so I think it is vital for women because we are still considered inferior. We need to show that this is not so; although much progress has been made, that is a reality; if we see a general view of our country, we are still a country with a very macho culture.

L17: ...we live in a macho society, it is more difficult for women to enter any job or any society because we are used to "antonomasia" that the man has to do things at home, he has children, and that's it. The man is the president, the senator, all this, so there are many disadvantages between being a man and a woman, that is, advantages and disadvantages there will always be a difference in level.

L21: The stereotype still exists that women have to be at home and exercise a certain amount of domestic violence for things to happen and for women to stay there, and it would be the same case extrapolated to a higher social class.

Among the responses obtained, it is mentioned that in México, parents expect their daughters to succeed both professionally and personally, including the possibility of starting a family in the future. It is emphasized that nowadays, the expectations that women should dedicate themselves exclusively to the care of the home and family has decrease. Instead, it is expected that women can have a career and be economically independent.

Fathers' expected role towards daughters in Mexican culture is to protect, educate and support them to achieve their goals. Parents are also responsible for guiding their daughters through life's challenges and helping them develop skills to achieve a successful life. This includes support for education, seeking employment opportunities, building self-confidence and promoting gender equality. However, this only occurs in some families, as there is an idealisation of the personal relationships that women should have in their adult lives. Although these ideas are changing, the idea that women should be trained to be good mothers and partners still prevails, and it is not yet considered that women should be trained to be heads of households.

However, gender stereotypes and social expectations persist, which can limit leadership opportunities for women and create perceived barriers to their professional development. Therefore, although parents may have positive expectations for their daughters in terms of

professional and personal success, these expectations may be limited by the cultural and social barriers faced by women in Mexico.

Mother

L11: The typical mother with many kids or with her kids whenever she is at home, taking care of her husband and family.

Wife

L19: That the daughter finds a great man who can give her and fulfil all her dreams; that she finds her “prince charming”.

Professional / family-oriented

L23: the family paradigm of being the mother, not necessarily being a housewife, but caring for the family.

Professional / no family ties

L22: I think it is for her to realize herself as a professional, travel, meet people, and so on, and, well, if she wants to get married, let her get married.

It would seem that the idea of roles that transfers an idea of pattern repetition would not be expected when thinking about the expectations mothers have for their daughters' roles.

The difference between the expected roles of men and women in Mexican culture is reflected in the different gender stereotypes. Men are expected to be strong, leaders and providers, while women are expected to be compassionate, submissive and nurturing. These stereotypes can hurt women's identity development and limit their participation in working life and decision-making.

The research mentions that mothers in Mexico have high expectations for their daughters, while also considering the possibility of their daughters starting a family in the future. The traditional expectation for women to solely focus on domestic duties has decreased, and it is now expected that women will have a career and be financially independent. To be successful in both ways, professionally and personally. It is started that mothers aim to equip their daughters with the essential skills to achieve independence and success in life. They also desire for their daughters to gain knowledge and have enriching experiences.

Mother

L21: ...The family base is not necessarily the one who does everything, but a leader within her family, along with everything else.

Wife:

L14: as the woman realized at the wedding, dressed in white.

Professional / Family Orientation

L13: I would expect a combination of roles to build her own family and develop professionally.

Professional / no family ties

L17: Give her the platform for her to achieve what she wants to do with her life and give her the role of a strong woman in a world that is facing more difficult times.

Answers about the roles that sisters need to display in their role as women in adult life reflected on the one hand, the desire for greater independence, but also an idea of family responsibility.

The research provides information on the changing expectations of women in Mexican society and the perceived barriers they face in terms of leadership and career development. Sisters expected that there will be a supportive and mentoring relationship between the sisters, with the hope that women will be able to achieve professional and economic success and have the opportunity to start a family in the future.

Support and advice

L14: The supportive sister who will be there through thick and thin

Service

L11: To fulfil her parents' wishes; that is, to be the family's caregiver and take care of the house and everything else.

Professional / no family ties

L18: do the activities that you want; travel, prepare yourself.

The Latin American family is a mixture of macho but not patriarchal characteristics. The male figure uses force even without identifying clear limits. The father plays a minor role in the family's upbringing, where the matriarchy protects or even overprotects family members. (Cuevas, 2021)

Macho attitudes were linked to Mesoamerican roots connected to the isolation and rejection that the mestizos received from the Spanish and indigenous conquerors as a product of the violence that indigenous women suffered from the colonizers, causing unsafe psychology that tried to prove the ability and dignity. The study on Mesoamerican sexuality generates a relationship of the cultural and historical origin of machismo and Marianism as factors that have conditioned the social behaviour of sexuality in Mexico and Central America (Moisés, 2012).

Violence against women and girls is one of the most severe widespread and deep-rooted human rights violations. Women and girls suffer different types of violence in all spheres

of life: at home, in the public sphere, at school, at work, in cyberspace, in the community, in politics, in institutions, etc. (ENDIREH, 2016)

Religious ideas about Marianism can affect Mexican women's behaviours by promoting the idea that women should be obedient, submissive, and passive. This belief can also limit women's access to education, vocational training, and participation in decision-making. Furthermore, Marianism can also contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, which can limit women's participation in the workplace.

Brother's expectations of their sisters are related to support and guidance. Considering that men's role has historically been that of provider, brothers expect sisters to be the ones to help with household chores or care for family members when needed. Nowadays, they also believe that women can be successful in the labour market and combine this with starting a family.

Orientation or guidance:

L17: as a guide; as an example

Support and advice:

L21: She can help me, she can support me, she can be with me through thick and thin, and I will have her all my life.

Service:

L8: Women, when reaching a certain age, stay at home taking care of the children, taking care of the house 100% of the time.

Professional / No family ties:

L26: Career-oriented, with family life, if that is the way they see themselves, too. That is, regardless of whether they are men or women, for you, it would have been the same thing.

There are also differentiated concepts between co-workers and bosses within a professional relationship, even depending on gender:

The interviews suggest that male colleagues may expect women to be organised, managerial and able to manage their work and personal responsibilities. However, it also shows the persistence of gender stereotypes and social expectations that can limit women's leadership opportunities and create perceived barriers to their career development.

In general, women are expected to be able to perform effectively and efficiently in the workplace while managing their personal responsibilities. However, these expectations can be influenced by gender stereotypes and cultural biases that limit women's leadership and career development opportunities.

It is important to note that these expectations may vary according to the specific work and cultural context, and that not all people have the same perceptions or expectations of gender.

Superior role

L8: A man concerning a female partner that I feel suddenly gets jealous. I feel as if he was jealous of her growth.

L20: That the woman makes sure everything is in order and that if anything happens, the woman is going to resolve it.

Collaborative role

L16: They can work as a team; they are not relegated from certain activities because of the fact that they are women.

Subordination role

L11: Even though we are partners, you have a slightly lower level because you are a girl.

Competition role

During the interview it is mentioned that women are expected to be team players, responsible, competent and able to fulfil their job responsibilities. It is also emphasised that it is important that women are not relegated in their roles or activities because of their

gender and that they have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities on an equal footing.

In this sense, it is expected that women will be treated fairly and equally in the workplace and that they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their value and competence regardless of their gender.

In short, the role expectations of women from their male manager include the ability to work in a team, responsibility, competence and the opportunity to prove themselves on an equal balance. However, this expectation can be influenced by gender stereotypes and cultural biases that limit women's leadership and career development chances.

Effectiveness and results:

L14: I must be very effective, do things very fast, do them properly, and have a very tidy office.

Collaborative role

L23: The team can work and balance work as well.

Inferior or subordination

L18: that she complies with all her work and that she obeys.

No family interference

L20: To respond to her, if her family and personal life are under control, to avoid leaving a bad impression, she is committed and fulfils her duties.

Occupational segregation between genders is an effect to be taken care of within the organisations, linking women to assistance or education activities and men to decision-making activities. Even on a day-to-day basis, differences in the tasks to be performed according to gender are confirmed, which reaffirms that differences are often normalised within organisational contexts.

The queen-bee effect mentioned by Staines, Jayaratne and Tavis in 1973 seems to be a reality where other women may not necessarily expect collaboration.

Collaborative role:

L20: Colleagues become friends, but I think there is always that part of you because I expect you to do your things so that I can do mine and our work can progress.

Competitive role:

L24: when a woman stands out, she arouses envy

Through the research, it is mentioned that the way a woman exercises leadership is often very different from that of a man, and that women have different skills and abilities than men.

In this sense, women are expected to be able to exercise their leadership effectively and to demonstrate their skills and abilities on an equal base. The relevance of the concept of sisterhood I indirectly mentioned.

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Effectiveness and results:

L21: Complete objectives; deliver results; get the team to respond; be enthusiastic; achieve short, medium, and long-term results; and make things happen to influence things.

Collaborative role

L16: who can work in a team, responsible.

Competitive role

L21: Women see a possible competition in other women,

No family interference

L20: That prioritizes being identified as a man who does not often fail because he is taking care of his family.

This study shows the relevant impact of cultural influence and social norms (Morris et al. 2015) in the construction of identity, generating those roles that, under these norms of influence, are considered acceptable for this structure.

Some of the stories regarding the role expected by society reflect the prejudices and cultural expectations for the role of women within society:

L10: It was very, very marked that the woman belongs to the family, the woman belongs to the house, the woman belongs to the children, and the man is the one who goes out to provide. Even if the man fails, failures do not matter because he goes out to provide for the family, so he can afford small luxuries for himself.

L11: Women should be the ones who educate, the ones who take care, and the ones who teach, while men are the only ones who support, who work, and who build.

L13: Society demands that you have a family.

L15: Our mothers', aunts', and uncles' generation expect you to, obviously, have a family and children

L17: Work to educate because we are educators. We have an incredible burden.

L19: A large portion of society has these ideas about the role of women quite ingrained: “women should stay at home or look for part-time jobs that do not distract them too much from their work at home, which is taking care of children and taking care of their husband”.

L21: They can move families past the assumed role and accept that women have to live, guarantee their children's education, develop fully, and that, if they are in the labour market, they can be a part of the working class.

L22: That you support your family; that is, those who have a family. That you do not neglect your family, that you work as long as you have to work, but that you do not neglect them, and I say women sometimes work twice as much.

The conversation was analysed within the interviews to identify situational factors that could impact the development of a leadership profile. Some of the situational factors that affect the enthusiasm of leading women's teams in Mexico are aspects related to environmental conditions, such as climate, traffic, economic and political conditions of the country, and aspects related to the conditions of insecurity, without there being any preponderant factors.

The feminist approach questions the fact that women are dependent on men's actions by nature, considering that gender relations are a consequence of historical, cultural, and social perspective (Van-Worme, 1989).

Little account has been taken of women's social and economic reality, blaming women who, in fact, could be viewed as the victims of a patriarchal system that regards male characteristics, such as individualism and autonomy, as normal. (Fernández y Duarte, 2006)

As a relevant element within the narratives, there is a level of dependence of women on social expectations and society on the role expected of women. This co-dependency is seen as "normal" because culture recognises self-sacrificing and self-denying behaviour as a quality, especially in women.

The idea of women's co-dependency is affected by gender and cultural stereotypes. Therefore, understanding this impact on vulnerability implies a better understanding of relationships and behaviours focused on suffering, abuse, and exploitation, considering that, in some situations, these co-dependent behaviours can benefit women and their way of working by providing them with a strong ability to face difficult situations. Therefore, it

is essential to identify that co-dependency could be mistaken as a characteristic of the female gender and not as a phenomenon that could limit women's ability to establish healthy relationships or set boundaries to avoid abuse or exploitation in their lives.

The interviews mention several social elements that affect the construction of identity, including the influence of cultural and religious figures, particularly the Virgen of Guadalupe, on the perception of women's roles in Mexican society. Additionally, the interviews discuss the influence of gender stereotypes in the business context and society's perception of certain behaviours and gender roles.

3 Level of the impact of identified ambivalent sexism on leaders' self-efficacy, social support, and effectiveness of other women.

Gender stereotypes and social expectations can create barriers for women in leadership roles, affecting their self-efficacy and ability to receive social support. Additionally, women may face obstacles due to a lack of role models and opportunities to connect with other female leaders.

The characteristics required for effective leadership development differ from the role assigned to the female gender. Women prioritise motherhood and are the centre of a family, under the conceptualisation of family as the basis for society. Even though several

of the participants pointed out that this role is changing in the new generations, socially, these prejudices are still present in the family, organisational and governmental context.

Within the first group of interviews, the concept of motherhood was identified as strongly linked to the expected role for women and an understanding of male leadership with sexist elements.

Based on the information obtained with this first interviews, a second questionnaire was generated in order to identify gender roles perceived from the social requirements for women that, as part of the researcher's analysis could generate negative feelings affecting emotional adaptation and biases being part of the construction of social requirements instilled in the near context since childhood and reinforced by relevant figures within the construction of social standards taking as a basis the possible barriers analysed with the narratives of the first group (Paulus et al. 2017).

The main barriers to women's inclusion in working life include gender discrimination, sexism, lack of access to education and vocational training, wage inequality, lack of family and community support, harassment at work, limited access to financial resources, lack of access to technology, lack of access to decision-making and lack of leadership opportunities.

The main reasons why women quit their jobs in leadership positions include lack of support and recognition, gender discrimination, harassment at work, lack of career development opportunities, lack of flexibility in work schedules, lack of leadership opportunities and lack of an inclusive work environment.

Some narratives show experiences with a perceived interaction giving an inferior status or a subordinate position, mentioning barriers related to hostile sexism that considers, in an evidently aggressive manner, discrimination towards women: acceptance of female leadership, apathy, belief in lesser capacity, boycott, cultural beliefs and stereotypes, discrimination, envy, gender struggle, jealousy, lack of listening, lack of recognition of female authority, machismo, male egos, underestimation of a woman able to make decisions and, wage inequality.

At the same time, sexist experiences can develop characteristics that strengthen the leadership profile. However, according to Pearson (2009), more than the years of experience, it is the level of education that influences the most sexist attitudes; in the conversation, responses demonstrated that these behaviours occur at different levels of the organisational stereotypes.

L4: I have experienced situations with providers where there is a man and a woman, and the provider assumes that the man is the person in power or the leader at the table.

It is due to the above that, based on the elements identified as possible barriers to exercising leadership, an analysis is generated with another group of women that seeks to deepen which of the elements of Mexican culture (Ramos, 1934, Flores, 2011) indicated within the review of the literature could have the most significant impact on the concept of leadership that women in this country have (Contreras et al. 2012). The characteristics and behaviours that characterise leaders in Mexico (Cuadrado et al. 2004), identifying those elements constructed as part of the social identity, generate consistency with the idea of society's notion of this role.

The development of this self-efficacy cannot be achieved through training (Wong et al., 2012). Within the narratives, there are some elements to be considered as part of the expertise or moments that show how self-efficacy gains influence when facing barriers in leadership that derive from prejudices shown towards the female gender. It is assumed that women's actions reflect their need to generate specific reactions to face such a situation.

Within two groups, the interviews showed that the barriers that prevent access to leadership positions consist of overcoming obstacles that men do not necessarily confront. Some interviewed women felt that they did not receive equal treatment as leaders because of their gender.

L1: Particularly in human resources, when people are angry because you fired someone, they tell you things about you being a woman and that you probably sell your body or talk about physical things. Insult me for the way I treated you, not because I am a woman. What is that? That bothers me.

L3: People set barriers on you because you are a woman, and you have to deal with it little by little and see how you win people over, both leaders and workers. And I think that, with a little more security and experience, you are no longer afraid to face your new challenges.

L2: ... however, sometimes, when the quorum is composed of more men, the same men can make the environment for women, when discussing a business issue, not so transcendent, so relevant. And that is where we have to stand out, but that is also when emotions get the better of us, and we can get too excited.

The effect of gender-related stereotypes impacts the inequality of conditions for some women (Baker, 2014). Although such stereotypes are not necessarily consciously perceived by all women in the Mexican context, gender stereotypes favour inequality and gender differences: levels of demand may vary between genders, with different behaviours expected between men and women, and determine differences in behaviours or values based on the social context surrounding women. For example, the democratic and participative leadership style being more related to the female profile and the autocratic

and managerial style being more related to men is part of what the work teams contemplate as characteristics that can impact the image that people have of a leader's effectiveness (Kark et al. 2012).

Under the ambivalent sexism, the barriers mentioned for the first interviews are confirmed by the sample and, taking this theory as a reference, the conceptualisation of women as a fragile human being within benevolent sexism and the superiority of men's profile could review the behaviours that women perceive as barriers, they must confront to display leadership.

In the information provided by the interviewees, some aspects that may be related to hostile sexism are mentioned, such as experiences of the belief that women are inferior to men and incapable of performing in certain areas or roles, the perception that women are emotional, irrational or weak and therefore unfit to lead or make important decisions, the tendency to minimise or ignore women's experiences and perspectives and to prioritise men's opinions and needs or the justification of violence or harassment against women as a way of controlling their behaviour and punishing them for not conforming to gender expectations.

3.1 Stereotypes, education and culture

Gender stereotypes continue to exist and are encouraged by society, family, and institutions on a daily basis, being a barrier for women to be treated equally and with equality. 47.6% of women believe that working women neglect their children: a statistic that reflects the critical barrier for women to develop their work activities without a sense of guilt.

According to the National Institute of Women in Mexico, the impact of stereotypes and gender roles in the country is significant in the social sphere. In 2007, the Institute generated a document that processes statistics from various sources regarding gender roles. 78.4% of women consider that a good wife should obey her husband in everything he orders her to do. This statistic supports the information shown in the study in which obedience is considered part of the common characteristics of a woman.

Among the women interviewed, some narratives are identified that reflect how this role expected by society for Mexican women generates difficulty in performing activities:

L11.- When I arrived, it was an area where there were only men, and I was the only woman because it was engineering, and they would ask me, for example, if I was an engineer and not an assistant or anything like that, but, for example when my boss wanted coffee, he would not ask my partner, he would ask me, "hey, don't be bad person, help me and make me a coffee, hey don't be a bad person, make me a copy". Me and my partner we were in

the same position: there was no difference, but it was like a servile role. I do not know how to say it.

L23: One of my collaborators did not really tolerate the fact that I was a leader. He always had a lot of respect for me, and he always listened to me, but deep down, because of his culture, he would think, what she is saying to me is not right, ... I am going to do it because she is my boss, yes, I am going to do it, but he never really wanted to listen to me.

In the group of interviewers, the narratives of the women in the sample were analysed to identify the behaviours and conceptualisation of leadership in the Mexican context and its impact on expected roles as part of the social construction of identity. Without the intention of showing the results as something generalised or conclusive, the idea of identifying similar elements that would allow us to find different profiles perceived the relationship of what was shown with and expand the sample, seeking to strengthen the interpreted information from the first groups.

The social construction and the effects of stereotypes linked to self-efficacy, self-esteem, and the level of performance of some activities could vary in terms of gender due to a social construction where the ability of people, the definition of concepts such as success, and leadership styles, which is consistent with previous relevant studies (Bandura 1982, Aregu, 2013).

There is an impact on ambivalent sexism identified by Mexican women related to self-efficacy of leaders, social support, and the effectiveness of other women linked to the expectations of Mexican women in society.

The idea of highly effective women who are not affected by family issues is repeatedly mentioned. The conceptualization of women being especially strict with female colleagues or female collaborators is also a finding that would be interesting to address in future research.

Concerning Pfeffer (2011) and the idea of leadership development experience and its impact on emotional copying and perception of self-efficacy, the following experiences were narrated by the group, describing the type of experiences that can encourage the taking of leadership for some activity achieving an emotional adaptation or an impact on self-esteem:

L7: You can pay more attention to what is being asked of you and what you are doing to give yourself confidence.

L14: Of the most important experiences of life are forming you to be able to represent, to lead, this, to manage a group of people or partners around a common goal.

L19: the movement where you see women like leaders, I think it is because they have suffered some kind of abuse, some kind of circumstances in their life, they were victims of something, so that generally gives them, all these feelings, emotions that impulse the way you can go out and look for a way to solve different things.

L20: In the beginning, it was not easy because they would ask me something, and I would feel sorry for not knowing; I have almost three years of experience in the field, but before that, I had zero, so at the beginning, I would answer, I do not know, but I will learn and then although I felt sorry and although I said that I didn't know, I investigated. Then I stopped feeling sorry for what they were going to say and simply believed in myself.

L21: You are not born a leader, and you have to become one. You need constantly research, you need to look for knowledge about what you want, to be in constant training, you need to self-train in human development issues, in team issues, some psychological issues, and all those kinds of things, I think it is important that a leader works on how to be a leader.

L24: all of my processes have always been learning, or rather, I have won with this, at a cost I cannot calculate; I have won; I feel that I have enriched myself more than I have suffered.

The concept of ambivalent sexism and its relationship with gender role ideology in specific stages in life (Chen et al. 2009) establishes a framework that contemplates sexism as multi-dimensional. This concept was published in 1996 by Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske and considers that sexism has its bases in prejudices or biases, stereotypes, and discrimination against individuals attributable to the person's gender. This concept is composed of two crucial aspects through the association of behaviours and thoughts: benevolent sexism, with apparently positive gender-related evaluations, and hostile sexism, where roles that do not conform to traditional gender roles are viewed negatively, mainly affecting women.

Some of the narratives related to barriers to the deployment of leadership attributed to the female gender are mentioned. The following are aspects mentioned in these appraisals: Responsibility towards the family as a mother, minimisation of personal traits, Priority of time assigned to family over professional time, women emotionality and, lack of preparation of society to have female leadership

Benevolent sexism within organisational behaviours manifests itself through the belief that women are better suited for specific positions or tasks, such as customer service, family care or office work. Examples of benevolent sexism can also be seen in assigning support tasks to women, such as clerical work, while men are given leadership tasks. This practice can limit women's advancement to leadership positions.

The International Labour Organisation's Global Survey of Harassment in the Workplace, conducted in over 50 countries and covering more than 40,000 workers, revealed relevant statistics on the abuse of power within organisations towards women showing that 75% of women in the workplace have experienced some form of harassment. In addition, 40% of women have experienced verbal or physical abuse, and 20% have experienced sexual harassment. These statistics demonstrate that abuse of power is a reality for many women in the workplace.

In a similar way, and with similar results, in Mexico, relevant statistics on the abuse of power within organisations show that 70% of women have experienced some form of harassment in the workplace. In addition, 40% of women have experienced verbal or physical harassment, and 20% have experienced sexual harassment. These statistics demonstrate that abuse of power is a reality for many women in Mexico. This survey was carried out in more than 30,000 companies, covered more than 2 million workers, and was conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) in Mexico.

Macho ideas affect women's inclusion in leadership positions by perpetuating gender stereotypes and limiting women's self-confidence. Machismo can lead to gender discrimination, lack of access to education, vocational training and technology, and lack of

leadership opportunities. These barriers can limit women's participation in decision-making and working life.

Some research identifies that the incongruence of leader and female gender roles has diminished, although not in all countries. This view contemplates a different understanding of women's gender role than the one visualized in history, but also a different perspective of men towards managerial functions through a more androgynous vision. (Eagly, 2003).

The gradual change in stereotypes of leaders is also related to the shift in leadership roles, changing environments that better value women's managerial skills.

4 Influence of the figure of the “patrón” and the Virgin of Guadalupe as the female “patrón” of Mexico in the social construction of the gender role among Mexican women

In México, the sociological concept of “Marianismo” observes the idealised image of women as an archetypal figure. This concept indirectly impacts the construction of leadership identity in Mexican women. The Virgin of Guadalupe is a widely known and respected figure in Mexico. This research discusses how the characteristics associated with this figure might impact the role of women in Mexican society. The Virgin of Guadalupe is considered to be the mother of God and is viewed as a protective and problem-solving figure. This perception could potentially influence social expectations of women's roles as

caregivers and conflict solvers in Mexican society. It is suggested that the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe may have an impact on the perception of gender roles.

Machismo and ambivalent sexism are two forms of sexism that are closely related to each other. Machismo refers to the idea that men are superior to women and should have control and authority over them. On the other hand, ambivalent sexism refers to the notion that women should be praised for their femininity but, at the same time, devalued for it. These two forms of sexism are mutually reinforcing and contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Marianism has been associated with ambivalent sexism, which is a form of sexism that consists of praising women for their femininity while at the same time devaluing them for it. Marianism promotes the idea that women are inferior beings and should be submissive to men. This idea is based on the image of the Virgin Mary as a submissive and docile woman, which helps to perpetuate gender stereotypes and ambivalent sexism.

Marianism has significantly impacted leadership, promoting the idea that women should be humble, modest and helpful. Some of the other views it enables are passivity, obedience and docility. The impact of the figure of the Virgin promotes characteristics in women that

link submission, respect for the male figure, and piety and prudence in their behaviour are fundamental aspects of women's behaviour.

According to an article published by Public Policy Research Center (2020) and Forbes 2021, Mexico is one of the most insecure countries to be a woman. In the context of the pandemic, the cases of violence against women in the last year and the increase in femicides only expose the country's most traditional form of machismo, which is exercised from a position of power.

Signs of machismo within families in Mexican culture include: son preference, gender inequality in the treatment of sons, the assignment of stereotypical gender roles, lack of support for daughters to achieve their goals, and lack of access to education and vocational training.

The figure of the patrón is linked to attributes associated with men, including some stereotyped behaviours and male supremacy. The "patrón", as an authority figure that employs people, is identified with masculinity, rudeness, and intense interpersonal relationships, linked to the concept of machismo. The privilege of the male head of the household to represent the family and manage the family's assets is also described in the cure of the employer (Deere and León, 1991).

A patrón is a person who hires another person to carry out a job. The influence of social Catholicism that protects the weak in labour matters has been part of the definition of Mexico's current labour laws (Morales, 2019).

As part of this research, a group was questioned to find the relation that the concept of "patrón" has with a leader. Of the 20 people asked about the definition of "patrón", according to the Royal Spanish Academy, the definition that was most related to leadership showed the most significant linkage to the definition of the employer as a protector or advocate, with seven mentions. This link had different justifications as to why they should link the concept to this definition, followed by a conceptualization as "employer" with six different justifications. These findings could reflect the idea of the conceptualisation of leaders linked to the historical concept of the "patrón" as the person who employs and cares for his workers with the implications of limiting the growth of people in the face of protection that may presuppose little decision-making capacity.

The concept of "patrón" as a figure of absolute authority creates mental structures that normalize and justify actions. The "Patrón" concept promotes discrimination, inequality, and feelings of superiority for those who hold this position or subservience for those who collaborate with them.

In the Mexican context, the patrón as employer figure refers to the power relationship between an employer and an employee. This power relationship can be abusive, with the employer exercising control over the employee and demanding loyalty and obedience. This figure can also be seen as a form of paternalistic relationship, where the employer acts as a protective figure for the employee.

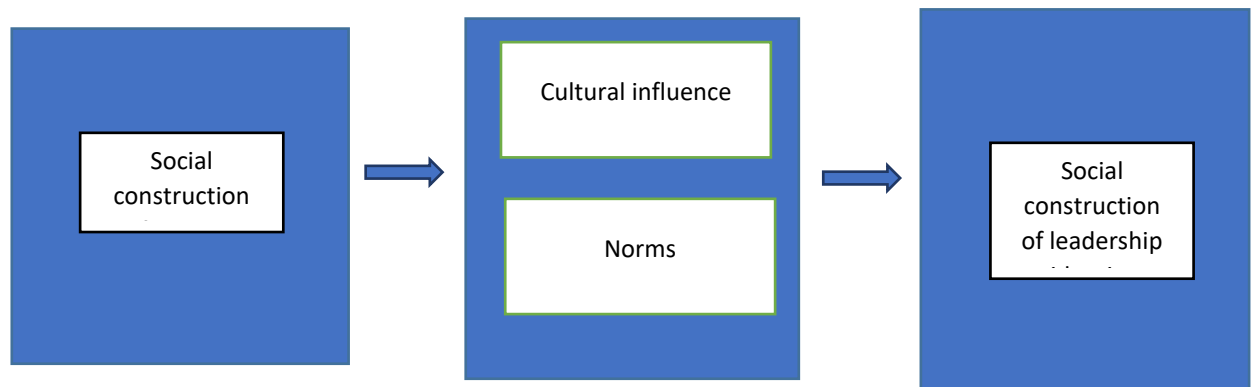
This type of stereotype generates problems for many women who face them on a daily basis in their social contexts when confronted with psychological or verbal mistreatment, labour inequality or discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, lack of support, or restrictions within organisations.

Factors that limit the development of women within organisations have to do with cultural aspects rooted throughout history, where inequality generated by discrimination due to the role of the mother is perceived as an obstacle to the fulfilment of work activities. This limitation is strengthened by the idea of a concept of motherhood related to the abnegation and subordination of personal needs before the family needs, exemplified by figures such as the Virgin Mary.

When investigating the roles expected by various figures, it becomes evident that the four aspects mentioned above appear: protection, maternity, support for the leader and submission (Grimes, 2018, Arnal, 2010). According to the narratives, male figures related to

the family would expect roles related to marriage and motherhood (Fathers or brothers). Although family-related figures (mother or sister) would also expect family-related roles from women, there is a slight difference in identifying female figures with greater supportive capacity and the idea of strengthening professional roles without necessarily being linked to the consolidation of a family. Regarding expected roles at work, respondents show expected roles in the workplace that are results-oriented in terms of bosses and colleagues with collaborative roles.

This finding is consistent with previous research mentioned (Mandujano – Salazar, 2019) that links men with patriarchal roles, economically independent visualised as provider figures, self-sufficient and women are linked to roles as wife and mother, dependent on decisions and with a profile of sacrifice.



The impact of family responsibilities affects the possibility of a gender balance in a leadership position (Smith, 2002). The difference in the experiences of women collaborating in multinational companies reflects a relationship with the studies shown in this research

that relate different models and practices that affect the perception of effective leadership (Girdauskiene and Eyvazzade, 2015)

The group within their narratives also pointed out some of these experiences, showing on the basis of social experience the socially constructed bias:

L8: ...I feel that there is still a difference between men and women even if they have the same level of education, same experiences, and age...

L10: ... culturally, we do have that disadvantage as men and women. Perhaps if you see it (analyse it), it is part of what we already carry with us from our background: the male leader is the one who goes up, and although it is the same position, the woman goes down, but it is not so much because of their capabilities or better skills, but simply because our culture has not given the same value to the men women.

L11: ...both men and women have the same abilities, so we should have the same advantages and the same disadvantages even though society does not mark it...

L13: ...In Mexico, a man can go wherever he wants, a woman cannot, for example, women want to develop as professionals, and for this, we are accused of abandoning our family, because our children are alone, because we abandon our husbands and do not take care of

them; we have that burden on our shoulders. So, I believe that a woman who wants to transcend, who wants to reach a higher level, if she has to do without many other things that man would have to do without, then gets hard from the beginning.

L15: ...in Mexico, they would take more seriously a leader who is a man than a leader who is a woman...

L16: I think that we need to work on the education that we provide from home to our children, and I know that maybe, people would say, it is a crazy dream, but I think that at some point, we will be on the same level as men.

L17: ... we live in a macho society, women find it harder to enter any job, or any society it costs us more work because we are used to men being a president or a senator. There are many disadvantages between being a man and a woman...

L20: ... I think that here if a woman presents herself as a leader of something and there are more men in the forum, they do not believe in a woman's capacity to have those leadership positions.

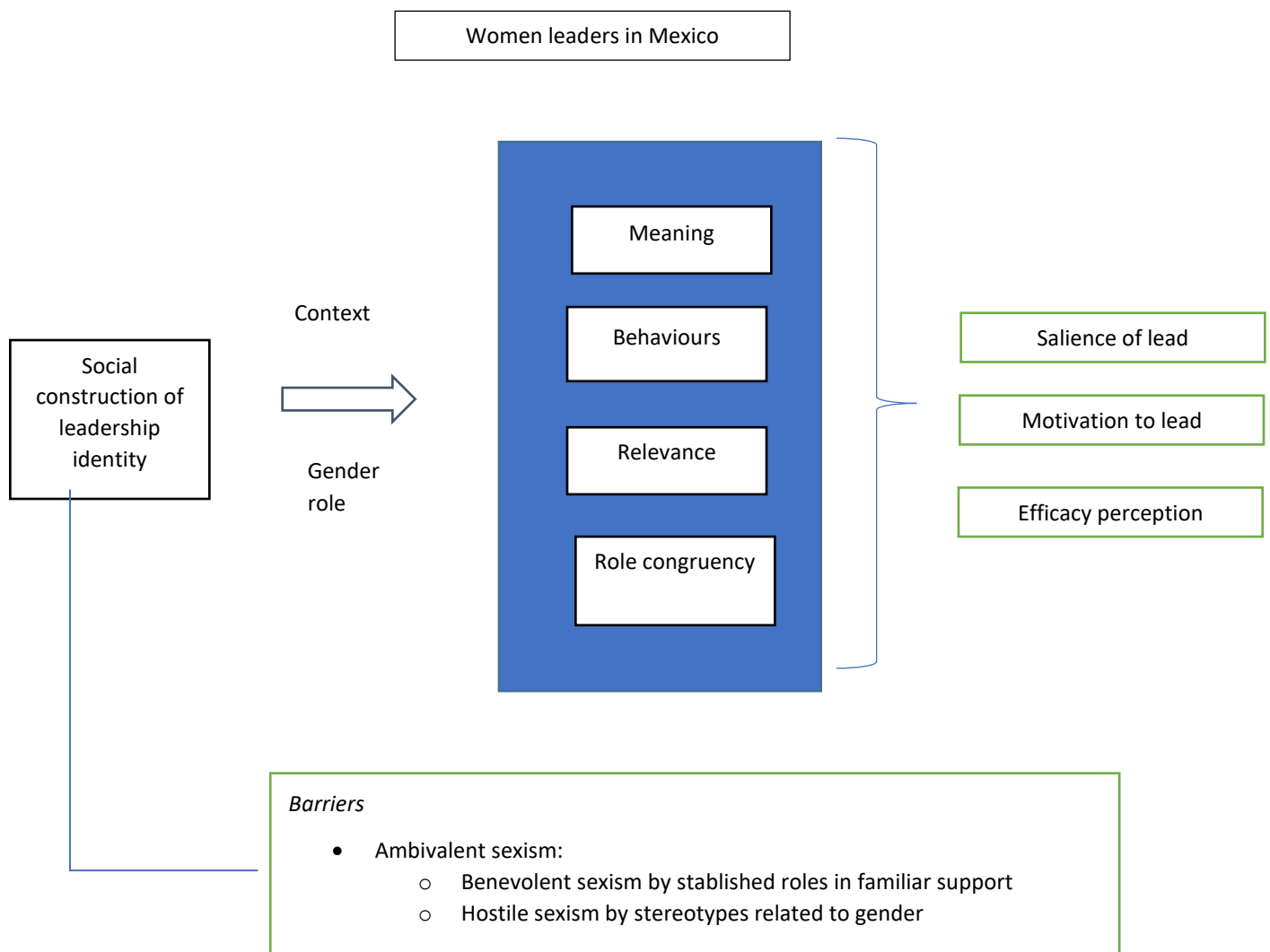
L23: ... as a leader being a woman, there are still no opportunities, neither monetary nor chances, that you can become a leader within any company, institution, or whatever...

L24: ...if men are under the magnifying glass, if male leaders are under the magnifying glass, women are three times more...

Barriers

- Familiar support: Stablished roles
- Ambivalent sexism: Stereotypes related to gender

Based on the theoretical framework and the answers obtained from the interviews carried out, as part of the results of this research, an initial chart is proposed that allows the following list of concepts to be graphically visualised:



DISCUSSION

This doctoral thesis addresses the analysis of the factors that influence effective leadership in the Mexican business context, with a particular focus on female leaders. Through a questionnaire, information was collected on the demographic and professional characteristics of female leaders, their perception of the impact of prior knowledge on their confidence to lead, and the elements they consider essential to strengthen such confidence.

This study examined with a first group of women the personal and professional motivations that shape women leaders' purpose and effectiveness, and how their past experiences shape their leadership style. This study investigated the personal and professional characteristics that enable respondents to lead, as well as the environmental factors that influence their enthusiasm and performance in leadership roles. It focusses on the dynamics of female leadership, identifying the attributes and elements that define and describe its effectiveness, as well as the factors external to the organisation that may impact its success.

According to the conversations, the salience and appropriation of purpose that can be consistent with the expectations created since childhood inside the family core promote female leadership and strengthen ties for the generation of support groups, development programs, and the creation of a common agenda. As has been mentioned in studies within other contexts (Easter, 2016), in Mexico, the participation of women in areas such as

engineering still needs to be strengthened, also at senior management levels. Factors such as security, investment of time, and ambivalent sexism barriers are of high impact on the greater involvement of women in leadership roles.

At the same time, the research examined leaders' self-perceptions of their capabilities and the factors that may make them feel deficient in their role, including the influence of physicality on leadership.

A second modified questionnaire was deemed pertinent to the research, addressing pivotal issues such as the personal definition of leadership, the essential characteristics a leader should possess, and the principal challenges they face. Additionally, behaviours associated with leadership, role models, and perceived differences between male and female leaders were investigated. The research examined the significance of leadership in the Mexican context, with a specific focus on women, emphasising the advantages and relevance of occupying leadership roles.

This study was taken to different types of profiles in different occupational environments. It was considered that a central aspect of this thesis is the cultural and social influence in the construction of the identity of leaders. The concept of 'patrón' and its relationship with leadership, according to the definitions of the Royal Spanish Academy, and the impact of the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe on social expectations of women were investigated.

The influence of figures such as the Virgin of Guadalupe and the patrón saint reinforce the idea of leadership with characteristics associated with the male gender (Grimes, 2018). Sexist attitudes and behaviours reinforce male dominance by limiting women from developing self-sufficient roles. In Mexico, men are still privileged in different areas. These differences are reflected in the various statistics shown during the research, which point to the fact that women still face barriers to entering the labour market in positions that demand more time and responsibility. Although women have made progress within universities in occupying spaces in the classroom, this is not reflected in managerial positions within organisations, especially in some sectors usually linked to the male gender.

Important figures, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe, and patterns linked to male roles with macho characteristics impact the development of women's identity, creating barriers for an incursion into organisations that promote equitable environments without gender distinction.

About the influence of the figure of the “patrón” and the “female patrón” of Mexico symbolised by The Virgen of Guadalupe under the “marianismo”, the social construction of the gender role for Mexican women is present within interview narratives.

The idea that women have value because of their care for others and a self-sacrificing role reflects on their behaviours, motivations, and self-concept. This belief creates the notion that the roles expected of them are those of service and care for others and develops,

consciously or unconsciously, perception of themselves as having a secondary value, which translates into behaviours within the organisations that hinder their professional growth.

Within the interviewees' narratives, it is identified that the woman's figure is related to behaviours of loyalty, compassion and generators of affection. Although the culture has been transforming, Marianism has promoted an expectation of loving, chaste and pure women where generosity is part of the expected profile for women and being faithful and virtuous is indispensable to be accepted by society, and where chastity and purity are related to virginity before marriage is still a relevant issue for the reputation of women within a large number of families.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is a revered figure among Mexicans, regardless of their religious beliefs. This text discusses how the Virgin attributes, such as a motherhood and protection, may impact the perception of women's roles in Mexican society. The term "patrón" can refer to a person chosen as the protector of a religious congregation. The consideration of the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe as the patroness of Mexico and mother of Mexicans refers to the image of protection, which is associated with expected roles of a mother figure within the country.

This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the various factors that influence leadership in Mexico. It offers valuable insights for the development of strategies

to strengthen leadership at both the individual and organisational levels, with a particular focus on the empowerment of women leaders.

This study generates information to strengthen the importance of understanding the lifelong learning process. The result is interesting; participants talked about elements of historical context such as the figures of the "patrón", seem to relate to the expected role of leaders as an employer, protector and even as a kind of chosen figure, and emphasise the role of the leader with characteristics linked to the masculine gender. Comments about the Marianismo, symbolised by the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe with characteristics related to motherhood, care and protection and a low profile or supportive deployment in the face of leadership, could generate a role for the female gender that seems to be inconsistent with the characteristics expected for the deployment of effective leadership. The influence of the figures of the "patrón" and "marianismo" represented by the Virgin of Guadalupe that idealised a stereotypical image of a woman in the social construction of the gender role in Mexican women could have an impact on the role that women in this country perceive as acceptable.

The concept of a virgin who is a mother has been a recurring theme in the study of female leadership. This model of expected behaviours has been used to analyse the development of female leaders. A female figure reflects the roots of a people, the manifestation and protection, and the extreme care towards the community firmly through the mention of

one of its members as the youngest of her children. This figure is highly relevant to the expectations generated by the role of the mother within the Mexican context.

In all the interviews, we examined what it means to be a leader in Mexico, the disadvantages this can entail, and how these experiences differ between men and women. Furthermore, the obstacles and preconceptions faced by female leaders were examined, as well as the social expectations regarding women's roles in adulthood, influenced by figures such as parents, siblings, superiors and colleagues. Through the narratives, social support is strongly impacted by prejudice and stereotypes that even consider the need to adopt roles that involve sacrifice to achieve congruence in the role expected of a woman, being consistent with previous researches (Cerruti, 2000).

The personal qualities required by people to be leaders are affected due to the social support perceived by Mexican women, where such support could be different according to the activities of women in organisations or their homes (Ortiz and Kumara, 2017), whereas physical support for leadership activities is also relevant (Singh, 2014).

The figure of the patrón shows a stereotypical "macho" (Fuller, 1995, Englander, 2012), with an aggressive and patriarchal figure that coexists with the image of a selfless, kind woman who fights aggressiveness and evil, exemplified by the snake under her feet, reinforcing role expectations and developing an identity linked to stereotypes perpetuated for centuries.

The narratives of the participants indicate that the following table may serve as a summary of the distinguishing characteristics that differentiate homemakers from working women in a company or institution:

	HOUSEWIVES	WORKING WOMEN
Priority	Family Development	Personal development
Identity	Social identity	Personal identity
Frame of reference	Marianism Machismo	Patrón Feminism
Experiences	Limited to the family environment	Exposed to a diverse environment
Gender stereotypes	Gender definer roles	Equality
Expectations	Family success	Personal experiences

The concept of “patrón” identifies practices of discrimination and violence, building a hierarchical social structure. This discrimination is supported by prejudices, symbols, customs, ideas, and even norms where the male gender is positioned as a figure of power. At the same time, women adopt a subordinate position generating inequality in

relationships, thereby limiting access to power which is a social construct that promotes equality.

Reynaldo Alarcón (2010) identified some of the basic dimensions within the work of Rogelio Díaz Guerrero. By compiling proverbs and daily sayings, Diaz Guerrero worked on multiple investigations to measure the effects of socio-culture on behaviours, managing to identify some relevant factors.

It becomes, within the narratives of the interviewees, that several of these factors are mentioned and described within experiences in the organisations. Some of these factors on the Mexican profile are relevant to explain the linking with the concepts mentioned in the research:

The concept of patrón has a relation to aspects such as:

Machismo: This concept defines how women must be gentle, submissive, and less intelligent and inferior to men, assuming that women must be protected and have more pressing difficulty facing life than men do. The machismo concept within Mexican society is linked to marginalisation and contempt for women, exercising violence and discrimination, and generating a somewhat irresponsible idea of paternity (Lugo, 1985). Several of the women interviewed mentioned the concept as the reason for multiple barriers in their leadership experiences.

Affiliative obedience: This concept, mentioned by Diaz-Loving et al. (2011), mentioning the works generated previously by Diaz Guerrero, is defined by statements that postulate absolute obedience to the father and mother, who are figures of respect. This concept is reflected in some narratives that mention obedience as an element of subordination expected from figures of authority, especially towards male figures.

The figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe is linked to:

Virginity: a concept that identifies the enormous importance for Mexican women to remain virgins until marriage. Especially within rural communities, there is a discourse within Mexican culture related to religious morality and gender-related cultural norms that limits the ability to make choices about their sexuality (Amuchástegui, 1998). The relevance of the concept is reflected in the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe, reinforcing the role expected of women in this regard.

Abnegation: presuming and valuing that women suffer more in life than the male gender due to their sensitivity, the fear of authority founded on the experience of respect and relationship between parents and children. This concept is constantly referred to,

contemplating that the visualization of the woman's figure who transcends is related to the capacity for suffering that this woman may have towards her family.

Family status quo and family honour: Faithfulness, protection, and honour of the family are highly valued, and concern over love where societies consider that the importance of respecting parents is even more important than loving them. High importance is placed on the faithfulness of wives, with severe punishment for dishonour and cultural rigidity that refers to the severity of parents in their raising of children, where women should not work outside the home because of their role within the family as the most beloved person. Both concepts are relevant within the interview narratives, as they impact the generation of expected roles, which creates feelings of guilt or non-compliance with positions established by society.

The study has shown the importance of the concept of self-efficacy and self-esteem in providing confidence to women to act in their daily activities. A high level of self-efficacy gives them the ability to make decisions, understand reality, and trust that they can achieve the goals set with a positive attitude, placing their own needs and interests on the same level as those of others, regardless of gender.

One possible interpretation of the results is that the passive, obedient personality often found in women who like to please others by being willingly obedient and compliant according to the expected role for female figures is manifested in the experiences commented by the interviewees and reinforced by the authoritarian personality of leadership linked to authoritative figures.

Ambivalent sexism is strengthened by figures or roles exemplified by figures such as employers or the Virgin of Guadalupe, generating models that are maintained on a daily basis. Benevolent sexism and hostile sexism reinforce ideas that create inequality between genders and legitimize these ideas, which is why it is essential to raise awareness of these ideas, allowing people to confront them within the social system to reduce prejudice against women.

It is posited that certain factors may significantly influence the develop of female leaders, thereby underscoring the importance that although women's schooling has increased and academic training does not necessarily imply gender differences, cultural differences persist in the educational processes of men and women. The experiences shared from the point of view of the interviewees indicate that there are barriers linked to their role as women, as they have a family to take care of and a society that minimises their leadership capacities, thereby maintaining a traditional gender role balance in the personal and professional spheres. In the narratives, barriers related to benevolent sexism are mentioned, where an

image of weakness and dependence of women is created, justifying inequality and attributing to men characteristics of intelligence, power and strength that women seem to lack. This is congruent with previous studies (Rollero and Fedi, 2014).

The group of women interviewed who work in the automotive area reported that, despite having university degrees on a par with their male colleagues, there is a difference in the activities assigned to them to obtain development or advancement within the organization. Consequently, although an increasing number of women are obtaining university degrees (Boatwright and Egidio, 2003), gender-specific career gaps persist, and differences in achievement motivation between men and women are a recurring theme in various analyses (Pinar, 2015). The conceptualisation of some female gender barriers or fears that affect career development is provided by Baird (2008) and Damaske (2011).

In this study, the impact of emotional adaptation to gender roles has been explored in the same way as other authors (Deaconu and Rasca, 2015) according to previously studied social expectations (Damaske, 2011). The results section presents the findings of the interviews, which identified external factors influencing autonomy and independence in assuming leadership roles, the purpose of assuming such roles, and perceptions of control and self-efficacy.

Based on the studies Plesoianu and Cârstea (2013), it could be possible to propose that experience-based learning could generate new programs that consider elements of emotional adaptation with particular emphasis on a focus on the compatibility of roles in personal life for women and leadership roles. The lifelong learning process considers the learning context and the personal characteristics of individuals. The various experiences lived are determining for building self-esteem, and each experience builds different skills among men and women.

In the course of the interviews, the significance of how over the years and in the struggle for equality, women have tried to adapt in search of equal opportunities. Female masculinisation has been part of this adaptation through adopting traits, behaviours and attitudes that society perceives as masculine. The narratives discussed the existence of an apparent phenomenon of female masculinization, which manifested in various ways, including the wearing of masculine clothing and hairstyles, as well as the adoption of more aggressive attitudes and behaviours. The phenomenon of female masculinisation has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. It can be seen as part of a broader trend of women seeking greater confidence and self-esteem, with the realisation that adopting masculine traits can help them to align themselves with the expectations typically associated with leadership roles.

The stories narrated share the following similarities:

The importance of knowing yourself as the first step to being an effective leader. Self-awareness is fundamental to effective leadership, enabling leaders to challenge gender stereotypes, build inclusive relationships, develop confidence and resilience, embrace diversity and model equitable behaviours. By knowing themselves, leaders can lead authentically and create an environment that values and harnesses the full potential of their team.

The need to develop communication and active listening skills in order to lead successfully. Communication and active listening skills is essential to challenge gender stereotypes, promote diversity and inclusion, enhance collaboration and teamwork, and boost motivation and engagement. In doing so, leaders can successfully manage and create a more equitable and productive work environment for all team members.

The importance of commitment and accountability in leadership. From the perspective of gender role expectations, the significance of commitment and accountability in leadership is to challenge gender stereotypes, inspire trust and credibility, facilitate equal opportunities and promote an equitable approach to decision-making. By emphasising these qualities, leaders can demonstrate effective and equitable leadership.

The existence of barriers and obstacles to leadership, such as lack of time. The existence of barriers and obstacles to leadership from the perspective of gender role expectations can have a positive impact on the organisation. This is because it challenges stereotypes, motivates change, fosters resilience and personal growth, promotes authenticity and raises awareness of the need for organisational change towards more inclusive leadership.

The need for internal and external motivation to lead. The perspective of gender role expectations provides a framework for understanding the need for internal and external motivation to lead in the face of social pressures, emotional barriers, double standards of leadership, resistance to change and the promotion of gender equality. Internal and external motivation helps women overcome these challenges and become successful leaders.

The interviewees' responses suggest that certain cultural factors may impact leadership perception, including gender polarisation in leadership roles and traditional gender norms. Additionally, some individuals may have been socialised to view leadership in outdated ways, which could affect their performance.

The group of women interviewed working in the automotive sector reported that, despite having university degrees at the same level as their male colleagues, there is a difference in the activities assigned to them in order to achieve development or advancement within the

organisation. Therefore, although more and more women are obtaining university degrees (Boatwright and Egidio, 2003), gender-specific career gaps persist and differences in achievement motivation between men and women are part of various analyses (Pinar, 2015). The conceptualisation of some female gender barriers or fears that affect career development (Baird, 2008; Damaske, 2011) required to be studied in a deeper way and in specific contexts, because depending of the size or nationality of the companies, the narratives was different. The perception of some female barriers or fears that affect professional development appears to be influenced by the size or nationality of the companies in question. This is evidenced by the fact that there are different narratives with women that had experiences in international or local companies, as well as in small and medium-sized companies.

In this study, the impact of emotional adjustment to gender roles has been explored in the same way as other authors (Deaconu and Rasca, 2015), according to previously studied social expectations (Damaske, 2011). Through the interviews evaluated in the results section, external aspects affecting autonomy and independence to participate as a leader, the purpose of assuming leadership positions, and perceptions of control and self-efficacy were identified for each interview.

Through this qualitative study, the research focuses on identifying situational factors that affect the motivation to lead teams (Chan and Draswog, 2001) among women in Mexico. In

this context, it is of paramount importance to reflect on the significance of previous experiences impact women's motivation to lead people, to provide opportunities to lead, and to create experiences that allow the development of learning experiences. This is consistent with the idea of Pfeffer and Fong (2005).

The narratives provide evidence that supports the assertion that the generation of autonomy for problem-solving and decision-making is significantly impacting previous experiences and the adequate handling of emotions. The perception of self-efficacy supports the strengthening of leadership and the motivation to lead teams through an emotional adaptation capable of transforming familiar expectations, ambivalent sexism barriers, and stereotypes linked to gender and physical characteristics.

Some narratives mentioned experiences such as hiring women to assume roles that are stereotyped for women, establishing requirements ,such as physical features for specific job or assigning activities that are not contemplated under labour contracts but are expected according to gender, such as serving coffee or devaluing some actions in front of others.

By analysing narratives of the interviews in this study, this research identifies some elements from Chan and Draswog's proposal (2001) on the motivation to lead. First, according to the sample analysed, the construction of the leadership identity through

previous experience is essential, where women build their leadership profile and develop different levels of mastery within their functions. At the same time, the relevance and purpose of leading roles based on emotional adaptation generate social identity towards leadership and the acceptance of role models found in their family and professional context and perception of self-efficacy that builds autonomy or self-sufficiency.

The research findings indicate that situational factors as emotional adaptation to gender roles, self-efficacy, and self-esteem influence women to lead teams in Mexico. Furthermore, the study examines the influence of cultural and gender expectations on women's leadership perceptions. These findings underscore the necessity of addressing cultural impediments and fostering self-efficacy and emotional adaptation to facilitate women's participation in leadership roles in Mexico and avoid loss of talents.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, it is necessary to compare this research with existing literature. Intrinsic motivation is influenced by psychological and social elements (Bandura, 1982), where reactions to social pressure to aspire to leadership positions can impact models that society approves or disapproves of as part of the attributes related to the leader (Garrin, 2014). The women leaders interviewed reported experiencing heightened pressure to demonstrate their skills and competencies. This additional pressure can impede women's advancement into leadership positions, as they

are subject to more intense scrutiny and the possibility of being judged more negatively if they make mistakes or do not meet expectations.

Conversely, according to Bandura's theory, individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to assume leadership roles and to face challenges effectively. In the Mexican context, it is of paramount importance for women to cultivate a sense of self-efficacy to overcome gender stereotypes and effectively navigate the challenges associated with leadership roles. In light of the fact that people learn not only through observation but also through the reinforcement and feedback they receive from their social environment, it is of the utmost importance that Mexican women leaders receive support and recognition for their skills and achievements in leadership roles. This can help to strengthen their confidence and motivation to take on leadership roles and challenge gender expectations.

The evidence presented in this study lends support to the assertion that in Mexico, traditional gender expectations influence the perception of women in leadership roles. However, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1989, 1991) posits that these expectations can be modified through education, exposure to leadership role models and positive reinforcement of leadership behaviours in women.

The potential influence of observational learning, self-efficacy, modelling, reinforcement, as well as social and cultural expectations on women's leadership expectations in Mexico is

of significant impact, based on Albert Bandura's (2001) Cognitive Theory. This theory posits that individuals learn and acquire knowledge through observation and interaction with their social environment. This research emphasises the necessity for a cultural and educational transformation that challenges gender stereotypes and facilitates equal opportunities for women leaders in Mexico. This encompasses the implementation of gender equality education in educational institutions and the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Mentorship programmes, professional networks, and gender equality policies are identified as potential mechanisms to facilitate inclusion and empowerment, addressing systemic barriers and advocating for change that promotes equal opportunities.

Women interviewed who detent leadership positions point out negative stereotypes, emphasizing that authoritarian stances are especially frowned upon for the female gender, this not being the case for male roles. Workers' attitudes towards female leaders show the existence of prejudices that favour the male image in leadership positions.

Consistent with the studies of Hoyt and Blascovich (2010), Hoyt and Murphy (2016), and Basco and Ho (2016), this study demonstrates how some of the stereotypes generated within a context can impact and violate people in their confidence, motivation, anxiety, and development as leaders.

The findings of this study are consistent with the stereotypes as a generalization of concepts reflect images that simplify the information in a certain way far from reality to abstractly constitute a barrier that impacts the reflective processes of self-concept and the recognition of characteristics and values of others, deforming the way in which women view and understand themselves and others.

The women interviewed considered it pertinent to note that in people's lives, reality could be invalidated through judgments, which in turn influences the way of thinking and perceiving, as well as the manner in which events are experienced and interpreted. These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Jourard and Landsman (1987). The interviewees highlighted the significance of individuals deemed influential in their lives as capable of challenging reality-based judgments by influencing the way of thinking and perceiving, as well as the way of giving meaning and value to things. Events experienced, which affect one's perspective, were also identified as a key factor.

The understanding of self-efficacy refers to present capabilities, and the future capabilities or potential a person has (Bandura 2006). This concept is crucial when recognising that the history of people is relevant when talking about self-efficacy. Even so, the idea of what they can do takes on an appropriate role as a motivator in people's perception.

Past research such as Bandura's (1971, 1977, 1982, 1989, 2001, 2006), holds that people are a product of their context, their personal biological background, and the influence in context generates different interactions according to the social context experienced by each person. This interaction creates a reference mechanism for the evaluation of behaviours and perceived roles. These elements regulate the level of attention with which one should react to adapt to the environment.

Studies such as those of Garrin (2014) shed light on how reactions from instincts and the same biological reaction can impact leadership aspirations due to the creation of models and social support that can define the attributes necessary for leadership.

The narratives presented in the results section demonstrate a path to leadership for women within the Mexican context, characterised by a delicate balance between social pressures and gender expectations. In order to succeed in leadership roles within the Mexican context, women have had to navigate the complex interplay between social pressures and gender expectations, while also developing a sense of self-efficacy and resilience. This balance was of critical importance, as deeply entrenched cultural norms and gender stereotypes present significant obstacles to the development and recognition of women leaders.

Imposed traditional gender role expectations have constrained women's opportunities to assume positions of power and authority, placing them under pressure. In order to overcome these limitations, they must have developed a strong perception of self-efficacy, trusting in their own capacities and abilities to lead, even when social structures might suggest otherwise. This perceived self-efficacy was not solely based on personal skills and achievements; it was also contingent on the women's capacity to reinterpret and challenge socially imposed gender roles. Furthermore, they had to demonstrate resilience and flexibility, being able to navigate and transform a work environment that was initially unprepared to accept their leadership.

The increase in the presence of women in different organisations has ceased to be an aspiration and become a reality, without this fact meaning a complete integration of women in the professional and personal spheres (Ortiz and Kumara, 2017). Even though women's schooling has increased, and academic training does not necessarily imply differences between gender, there are still cultural differences in the educational processes of men and women in places where more and more women in universities are being awarded college degrees (Boatwright and Egidio, 2003). However, professional sector gaps related to specific genders persist, and the difference in the motivations for achievement between men and women are part of various analyses (Pinar, 2015). The conceptualisation of some barriers or fears of the female gender that affect career development has been analysed from different perspectives and debated in various research works (Baird, 2008, Damaske, 2011).

According to the comments and experiences of the interviewees, the working dynamics between Mexican managers in international companies and foreign managers in the same type of company represent a difference in the development of women within the organisations. For Mexican companies, the issue is made more complex by the fact that stereotypes are more entrenched in the automotive and construction industries, as opposed to areas such as education, where women may have greater opportunities for development.

Inside the narratives, there are barriers mentioned, which are related to benevolent sexism, considering estimations which impact lies in the creation of an image of weakness and dependence of women, with understandings whose impact lies in the creation of ideas that justify inequality and give men characteristics of intelligence, power, and strength that women seem to lack in line with previous studies (Rollero and Fedi, 2014).

The perception of self-efficacy is a significant factor in the emotional adaptation of Mexican women leaders to the various obstacles encountered in their career development. Despite prejudices, biases, or predefined roles, women can demonstrate a clear understanding that they can develop the functions that are entrusted to them.

Based on the responses from the interviews conducted in this project, it is confirmed that the impact of emotional adaptation to gender roles according to social expectations (Deaconu and Rasca, 2015, Damaske, 2011) and efficacy (Hoyt, 2005) and self-efficacy (Wong et al., 2012) of women as leaders stemming from the social construction of identity. The study identified, from the experiences narrated, external aspects that impact autonomy and independence to participate as leaders among women, the purpose of assuming leadership positions, and the perception of control and self-efficacy of each interview.

The findings of this research match those of previous studies, which maintain that the norms and immediate context are a fundamental piece in the development of the identity of individuals (Blasi and Glodis, 1995), shaping roles according to social context (Baird, 2008), where prejudices play a relevant role in influencing the capacities, commitments, and obligations that people have concerning specific variables such as gender.

Social cognitive career theory (Lentz et al. 1994, 2000) suggests that occupational considerations are somewhat the result of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations; however, approaches such as Holland's theory (1959) suggest considerations based on a person's unity with their environment (Gore and Leuwerke, 2000). According to Holland's theory, people look for environments where they can use their skills and abilities to express their values, attitudes, and attitudes in an environment like their personality. They find the greatest likelihood of success and satisfaction.

The influence of the personal belief in being able to achieve an outcome, as mentioned by Bandura (1995), and the results shown by Yancey (2014) on the strong influence of self-efficacy on task and goal setting is evident. The responses obtained in this study point to a significant need for women to be constantly aware of the potential for stereotypes to negatively impact on their self-image, perceptions of success and satisfaction, to stand up for their values and to defend the attitudes they believe are valuable in their leadership, regardless of what others may say.

The understanding of identity affects people's actions, which in turn impacts performance and behaviours. The interviewees associate the behaviours required to be considered as team leaders with those of the leaders they have as a reference, mostly male. This is evidenced by the fact that even in everyday actions such as the way they speak, address others or interact with peers, the interviewees associate their leadership with the behaviours of the leaders they have as a reference. This finding is congruent with previous studies (Liao et al. 2023).

The findings support too what Lentz et al. (1994 and 2000) established about the importance of identifying the relationship between professional barriers concerning specific tasks and choices within global beliefs, differentiating aspects of the immediate and distant environment, and relating barriers to favourable environmental conditions.

The confidence and belief in the capacity of each of the interviewees have been manifested in their narratives. Some descriptions show that a sense of efficacy is essential even to face problems and generate resilience in previous studies have identified a high level of burnout in women workers with high work-family conflict and high self-efficacy, reducing the vulnerability to burnout. Self-efficacy in conflict management is important in developing leadership skills for women (Balogun, 2019).

This research reaffirms the importance of identifying the relationship between task-specific barriers and career choices with global beliefs, as well as differentiating between aspects of the immediate and distant environment, where perceptions influence leaders' confidence and ability to cope with challenges. This is fundamental to leaders' identity development, as it influences their self-perception, their ability to cope with challenges and their effectiveness in leadership roles.

The psychological complexity surrounding self-esteem builds on the personal assessment of feelings and actions that emanate from thought, giving value to what we perceive and understand to create identity, which then steers every behaviour and action. At the same time, the impact on the ability to trust oneself, the perceived personal value linked to the acceptance of others, and confidence when acting influences the freedom to react. Authors such as Branden (1995) include self-esteem elements such as self-acceptance,

responsibility, self-knowledge, integrity, responsibility, and purpose, which impact how we think, feel, react, and value what we experience failure.

Female leaders may encounter specific challenges and expectations related to their gender. Self-esteem plays a pivotal role in their capacity to trust themselves, accept themselves, and maintain their integrity in challenging circumstances, discussed in results section 1.2 of this research. Related to the points previously raised by Branden, the influence of self-acceptance, accountability, self-knowledge and integrity on the self-perception and value placed on personal experiences, including failures, by women leaders is worthy of further investigation. This was of fundamental importance to the development of the identity as leaders in several women who participated in the study, impacting their self-confidence, their ability to make decisions and their capacity to face challenges in leadership roles. Furthermore, the interviews posit that women leaders with high self-esteem may be more effective in making decisions and managing challenging situations, which can contribute to their success and effective leadership in work and social settings.

This study specifically reviews the Mexican context. where gender roles are historically entrenched, self-esteem plays a crucial role in how women leaders perceive and value their own abilities and contributions. The research findings indicate that self-esteem plays a significant role in an individual's capacity to trust themselves, their self-worth, and their confidence in taking action. These factors are crucial for effective leadership in a social

environment where gender roles can impose limitations and expectations. This is discussed in detail in section 1.3, which outlines the participants' past experiences and their impact on performance. The interviewees discussed the influence of various elements, including self-acceptance, responsibility, self-knowledge and integrity, on the way Mexican women leaders think, feel and react.

Furthermore, the research revealed the internal and external motivations that drive women to take on leadership roles, as well as the barriers they perceive must be overcome to perform these roles effectively. Additionally, the thesis considers the perceived self-efficacy of leaders and how this perception differs between genders.

In the studied context, women may face expectations and limitations imposed by pre-established gender roles, self-esteem plays a crucial role in how they perceive their own worth and capabilities. Interviews highlighting that self-esteem is related to personal satisfaction, personal projection and the appreciation of abilities, the paragraph emphasises the importance of women being able to identify and pursue their own goals, regardless of societal gender expectations. The responses of the participants demonstrate how their behaviours challenge traditional gender roles, promoting greater autonomy and empowerment among Mexican women. This, in turn, enables them to reach their full potential in various aspects of their lives, including leadership.

It can be posited that confidence in men may be more directly related to their physical ability and dominant presence, thereby reinforcing their perception as natural leaders. In contrast, confidence in women may be more influenced by physical appearance and how they perceive themselves in comparison to societal standards. The L1 interviewee indicated that she had received feedback regarding her work performance, attributing it to her gender and physical appearance without considering the merits of her work in isolation. Authors like Pappas (2016) suggested that women with high rates of body dissatisfaction may have lower career aspirations and expectations, resulting over time in being able to exclude themselves from activities, this leads to the consideration of physical aspects as relevant elements in women's self-esteem and their relevance for the development of their identity as leaders.

According to the narratives, interviewees constantly focus on past experiences. Yet, they do not refer to those strengths, skills, or talents that could allow them to project themselves in some future activity.

The socialisation processes from early age are built upon as part of the personal and social identity, affecting the different life cycles and varying according to the situations and contexts experienced. This study extends previous research relating to bias attitudes by examining family socialization processes that affect adaptability and cultural elements that

subtly or overtly impact personal identity and leadership development (White and Gleitzman, 2014).

The social narrative is shaped by cultural values and influences the concept of co-dependency (Chand, 2012). The narratives presented in this work reinforce traditional gender roles, contrasting dominance with submission and aggression with victimisation.

In recent years, particular interest has been placed on recognising the destructive effects of gender inequality (Ridgeway, 2011) and its impact on women due to the existing disparities in their social and economic status. There are arguments that society's normalisation of certain behaviours often leads women to suffer from mental health problems (Dennerstein, Atsbury and Morse, 1993). The descriptions in the results section corroborate the normalization of certain behaviours, while also underscoring the awareness that there is a discernible difference in society compared to previous years. A tangible illustration of this is the candidacy of two women for the presidency of the republic in the 2024 presidential elections, which represents a departure from the historical norm of male leadership in the country.

According to the social context, the perception and behaviours resulting from the interaction are relevant for individuals to feel safe or threatened (Ellemers et al. 2002), This

previous studies on integrating theoretical knowledge and empirical research on social identity have shown that the strength of commitment to the group is related to social identity. Interviews within this research helped identify that the environment creates an effect on the psychological processes of behaviour, providing skills for adaptation to the context where self-concept impacts the motivation and behaviours of each interviewee. Considering the different literature reviews, it manifests as the behaviour with the relationship accepting the learning models and behaviours.

The evidences of this research shown within the theoretical framework supports an important relationship of identity development with self-concept and self-efficacy perception, even in specific professions (McClellan, 2017). Social interactions and roles defined within a social context create stereotypes that influence aspirations and perceptions of leadership, as well as acceptable behaviours and styles differentiated by gender.

The ideas put forward by the interviewees are consistent with previous studies that argue that the sharing of emotions influences the emotional climate in general, as well as the cohesion and solidarity of a group. This, in turn, has a positive consequence on the collective memory and the emotional environment in the long term (Rimé, 2007).

The ability to defend values and principles, even against opposing ideas and the confidence in one's judgment without having a feeling of guilt is the result of high self-esteem (Lönngvist et al. 2009). Even mistakes made by people with high self-esteem and high levels of self-efficacy do not affect confidence in solving future problems. Although it would seem that the interviewees possess sufficient levels of self-esteem to recognize their talents, their constant comparison against the male gender makes it evident that people still experience difficulty feeling equal to the rest of the people with whom they relate.

The development of identity and the different experiences contribute to the development of skills and generation of personal beliefs about personal capabilities and personal effectiveness that influence motivations and actions, manipulating the construction of the perception in which the world of the lived circumstances is understood (Blasi and Glogis, 1995).

For each individual participating in this study, their experiences can provide them with guidance that either supports or inhibits their actions and is capable of modifying their prejudices in the face of conflict. By having to resolve situations and by ensuring the results of the day, participants learned how to be a leader or acquire certain leadership skills.

Even with the multiple changes in the roles of men and women that have been experienced in the last few years, we can observe what is worth for modern society's culture. The idea

of a certain degree of heroism of women for their sacrifice and attitudes of abnegation under the adoption of positions that place them in moral regulation standards of their conduct affects their own physical or mental health. In the interviews, the notion that women should be self-sacrificing and selfless, particularly in relation to the care of their families, was repeatedly emphasised.

Under this notion, some women interviewees developing their psychological identity encounter norms that require sacrifice to maintain relationships. Their personality sustains the value placed on their interpersonal relationships with an imbalance in what is expected of them to maintain their own physical or mental health. (Granello and Beamish, 1998). The INEGI statistics presented in this research, along with the findings of various surveys, provide evidence that women in Mexico frequently encounter norms that require them to prioritize the maintenance of interpersonal relationships over their own wellbeing. The disproportionate burden of unpaid work and the impact on physical and mental health demonstrate a significant imbalance between the expectations placed upon them and their capacity to maintain their own health and well-being.

Roehling, Koelbel, and Rautger 1996 showed that co-dependency in women is related to a family history of abuse and cultural traits of femininity. Some background aspects in the

family of origin seem to favour the development of co-dependent behaviours and attitudes, trying to compensate with attitudes that allow them to balance their environment.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, the concept of codependency presents a complex dynamic that can impede the autonomy and self-efficacy of women in leadership positions. The likelihood of women developing codependent behaviours as a result of a family history of abuse and the internalisation of cultural traits of femininity raises questions about the ability of women leaders to exercise effective and empowered leadership..

Furthermore, this relationship raises concerns about the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and traditional roles in the workplace. The emphasis on submissiveness, excessive empathy and other-orientation as desirable traits in women may limit their ability to exercise leadership in an equitable and transformative manner. Rather than fostering an inclusive and diverse work environment, these patterns of behaviour can reinforce expectations that women will assume the role of caregiver and emotional support, to the detriment of their professional and personal development.

Within the result section, it is also important to recognise that codependency can be a coping strategy adopted by women in family and social environments that perpetuate gender inequality and victimisation. Rather than addressing the underlying causes of codependency, such as gender-based abuse and discrimination, these women may face pressure to conform to unrealistic norms and expectations that perpetuate their vulnerability and subordination.

Aftab and Aslam's (2014) proposal focused on considering that the gender standard may differ depending on the culture of men and women and impact the way roles is socially constructed, generating biases, experiences, actions, and behaviours. This analysis can be linked to Perlin and Schooler's (1978) proposal, previously described in this research, on how adaptation to difficult social experiences protects people from psychological harm, proposing that gender standards can generate difficult social experiences within the workplace, impacting the development of emotional coping affecting the construction of leadership profiles in Mexican women.

This is consistent with previous studies where spouses' expectations with respect to gender roles are also important within the female context, especially in contexts where patriarchy exists. The female figure may be affected by preconceived roles within an environment where the concept of the man as provider and protector and the woman as caregiver and manager of the home is part of the culture (Azam et al., 2020)

Like in other cultures, dependency and weakness are characteristics of women, relating them as positive aspects for the female gender but as negative characteristics for the male gender. The conceptualisation of women as weak, suffering, sensitive and with different capacities to carry out some activities is complemented by the idea that women need to complete their lives with men to meet their needs and breaking out of this stereotype can be a motive for negative judgments (Dildar, 2015).

A group of the women interviewed referred on various occasions to factors perceived as barriers under concepts such as stereotypes, education, and culture, consistent with previous studies in specific contexts (Hagan, 2021). For example, some of the stereotypes mentioned are related to weakness or strength, emotionality, lack of capacity, physical aspects, inferiority, or interpersonal conflicts.

These ideas shown in this study are consistent with Meade's (1935) conceptualisation of how the construction of individual identity and qualities is affected by environments instilled in the context of society and the relation between expectations of individual behaviours and qualities expected beyond a biological perspective.

According to the United Nations report on Tackling social norms as part of Human development perspectives in 2020, gender social norms hinder equality, generating significant differences in politics, educational levels, and access to job opportunities that occur worldwide.

As a finding, as well as in other cultures, the lack of balance, reflecting different dimensions, perpetuates cycles of discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion, and limited access to additional options and resources (Arai et al., 2016). The reference in this study is manifested in the experiences shown by the interviewees mentioning on several occasions that, even though progress for past generations is palpable, there is still much to be done in the current Mexican context.

Some examples of gender-based violence in organisations mentioned by Mena et al. (2019) include: Obstacles to occupying positions , discrimination to hiding the occupation of positions because of gender, the relegation of specific roles, verbal aggression or communication styles establish interpersonal relationships that show contempt or intimidation, physical aggression, practices of omission towards the person's presence by preventing normal functions or relationships, obstruction of rights, sexual harassment, actions and expressions aimed at denigrating self-esteem or morale, machismo, spiteful practices, persecution, extreme demands, inequity in the workplace and, limitation of conditions for work performance.

The interviewees provide a disturbing description of gender-based violence in organisations, highlighting various forms of discrimination and aggression that women face in the workplace. These forms of violence not only represent a violation of fundamental human rights, but also have significant implications for the role expected of female leaders in Mexico.

A few days ago, I heard the following statement from a senior manager: until a few years ago, if you were not a heterosexual male engineer, you had no chance of getting to senior management positions in this institution. This statement helps me to understand in a few words a reality that surrounds Mexican women, present in each of the opportunities they have in their professional development.

The social construction and understanding of the role of women and their place within culture consider biological elements and social functions where women's potential is related to their talent and ideas and concepts generated throughout history (Tuñón, 2005).

I cannot fail to mention that in some way, each of the stories, literature and findings within this research have helped me to understand several moments in my life as well as to understand what have been the milestones that have made a difference in moving forward in my professional development first as an individual contributor and then as a team leader

in a context where I had to balance family and professional life without feeling guilty of not being in a perfect balance as well as to continue to be in an ideal balance. I also continue to believe that growth within an organisation lies in the ability to adapt in the development of competencies but also in the understanding of the environment and the generation of strategies that form support networks that strengthen self-confidence, self-efficacy and reduce those thoughts that inhibit professional development or the normalisation of ambivalent sexism that we have normalised within Mexican culture.

With regards to the impact of the figure represented by the Virgin of Guadalupe (Hernández, 2003), named the “female patrón” of Mexico, the group was questioned about the characters or elements shown by these religious figures relevant to the role expected of women, and found elements linked with protection as the most mentioned in the answers, maternity, and in elements as supportive of a leader, and even submission. From this answer, the idea or an impact of the "Marianismo" in constructing a protective role for women linked to maternity strengthens the idea of a social expectation of the female gender as mothers that protect, and any deployment that is different to that could cause dissonance (Englander et al. 2012).

Previous studies relate extrinsic religiosity and biblical literalism to benevolent sexism. Still, there are no apparent relationships with hostile sexism. Intrinsic religiosity and biblical literalism are positively associated with protective paternalism. (Burns and Busso, 2005)

In Mexican culture, traditional gender expectations are deeply entrenched, influencing women's perceptions of leadership roles. The concepts of *marianismo* and *machismo* perpetuate the expected roles for women and create an identity for Mexican women leaders in which self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy are linked to predefined societal roles. The introduction of women's suffrage in Mexican society has had a profound impact on the expectations placed upon women. The introduction of women's suffrage permitted women to participate in the political process and influence decisions that affect their lives, but despite these advances, relevant figures as the Virgin of Guadalupe and the “patron” in Mexico represent a significant cultural influence, as they promote traditional values that perpetuate inequality and stereotypes that influence expectations and opportunities for women.

The interviews conducted serve to corroborate the substantial influence of gender stereotypes on social norms and the expectations of both men and women where women may encounter obstacles and impediments to attaining leadership roles, and may be precluded from opportunities due to these deeply entrenched expectations and stereotypes. This paper presents evidence indicating that gender stereotypes embedded in Mexican culture have a detrimental influence on the opportunities and expectations of women in leadership positions.

Therefore, the construction of knowledge, assimilation, and transformation of experiences is basic for learning that responds to the demands of a particular context.

To explain the influence of society on behaviours that may both inhibit and promote leadership according to the gender role congruence perceived by women in Mexico, this work demonstrates how the relevance of leadership and the appropriation of a purpose to exercise leadership generated since childhood with a strong influence from the family nucleus.

Concerning the barriers identified by Mexican women, these obstacles are linked to concepts such as self-efficacy, social support, and women's effectiveness and their relationship to the expectations that Mexican women perceive from society, as the narratives showed.

Various factors influence the identity development of women leaders in Mexico within organisations. These include promoting gender equality, creating an inclusive and respectful leadership environment, encouraging shared decision-making, recognising the achievements of women leaders, empowering women, creating a supportive and collaborative culture, raising awareness of diversity and inclusion, establishing support networks and encouraging women's participation in decision-making.

A variety of factors influence women's identity development in Mexico. These include access to education, participation in the labour force, access to justice and gender equality, political participation, access to adequate health services, economic security, recognition and visibility of women's achievements, women's empowerment, and the creation of an environment that is safe and respectful of women's human rights.

Some of the normalising behaviours within the business sector mentioned in previous texts (Mena et al. 2019) that are considered part of sexist behaviours have been narrated by the interviewees.

Empirically, we can mention that, although not all people or figures exert an equally strong influence, important figures occupy a high level of importance and impact depending on the power of authority exercised by them, which affects how people believe they are perceived or accepted. This assertion is supported by previous studies, such as those conducted by Rice in 2000.

The latest information from the 2020 population and housing census at the national level showed that 33% of every 100 households have a female head of household, which is an impact statistic if one considers that the change in the role of women would also change the expected future gender role within organisations.

If this expectation remains unchanged, the number of positions in administrative activities may increase, but not the number of places in leadership positions. The idea of women's role as homemakers is being replaced by roles that require a redistribution of activities to cope with the new contextual conditions.

According to what has been exposed in this work, self-efficacy in each of the women interviewed is shown to be a relevant element in reducing the barriers they face when exercising their role as group leaders. The gender role perceived by them becomes a relevant factor in believing in their abilities and feeling empowered to perform those functions assigned to them.

The reinforcement of negative messages about the incompatibility between personal and work life affects perceptions of the skills needed within the professional and private spheres.

The impact of hostile sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1996) has been reduced over time in a society increasingly aware of the need for equal opportunities between men and women. However, benevolent sexism is still present by normalising some behaviours that reinforce the image of women as weak human beings in need of protection.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous analysis (Miscenko et al. 2017) on how traits and the self –impact the development of leader identity by influencing followers' perceptions of leader effectiveness. As in previous studies in other cultures, such as China, the narratives reflect a female-oriented role preference for home-oriented couples. Men are seen as providers, and male domination exists even with the possibility of violence, benevolence exists within the early stages of the couple, and hostility is related to later marital norms (Chen et al. 2009).

The findings of this research are consistent with previous studies on how traits and self-impact in leader identity development influence followers' perception of leader effectiveness. (Van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2003).

The rejection of female figures in leadership positions is present in some of the narratives identifying that there is an idea that within society, the expected role for women is related to their role as mothers mentioned in previous studies (Balogun, 2019). Within organisations, their ability to work in teams seems to be more expected in their working relationship with male colleagues.

Within the workplace, the women interviewed recounted experiences where the expectations for acceptance as leaders at work are to be intelligent, decisive and responsible, even to a greater extent than men because they are more challenged by their

decisions or mistakes. Stereotypes of Mexican women include being traditionally sweet, kind, submissive and helpful. These stereotypes also include being historically responsible for housework, childcare and care for older people. These stereotypes are also traditionally undervalued in the workplace and public life, contributing to the discrimination and gender inequality that Mexican women face.

Negative attitudes towards women that identify them as less competent than men and supposedly positive attitudes that reinforce traditional gender roles promoting care requirements for being weak generate beliefs of an adequate context (Ridgeway, 2011). Women receive what they deserve according to the expectations of the social context but exhibit social inequalities that these beliefs cognitively justify (Eagly and Carli, 2003).

Both men and women legitimise male dominance and strengthen sexist ideas validating these views with the belief of a fair world maintaining inequalities and prejudices on a daily basis (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

Gender stereotypes and social perceptions can influence expectations about leadership roles. These include long-held beliefs about what skills and characteristics are considered "right" for a leader, which can limit women's opportunities to serve in leadership roles. In reference to the work of Eagly and Carli (2003), with particular emphasis on their research on the influence of traditional gender roles and their impact on the perception and

evaluation of women's skills and competencies in specific contexts, such as The study corroborates previous research (Eagly and Heilman, 2016) on the influence of family background and personal and professional narratives on female leadership within a team in an organisational context.

The interpretation of the results based on the theory of Congruence of roles posed by Eagly and Karau (2002) provides information that considers the prejudices shown towards leadership for women, where the efficiency in specific tasks and the ability to access certain positions are determined within a social context. Time invested for duties that imply leadership and its impact on implications of a significant investment of time for this role are factors with high relevance for the group interviewed, constituting one of the most mentioned barriers identified by this study due to a perception of the inconsistency between the gender role and the role of leader.

The main constraints to Mexican women's access to leadership positions include lack of education and training, gender discrimination, wage inequality, lack of family support and lack of opportunities. These constraints are related to the low presence of women in leadership positions in Mexico. These constraints also contribute to gender inequality and the lack of women's empowerment in Mexico.

The role of women in Mexican society has changed in recent years. Women have gone from being seen as passive and submissive to being leaders and authority figures. This has been achieved through women's empowerment, the struggle for gender equality and women's participation in public life. Women have achieved success in fields such as politics, technology, activism and culture. This success has contributed to the increased visibility of women in Mexican society.

The last few years have significantly increased female leadership in Mexico. Some of the main advances include the increase in the number of women in political positions, the number of women in managerial positions in companies, although not at the highest levels of organisations, the increase in the number of women in the technology industry, as well as the increase in the participation of women in activism and the fight for women's rights, and the increase in the visibility of women in culture. These developments have contributed to the increased empowerment of women in Mexico.

Based on the responses of women interviewed, it can be inferred that effective leadership requires strong communication skills, active listening, responsibility, commitment, teamwork, decision-making ability, and the capacity to motivate and guide others towards common goals. Additionally, the importance of self-efficacy, self-confidence, and adaptability to different situations is highlighted.

The research concludes that situational factors, emotional adaptation to gender roles, self-efficacy, and self-esteem influence women's motivation to lead teams in Mexico. As well, the study features the impact of cultural and gender expectations on women's perception of leadership. These findings emphasise the significance of addressing cultural barriers and promoting self-efficacy and emotional adjustment to encourage women's participation in leadership roles in Mexico.

About the role expectations of women leaders in Mexico, several elements of this theory are pertinent, given that people learn by observing and modelling the behaviour of others. This implies that women in Mexico can cultivate leadership role expectations by observing other successful women leaders in their environment. This allows them to gain a more expansive understanding of leadership possibilities and develop confidence in their own abilities.

Since the constitutional reform that gave women the right to vote in Mexico, it has become clear that although the number of women in the labour market is increasing year on year, social expectations continue to influence the construction of female leadership, which still faces barriers to balanced personal and professional development.

The role of women in Mexico since they were permitted to vote provides insight into the achievements, challenges, and opportunities that remain in the pursuit of greater gender equality in the country. (Cano, 1996)

The introduction of women's suffrage in Mexican society had a profound impact on the expectations placed upon them. This resulted in women being able to participate in the political process and to influence the decisions that affect their lives. This, in turn, has led to an expansion of their opportunities and rights in society.

The acquisition of the right to vote had a profound impact on the expected role of women in Mexican society. Prior to attaining the right to vote, women were largely excluded from political participation and were perceived primarily as housewives and mothers. Nevertheless, following the acquisition of the right to vote, women began to exert a greater influence on political decision-making and to participate actively in the democratic life of the country (Escandón, 1994).

The right to vote enabled Mexican women to express their political opinions and defend their rights and interests in the public sphere. Furthermore, it facilitated their participation in political parties, social movements and civil organisations, thereby providing them with a platform to advocate for social and legislative change on issues that mattered to them, such as gender equality, domestic violence, education and reproductive health.

Furthermore, the right to vote contributed to a shift in social perceptions regarding the capacity and role of women in Mexican society (Hernández, 2023). As more women began to exercise their right to vote and hold public office, the long-standing gender stereotypes that had previously constrained women's participation in the political sphere were gradually eroded. This resulted in an increasing acknowledgment of women's capabilities and contributions across various domains, including politics.

These expectations are associated with models deeply rooted in Mexican culture, including Marianism, reflected in the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and concepts related to machismo, such as the concept of the employer, in the workplace.

Gender role expectations are transmitted through social processes in which individuals learn behaviours, norms and values associated with their gender. This role construction has been addressed by authors such as Sandra Bem (1974) and Judith Butler (2001). However, theories of gender socialisation are not absolute. Those theories that emphasise the role of biological factors in determining gender roles and behaviour ignore or minimise social and cultural elements or factors in identity construction. To consider these theories would be to exclude positions in which men and women could occupy any position they choose because they are limited by biological aspects.

The ideas of authors such as Eagly and Carli (2003) consider an approach that highlights the expectations of traditional gender roles and their influence on the perception and evaluation of women's skills and competencies within specific contexts, in this case the Mexican context in the workplace.

The work of Eagly and Carli (2003) is confirmed to exist in the context analysed by identifying entrenched gender stereotypes and associated social norms that may limit leadership opportunities for women within the Mexican context. These stereotypes and expectations create additional barriers and disadvantages for women, which must be overcome in order for them to be recognised and to access leadership roles on equal terms with men.

Eagly and Carli posit that in numerous societies, there are robust and deeply entrenched stereotypes about gender roles. These stereotypes ascribe specific characteristics and skills to men and women. They associate men with leadership qualities such as being aggressive, decisive and competitive, while associating women with qualities more related to other areas, such as being collaborative, sensitive and caring. This argument is valid within the context of Mexico.

The interviews revealed evidence of the significant impact of gender stereotypes on social norms and expectations of men and women. In the context of leadership, for instance, the

expectation that leaders should be male has led to the association of leadership with traditionally masculine leadership styles, such as managerial and authoritarian leadership. Consequently, women may encounter challenges and barriers in accessing leadership roles and may be denied opportunities due to these deeply entrenched expectations and stereotypes.

Eagly and Carli also highlight that women leaders are often subjected to greater pressure to demonstrate their skills and competence compared to male leaders, due to a phenomenon known as 'confirmation disadvantage'. This occurs when women have to work harder to prove their worth and overcome negative gender stereotypes. This additional pressure can hinder women's advancement into leadership roles, as they are subject to more intense scrutiny and the possibility of being judged more negatively if they make mistakes or fail to live up to expectations. The concept of confirmation disadvantage is identified within the interviews conducted as having a significant impact on women's leadership in Mexico.

In an absolute sense, we could not consider that women in Mexico are constrained not only by gender socialisation processes, but also by traditionally expected gender roles.

Gender stereotypes can impede the advancement of women in leadership roles in Mexico. These stereotypes include the belief that women are more emotional or less capable of making difficult decisions.

Although there is no specific mention of the studies conducted by Margaret Mead in relation to Mexican women leaders, relevant elements can be identified that may influence the role expectations of these leaders, considering the cultural and social context of Mexico. As Mexico is a country with a rich cultural diversity and deep-rooted traditions, gender role expectations may be influenced, as some cultures may have a more traditional and conservative view of female leadership roles. Conversely, organisational, and political structures in Mexico may present barriers or obstacles to women's access to leadership positions, which may include gender bias.

Given the pivotal role that education plays in women's advancement into leadership roles, access to quality education and opportunities to develop leadership skills can impact the role expectations of Mexican women leaders.

Traditional gender expectations can influence the work-life balance of women leaders in Mexico. Women often face greater pressure to balance multiple roles, which can hinder their ability to assume high-level leadership positions.

Women leaders in Mexico face several challenges due to discrimination and unconscious bias. These include a lack of promotion opportunities, a lack of recognition and a lack of institutional support.

Matching with narratives, a double standard of evaluation is often encountered by women leaders in comparison to their male counterparts. Women may be subjected to harsher judgement and experience unfair criticism based on gender stereotypes, which impedes their advancement in leadership roles. This double standard has the effect of losing talent and diverse perspectives, of preventing equal representation in decision-making, and of perpetuating gender inequalities at all levels of society.

According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Inequality Index, Mexico ranks 124th out of 153 in terms of gender equality, which supports the identification of women as a vulnerable group. The study highlights the high percentage of women who have experienced some form of violence in their personal and professional lives.

There is evidence within this study that show how women in Mexico who wish to gain access to jobs involving the management of work teams will have to change their profile in a work sector that discriminates against them or, if necessary, give up their aspirations, to get settling with administrative positions in middle management or part-time positions to the particularities of the work sector.

To address these challenges, it is necessary to implement cultural and educational change to break down gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for women leaders in Mexico. This should include gender equality education in schools and the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This encompasses mentoring programmes, professional networks and gender equality policies that facilitate inclusion and empowerment, thereby addressing systemic barriers and advocating for change that promotes equal opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The potential influence of observational learning, self-efficacy, modelling, reinforcement, social and cultural expectations on the leadership expectations of women in Mexico are factors that influence the development of the identity of leaders in Mexico. A cultural and educational transformation is necessary to challenge gender stereotypes and provide equal opportunities to women leaders.

According to the data collected in the interviews, the participants' comments suggest that gender equality education should be taught in educational institutions, and diversity and inclusion should be promoted in the workplace. Mentoring programs, professional networks and gender equality policies can facilitate inclusion and empowerment. Gender stereotypes and social perceptions can limit women's opportunities to hold leadership positions.

The influence of family background and personal and professional narratives on female leadership has been observed. Time constraints and perceived inconsistency between gender roles and the role of a leader are identified as barriers that women face. Reinforcing female roles can perpetuate stereotypes and underestimate female leadership. Role

models, work-life balance, and recognition of women's achievements are crucial to combating role inconsistencies.

The concept of self-efficacy is of significant importance in the context of reducing the barriers faced by women leaders. Negative messages about the incompatibility between personal and professional life can influence perceptions of the skills required. Sexist attitudes and behaviours serve to reinforce male dominance. Access to education, political participation, economic security, and a safe environment are factors that influence the development of women's identities. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have been particularly pronounced for women. It has been posited that the business sector has been characterized by the normalization of sexist behaviours. The evolving role of women within the domestic sphere may give rise to alterations in the conventional gender roles observed within organizational settings. The role of motherhood may impede the professional advancement of women.

The pervasive stereotypes of Mexican women contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination and gender inequality. Both men and women can reinforce male dominance and validate sexist ideas. Mexican women encounter a number of obstacles in their pursuit of leadership roles. The ability to lead effectively requires a number of key skills, including the capacity to communicate effectively, to actively listen, to take responsibility, to work in a team, to make decisions, and to motivate and guide others. In Mexico, situational factors, gender expectations, self-efficacy, and self-esteem influence women's motivation to lead.

It is imperative to address cultural and gender barriers in order to facilitate women's participation in leadership.

Female leaders in Mexico encounter a number of obstacles, including discrimination, a lack of promotion opportunities, recognition, institutional support, and a double standard of evaluation. Mexico is situated at a relatively low level in the global ranking of gender equality. In order to overcome gender stereotypes, promote equal opportunities and implement gender equality policies, it is necessary to implement cultural and educational changes. This encompasses mentoring programmes, professional networks, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

This thesis reinforces the notion that significant figures, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe and the "patron", play a pivotal role in the formation of women's identity, thereby creating obstacles to entry into organizations that espouse equitable environments devoid of gender distinction. These figures serve as exemplary models of excellence.

Furthermore, the thesis posits that the aforementioned figures exert a profound impact on women's education.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Given the limitations of this study, it can be considered that the sample analysed as part of the chosen methodology makes it impossible to take the result of this study as generalised.

The sample used for convenience could also represent a limitation for this research since it could be considered to reduce the reliability of the study. However, the constitution of the sample contemplates a planned choice of profiles that provide a heterogeneous perspective according to the diversity of profiles.

One of the limitations of the chosen sample is the impossibility of generalising the results. The sample chosen for this study does not consider different religious groups, age ranges, sexual orientations, or specific populations in different states of the Mexican Republic, which could generate more information to know if the results of this study are consistent for all groups.

Additionally, the researcher's experience is considered a possible source of limitations. Due to her experience, a possible mistake by not including questions that could have helped delve deeper into the subject or omitting an important concept that would have allowed the findings generated with this study to be expanded and the handling of the English language as a second language.

As a limitation, we can consider that since this is an exploratory study, the results of this research cannot be declared conclusive, given that it involves a small sample that prevents the generalisation of results.

The changes in behaviour and dynamics brought up by the pandemic may be possible limitations to this study as they impact women's family and social behaviours and dynamics in relation to recent years and may affect some of the responses provided during the study.

The use of technological elements for the generation of interviews due to the sanitary conditions represents a limitation for the access to the interviewees.

There may be additional limitations to this research, such as a lack of representativeness of the sample in terms of socio- economic, educational or occupational diversity. Additionally there may be limitations in the validity and reliability of the instruments used to collect research data.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the theoretical literature and the narratives within this study have recognised the impact of elements such as expectations, gender roles, stereotypes, situational factors, and postures on leadership implications, further research requires factors involved in women that evade or reject leadership positions in specific Mexican contexts. There are positions or sectors traditionally perceived as masculine that can contribute to the study on the impact of these elements in the face of specific cultural and social factors. As even this analysis has potential limitations, the possibility of future studies is latent.

The sample used for this study does not represent the totality of the Mexican population, which could lead to bias in the results. Studies related to Mexicans and their nature have not covered the diverse ethnic and cultural groups within the country's population nor encompassed the personality traits according to the differences encountered within the Mexican territory (Flores, 2011). It will be necessary to conduct studies that display characteristics in different segments of the Mexican population, identifying some models in the sampling that include variables that provide for the identification of personality traits or groups that share similar cultural features. Future research could be oriented towards specific ethnic groups.

Future research might include quantitative research that could contemplate the qualitative perspective of this study, and that could be carried out with large sample size, as well as possible relationships between specific variables.

It is suggested that research be conducted on agender perspectives within specific sectors that allow a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon, enriching projects that strengthen gender equality.

Also, studies could encompass items that measure the constructs of self-esteem and self-efficacy to relate them to elements such as role expectations.

Under the trend of the increase of women in the labour market, future research could generate more information that would allow for a deeper understanding of the structure of households and social policies that allow for a better adaptation to current needs. At the same time, the research could be conducted on mechanisms to better respond to the development of women and families in the current context, reducing the gaps caused by discrimination and occupational segregation.

Researchers argue that inequitable participation in senior management positions is mainly due to female stereotypes contrary to the roles that most cultures visualise as leadership profiles (Contreras et al. 2012). These studies emphasise the need not lose sight of the fact

that it is the characteristics of women's profiles that could benefit organisations, and under no circumstances should women in leadership positions within organisations be expected to imitate male leadership roles.

Following the above, the main contribution of this paper is the exploration of new elements that allow a better understanding of the situational factors that affect women in the Mexican context on their way to leadership positions.

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ANNEXES

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Thank you for your time in participating in this research. This interview aims to analyse the elements that affect leadership among Mexican women, and your leadership experiences are of great value to the study.

Name:

The Company you work for:

Work activities:

The number of people under your responsibility:

E-mail:

Do you consider that prior knowledge in the professional area affects the confidence with which you lead your team? Why?

Which of the following elements do you consider most essential to increase your confidence in leading your team:

The length of experience in the role you perform.

The level of education in the subjects related to the role you perform

The experience that the people in your team have in their work.

The similarity that people in team and leadership positions have in the ideology of the goals they pursue.

Why?

What element do you consider necessary for several Mexican leaders to establish a common purpose?

How could a Mexican leader develop autonomy by working with other team leaders?

What situations could negatively impact a leader's authority when working with other leaders?

What is your purpose as a leader?

How did you arrive at that purpose?

Is there a relationship between your experience and the way you solve current problems in your leadership? Why?

What personal and professional characteristics make you capable of being a leader?

What personal and professional characteristics make you feel capable of leading your team?

What environmental factors affect your enthusiasm for leading teams?

How did you become a team leader?

What role does emotional adaptation play when you are a team leader?

Do you consider that being an effective leader is related to your ability to understand your feelings and those of your team to achieve your organisation's goal? Why?

What is the experience that has marked you the most as a leader?

What experiences have shaped your leadership style?

In general, what attributes define a woman's ability to hold a leadership position?

What are the elements that describe effective female leadership?

What factors external to your organisation affect your success as a female team leader?

What are the three most essential elements that would make you feel like a poor leader?

Do you consider that physique has anything to do with leadership?

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Thank you for your time in participating in this research. This interview aims to analyse the elements that affect Mexican women's leadership, and your leadership experience is of great value to the study.

Name:

What do you do?

The Company you work for:

The number of people under your responsibility:

Place of birth:

Place of residence:

Age:

Where have you lived?

What is the best thing about your current position?

Do you consider yourself a leader?

Why?

What is the price you have had to pay for this position?

LEADERSHIP

What is leadership for you?

What characteristics should a leader have?

What would be the main problem of a leader?

STATUS BEHAVIOURS

Mention at least three behaviours linked to leadership

What is your role model as a female leader?

Why are they your role models?

Are there different behaviours between men and women? Why?

IMPORTANCE

What benefits does the leadership role give people?

Why would it be necessary for a person to be a leader?

Why is it relevant in Mexico for people to be a leader?

Why is it relevant for women to hold leadership positions?

IDENTITY BUILT BY SOCIETY

What does it mean to be a leader in Mexico?

What is the disadvantage of being a leader in Mexico?

Is it the same for men and women?

If it is different, how would it be different?

CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Nowadays, is there a possibility of equality for developing men and women as leaders?

What would be the main problems for a woman to exercise leadership in Mexico?

How to be a leader in a country like Mexico?

What is the main stereotype you think a female leader faces in the Mexican context?

What role does a father expect from his daughter in adult life?

What role does a mother expect from her daughter in adult life?

What does a brother expect from his sister in adult life?

What does a sister expect from her sister in adult life?

What role does a boss expect from her sister in adult life?

What role does a co-worker expect from a woman partner?

In Mexican society, what role do women expect in their adult life?

WHAT MOTIVATES A PERSON TO BE A LEADER?

What internal elements motivate women to take on leadership in any activity?

What external elements motivate women to take on leadership in any activity?

What are the barriers that women experience when they take on leadership roles?

What would you say is a leader's level of self-efficacy (confidence that what they are doing is correct)?

Is it different for men and women? Why?

Of the following definition of the Spanish Royal Academy of the term "patrón", which do you consider is linked to the concept of leadership? Why?

"Patrón":

A person who employs workers

A person served by a servant

Protector/advocate

Saint is chosen as the protector of people of religious, professional, or civil congregations

Since the Mexican population identifies the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe as independent of the religion, they profess to regard her as a symbol in Mexico.

Which characteristics of the Virgen of Guadalupe figure could impact the role that Mexican society expects from women and why?

COMPOSITION OF THE FULL SAMPLE

Code	group	category	people on charge	civil status	# sons	type of activity
L1	group 1	full time	9	married	0	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L2	group 1	full time	1	single	1	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L3	group 1	full time	2	single	0	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L4	group 1	full time	27	married	2	Activities linked to transformation of goods
L5	group 1	full time	8	married	2	Activities linked to transformation of goods
L6	group 1	full time	350	married	2	Activities linked to transformation of goods
L7	group 2	housewife	0	married	2	House wife
L8	group 2	housewife	0	married	3	House wife
L9	group 2	part time	0	married	2	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L10	group 2	part time	0	married	2	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L11	group 2	full time	17	single	0	Activities linked to transformation of goods
L12	group 2	part time	4	married	1	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L13	group 2	part time	0	married	1	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L14	group 2	full time	75	married	1	Activities linked to transformation of goods
L15	group 2	full time	8	single	1	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L16	group 2	part time	4	married	3	Profesional services, cientific and techics
L17	group 2	housewife	0	married	2	House wife
L18	group 2	full time	0	single	0	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L19	group 2	part time	0	married	2	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L20	group 2	full time	0	married	0	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L21	group 2	part time	0	married	1	Profesional services, cientific and techics
L22	group 2	full time	0	married	1	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L23	group 2	full time	45	single	1	Activities linked with services where main input is knowledge and personal experience
L24	group 2	part time	0	married	3	Profesional services, cientific and techics
L25	group 2	part time	0	married	3	Profesional services, cientific and techics
L26	group 2	full time	8	married	3	Activities linked to transformation of goods

EXPLORATION OF TYPES OF RESEARCH

As part of the annexes to this research, some of the concepts considered in the research methodology are added.

Choosing the right methodological approach, ensuring accuracy in data collection, maintaining scientific rigour and contributing to existing knowledge are fundamental aspects of conducting high quality research and making a significant contribution to the academic field.

The analysis of research types is essential for a doctoral thesis as it ensures the appropriate choice of methodological approach, accuracy of data collection, scientific rigour and contribution to existing knowledge.

Although the classification of the existing types of studies may not be absolute, and a study can be placed in more than one group, a possible classification within the approach to qualitative studies shown by Müggenburg and Perez (2007) could be:

According to the level of depth of the planned search for the knowledge to be obtained:

- Descriptive studies can be typical studies that describe the characteristics of a unique sample or comparative studies that describe the difference between two or more

groups, or case studies that intensely describe a study unit (Thomlison, 2001, Tripodi and Bender, 2010).

- Analytical studies that explain and account for a phenomenon or behaviour provide a relationship between variables (Hunter and Schmidt, 2004).
- Predictive studies that examine behaviour-controlling interventions and analyse the results under different conditions to establish the expected effects allow offering elements to establish norms and controls (Lassen et al., 2016).

Knowledge issued by qualitative research provides information on social context, being a dynamic process that allows the understanding of the why and how things happen from the perspective of individuals.

According to the definition of Taylor and Bogdan (1984), the objective of qualitative research is to provide a research methodology that allows an understanding of the complex world of lived experiences from the perspective of people who live it. Qualitative studies are focused on subjects from within the phenomenon to be studied through inquiry in which the researcher, through interaction with the participants, seeks to answer some questions based on the subject's experiences and the meaning that each person gives to that experience.

Based on the idea of Taylor and Bogdan (1984), the qualitative methodology offers the opportunity to understand lived experiences by considering people's points of view. Depending on the depth of the analysis, it is possible to design descriptive or interpretative studies.

In accordance with Dankhe (1989), there are different types of research: exploratory, descriptive, and correlational. Considering Hernandez Sampieri's (2003) research, the type of investigation depends on the state of knowledge on the research topic according to the review, the theoretical framework, and the approach to be given to the study.

Exploratory studies have the objective of examining a topic or research problem that has been little studied or even addressed previously. The main objective of exploratory studies is to generate a theoretical foundation and empirically justify a hypothesis that can be tested in a subsequent study to test hypotheses. There must be sufficient evidence to think of a reasonable and relevant hypothesis following exploratory studies; however, it cannot be considered, thus generating a balance where studies do not create conclusions, only information for future studies. (Kraemer and Blaser, 2016.)

A second type is descriptive studies that seek to specify the critical properties of the individuals, groups, and communities subjected to analysis. Descriptive research studies are an intermediate point between exploratory and explanatory designs. They are specially chosen for social work as they provide a large amount of information on the circumstances

and environments studied. These studies aim to describe or explain the relationships between phenomena, events, and situations by providing a general picture of the phenomenon or the population studied by describing these situations (Thomlison, 2001, Tripodi and Bender, 2010). These studies do not explain or confirm relationships between variables, but their main task is to describe social phenomena.

Within quantitative research, descriptive studies can provide information to clearly define specific variables by determining their status and the relationship of these variables to other variables. In qualitative approaches, descriptive research is a way of inquiry allowing the researcher to observe, document, and detail specific activities in a specific social context or environment, thereby pointing to possible transferable conclusions (Salkind, 2007).

Other types are the correlational studies that seek to answer research questions to know how a concept or variable may behave by knowing the behaviour of one or several related variables, and it is important to mention the exploratory studies that, rather than describing the concepts or phenomenon, seek to answer the causes of physical or social events. This method writes the relationship between pairs of variables resulting from single group surveys without establishing cause and effect relationships. The correlations show the strength of the relationship between the variables but only pertain to that single sample. Sometimes causal relationships can be generated based on the correlations, but additional studies with a different structure are required to determine cause and effect (Black, 2002).

Some of the typical qualitative studies have been shown by various authors from different perspectives or fields (Easter, 2016, Harding, 2018, Fargier and Guillaume, 2020). Qualitative research is a multi-method process of data collection, including linguistic symbols and verbal communication stories and texts, to understand processes aiming to achieve descriptions that reflect real-life concepts and behaviours. There are four paradigms within qualitative research: positivism, interpretivism critical as post-modern, qualitative positivism, and current scientific interpretivism. These could be considered paradigms that can produce scientific knowledge (Gephart Jr., R. 2018).

Based on the characteristics of each of the methodologies, the qualitative methodology was chosen for this study.

The qualitative approach originated with Max Weber (1864 - 1920), who recognised the description and measurement of social variables where subjective meanings and the context in which the phenomenon occurs are relevant. The theoretical, methodological, and epistemic foundations of qualitative research are based on the trends that emerged with greater force through the second half of the XX century.

In qualitative research, each subject is influenced by their social relations, which means that reality requires an analysis of these subjects' way of thinking, living, and feeling in order to be understood (Long and Johnson, 2000).

The construction of knowledge depends on concepts that seek to understand the reality where scientific processes are affected by the ideas of human beings according to their environment, where they are participating, and their relationship with others (James and Busher, 2009). The theoretical framework considers the scope of the research; according to Eisner (1998), there are six characteristics within qualitative studies that contribute differently. These elements tend to focus on what they require in the natural and everyday context of events; the self as an instrument by considering the researcher as the principle of the measuring instrument in their participation in the research.

Medina Bermudez (2001) used Kuhn's definition to recall the meaning of a paradigm as a set of its interrelated positions regarding the social world, providing a philosophical framework for studies orientating a researcher to establish appropriate criteria for the appropriate use of tools that provide epistemology.

Within the qualitative research approach, it is based on open lines focusing on the natural environment as an important part where the meaning is extracted from the data in a relevant way. It is not based on statistics; some of the benefits of this approach in the interpretative richness include the possibility of deepening meanings, extensiveness, and contextualisation of the phenomenon. This approach can be developed through the recurrent inductive process by analysing multiple subjective realities that do not have a

direct sequence. Generally, the inductive method associates with qualitative research, while the deductive method is frequently related to quantitative research. (Fernández and Díaz, 2002)

The richness of qualitative studies does not represent a rivalry with quantitative studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, Sandelowski, 2010). The understanding, analysing, and construction of valuable and reliable knowledge. A rigour within the research is possible to gather information and provide meaning to it based on previous conceptualisations and added findings that could be discussed and generate data that can answer concerns or generate new positions. There is the possibility of developing a study that allows going beyond the unlimited data by approximation. The increase of qualitative research is based on the benefits that this method recognises the role of the researcher as an important factor in deciding on an approach and understanding the information gathered by allowing different people to express their points of view in an open way to know in greater depth some perspectives that make up different social groups that allow a better understanding of the way of being in society. (Balderas, I., 2013).

According to this paradigm, the researcher creates interpretative practices for the materials, which can be analysed subsequently. Therefore, each woman interviewed represents a case that presents objects whose narrative has a meaning, so that, during the

interview, data is gathered by taking into account verbal and nonverbal communication, analysing the language and the interpretation that each word could have within the context in which it is studied; thus, resulting in a narrative that describes the results (Smith, 2019).

The descriptive qualitative research design focuses on describing the data, pretending to describe what happens through what people say, and avoiding interpretations. It is carried out through ethnographic, phenomenological, bibliographic, documentary, or action research studies, generating controversy by demonstrating that it is impossible to avoid interpretations altogether. In contrast, interpretative studies seek to provide an explanation and to understand more complex social facts and phenomena, further seeking to understand motivations and meaning, interactions, and cultural and social groups, where individuals act before the context, generating disagreement about the objectivity of the studies due to possible biases of the interpretation. Even with these arguments, considering what Sandelowski 2010 mentioned, both description and interpretation must be valid criteria that address objectivity. Based on the fact that knowledge of any phenomenon implies knowing facts, these facts are within a particular context the observer recognises. Descriptions are not free of interpretation; the phenomenological description or the grounded theory represents a low inference interpretation where more than one researcher, regardless of the interpretation, can find facts that allow the generation of information.

An interpretative nature is attributing meanings by discovering connotations of events for the experiencer (Smith, 2017). Use of expressive language and the presence of the voice in the text, attention to the concrete by delving into the object of the study based on the existing to make broader statements and the criteria for judging information, considering the elements of coherence and the usefulness for the instrument (Pozzebon, 2004).

The interpretative phenomenological analysis enables researchers to understand the human experience from a deep perspective by providing a framework for understanding the significance of the phenomena studied and allowing researchers to study the meaning of phenomena from a holistic perspective.

The interpretative phenomenological analysis offers the possibility to collect rich and in-depth data providing a deeper understanding of the social interaction between individuals and allowing researchers to develop deeper theories and explanations of the phenomena studied by exploring the underlying factors that influence the issues being studied and offering a rich and unique perspective on the issues being studied.

In agreement with the classification of Hernandez Samperi et al. 2003 for research design, we can find experimental designs made up of pre-experiments, pure experiments, or quasi-experiments, as well as non-experimental designs divided into transactional, transversal, or longitudinal designs. Based on this classification, experimental designs can be developed in

a laboratory context with artificial situations as a control of the independent variables that pertain to the research problem under a fictitious scenario or carried out in the field with realistic situations where the independent variables are manipulated under conditions as controlled as possible by the experimenter (Frey, 2018).

On the other hand, the non-experimental design focuses on the study of reality in a natural dynamic, seeking to describe, explain, and predict reality from a natural dynamic approach (Clamp et al., 2004). Therefore, the choice between design has a relevant effect on the time-related dimension of the study, the number of moments at which data are collected within a specific time, the type of problem to be solved, the desired control of variables within the experimental design, as well as the possibility of the replication, which is an important part of the chosen design (Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora, 2015).

According to the researcher's intervention on the phenomenon studied:

- Observational research is based on the use of techniques that allow the researchers to acquire information through direct observation and recording of phenomena, but without any intervention (Boslaugh, 2008, Edmonds and Kennedy, 2017)
- Experimental and quasi-experimental that have an intentional intervention in which one or more variables are manipulated in order to analyse the consequences that this manipulation has on one or more other variables (Muijs, 2004).

Corresponding to the moment at which the phenomenon occurs and its registration:

- Retrospective studies inquire about events that occur in the past and allow the formulation of hypotheses about possible associations about outcomes. (Salkind, 2010)
- Prospective, where the information is recorded as the phenomena or events programmed to be observed occur to the observer (Salkind, 2010).

According to the number of occasions in which data on the phenomenon under study are collected:

- Transversal studies are where data are collected at a single point in time, at a single point in time (Swanborn, 2010).
- Longitudinal studies are where data are collected over time, in specified periods, in order to make inferences about changes, their determinants, and consequences (Taris, 2000, Derrington, 2019).

The transversal study is proposed because of the cost and time conditions for carrying it out. The decision considers that although it is not possible to make reliable forecasts or predict possible causalities between variables through this type of study, with this decision, it is possible to carry out the analysis with reasonable control in the selection of participants.

Giving to the sense of the explanation of the phenomenon:

- Case-control studies require the monitoring of two groups where individuals are selected and matched on a common set of characteristics such as demographic, gender, education, income, residence, etcetera (Lavrakas, 2008).
- Cohort studies examine a population group subject to a risk over time to identify whether a particular cause generates an effect (Glenn, 2005).

Attribution to the source of the data collection:

- Documentary studies are based on records and documents from which information is obtained (Wagner, 2012).
- Field studies carried out at the site where the phenomenon occurs are undertaken in the real world and generally prohibit the direct manipulation of the context by the researchers (Salkind, 2010).
- Some types of qualitative research use group interviews, structured and unstructured interviews, qualitative observation methods, and ethnographic research or social network analysis.

By the ultimate purpose of the investigation:

- Basic research-oriented studies focus on the accumulation of information or the formation of a theory (Reagan, 1967).

- Applied research focuses on the solution of an immediate problem, offering elements for technological applications or decision-making (Frey, 2018).

Quantitative research collects and uses quantitative data on variables, and while apparently easy to execute, it is also susceptible to error. This kind of research is widely known, as well as popular and familiar to people in general, as it is a standard method for collecting data and opinions. Some ways to gather information by using this method can be self-questionnaires, mail questionnaires, handing out questionnaires, structured interviews, and online and computer-based surveys. However, it is important to consider that the correct choice to gather data is the basis for obtaining an appropriate answer rate, which is necessary for this methodology for statistical validity (Leman, 2010).

The quantitative methodology, according to SAGE research methods, processes and structure data through:

- Data mining with this methodology researcher looks to the data to identify categories of cases, extreme cases, relations between characteristics, or establish the nature of the network (Byrne, 2017)
- The experimental design is used to examine the effect of a treatment on some outcome, where experiments can be conducted with individual participants or groups. (Frey, 2018)

- Health data can improve the description and explanation of a real phenomenon by analysing qualitative data applicable to health researchers. This data analysis applies the principles of inductive reasoning by predetermined codes types (Bradley, 2007)
- Psychometrics refers to the measurement of abilities, attitudes, and traits through a questionnaire. Research studies the relationship between the traits of participants and their responses to items on the test. These tests can provide important information for model generation. (Salkind, 2010).
- Structured observation is the direct observation of an environment without interaction with the participants in a systematic way by collecting data according to predefined rules and procedures. (Given, 2008)
- Survey research collects information from a sample by asking questions through various methods of recruiting participants. This method collects data and uses a variety of instruments (Andres, 2012).

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- Field studies carried out at the site where the phenomenon occurs are undertaken in the real world and generally prohibit the direct manipulation of the context by the researchers (Salkind, 2010).
- Some types of qualitative research use group interviews, structured and unstructured interviews, qualitative observation methods, and ethnographic research or social network analysis.

Per Arnal et al. (1992) studies on the contributions of the qualitative current in areas such as education, the study of phenomena from the perspective of individuals considers their frame of reference and the focus of this method for the knowledge of how people experience and interpret their environment acting accordingly. The focus of this research is

aimed at the interpretative grounds represented by de Heideggerian hermeneutic (1962), which intends to find the true meaning of the narrative verbalised by participants, where the process of categorisation of the obtained data represents a challenge for this investigation to be able to capture reality appropriately in relation with behaviours.

By the ultimate purpose of the investigation:

- Basic research-oriented studies focus on the accumulation of information or the formation of a theory (Reagan, 1967).
- Applied research focuses on the solution of an immediate problem, offering elements for technological applications or decision-making (Frey, 2018).

Qualitative research can be:

Descriptive:

- Ethnographical design: The researcher observes and interacts with study participants in their real environment or context (Atkinson, 2001).
- Bibliographical or narrative design: Research based on natural narrative processes to collect and analyse data can plan studies that include narratives as part of a relational process (Andrews et al. 2013).
- Phenomenological design: Personal knowledge emphasizes the importance of personal perspective and interpretation by obtaining information about motivations and ways of acting (Byrne, 2017).

- Action research design: A systematic methodology is designed to diagnose problems to generate rapid solutions, used in educational research (Reason and Bradbury, 2008).
- Documentary design: Evaluation of documents with a social or historical value around an event or individual generates narratives about the information analysed (Tight, 2019).

Interpretative:

- Grounded theory: Research method based on systematically collected and analysed data used to uncover social processes such as aspects of group behaviours or social relations (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).
- Analytical induction: The methodology used to collect data by seeking to find new varieties of data whose review analyses such data applicable to a broader range of cases (Pascale, 2011).

The descriptive qualitative research design focuses on describing the data, pretending to describe what happens through what people say, and avoiding interpretations. It is carried out through ethnographic, phenomenological, bibliographic, documentary, or action research studies, generating controversy by demonstrating that it is impossible to avoid interpretations altogether. In contrast, interpretative studies seek to provide an explanation and to understand more complex social facts and phenomena, further seeking

to understand motivations and meaning, interactions, and cultural and social groups, where individuals act before the context, generating disagreement about the objectivity of the studies due to possible biases of the interpretation. Even with these arguments, considering what Sandelowski 2010 mentioned, both description and interpretation must be valid criteria that address objectivity. Based on the fact that knowledge of any phenomenon implies knowing facts, these facts are within a particular context the observer recognises. Descriptions are not free of interpretation; the phenomenological description or the grounded theory represents a low inference interpretation where more than one researcher, regardless of the interpretation, can find facts that allow the generation of information.

According to the classification of Hernandez Samperi et al. 2003 for research design, we can find experimental designs made up of pre-experiments, pure experiments, or quasi-experiments, as well as non-experimental designs divided into transactional, transversal, or longitudinal designs. Based on this classification, experimental designs can be developed in a laboratory context with artificial situations as a control of the independent variables that pertain to the research problem under a fictitious scenario or carried out in the field with realistic situations where the independent variables are manipulated under conditions as controlled as possible by the experimenter (Frey, 2018).

On the other hand, the non-experimental design focuses on the study of reality in a natural dynamic, seeking to describe, explain, and predict reality from a natural dynamic approach

(Clamp et al., 2004). Therefore, the choice between design has a relevant effect on the time-related dimension of the study, the number of moments at which data are collected within a specific time, the type of problem to be solved, the desired control of variables within the experimental design, as well as the possibility of the replication, which is an important part of the chosen design (Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora, 2015).