EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN MÉXICO

A Dissertation

by

ANA PATRICIA MORENO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2012

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,   Gary N. McLean
Committee Members, Toby M. Egan
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                                  Jia Wang
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ABSTRACT

Experiences of Women Leaders in México. (August 2012)

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This qualitative study sought to understand better the experiences of women leaders in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. Seven women leaders were interviewed. They shared personal experiences, reflections, feelings, ideas, and actions related to their leadership positions in different arenas, such as corporate, political, academic, and non-profit organizations. Phenomenology was the most appropriate type of inquiry for this study because its objective was to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of women in leadership positions in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. I conducted a thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews to discover commonalities among the experiences of the participants. A list of preliminary themes emerged. I made follow-up contacts with the participants to verify the findings, and themes were revised and accepted.

The analysis revealed insights into six themes: preparation, innate characteristics, move under principles and ethical values, the job itself is very important, to find a balance between personal and professional time as a goal, and benefits that the

leadership position give to them. A total of five subthemes emerged under four of the six themes: academic, the women leaders want to have an impact in social responsibility activities, they like challenges and being competitive, independence, and recognition.

To my beloved husband and best friend, Víctor Manuel Moreno, who has been extremely supportive of this project and with whom I have shared more than 31 years of a very happy marriage. This is, as many others, a joint project and undoubtedly you are also earning a PhD degree, a "honoris causa" from my heart. I could not have done any of this without your understanding and love. Thank you for being always with me; I will always love you. Thanks!

To my three kids—Ana, my roomy; and Víctor and Juan, who stayed more than two years without a close Mom and their little sister. I had a wonderful time with Ana during our stay in College Station; she was so funny when she was trying to help me with the Stats terminology, or how to reach the number of pages for an essay by being descriptive, and she said I should use lots and lots of adjectives. I cannot forget all the long hours she spent at the computer lab of the college of Education and Human Resource Development. She was a great companion. Víctor and Juan grew up, personally and professionally, while I was away from home, and they always tried to keep our family together, even though we were thousands of miles apart.

To you, my beloved ones, my family, who mean the world to me, I recognize all the sacrifices we all made so I could study in this doctoral program. Thank you for your understanding and support. I love you. *Los quiero mucho.* Also, to three special women leaders who have continuously influenced me: my grandmother, *Doña Lala*; my mother, *Gloria*, *Mami*; and my sister, *Gloriosa*. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for setting such a wonderful example of leadership and love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the women leaders who inspired me and participated in this study, and who took the time to share their success and great stories with me. They not only shared their experiences, they opened their hearts, and I am sure they will also set an example and inspire and encourage other women to take chances.

I want to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Dr. Gary N. McLean, a wonderful professor, person, and an extremely good chair of my committee. In spite of his hectic international agenda, he was always there for me, answering e-mails wherever he was, no matter if it was a business trip or a personal matter. I also want to thank my advisory committee members, Dr. Toby Egan for his insights, Dr. Jia Wang for her positive inquiry, and Dr. Anita McCormick for her enthusiasm and empathy. I was blessed to have had all of you on my committee.

A special mention is to my *compadres*, Juan and Carmen Villa. I certainly would have not reached Texas A&M if they were not part of this community. I appreciate everything they did for us, but mainly for being so kind and loving to Ana, and for letting us feel we were not alone, but close to friends, to family, and to home.

I could not say mission accomplished today without the support and understanding of my family, my extended family, and my lifelong friends. My gratitude to those friends and relatives who made special trips to College Station: Irma and Poncho, Butcher, Meche, and Tere; Gaby, María, and my Mother in law. And to all of

those who have been in touch through the Internet and have been a great support. All of them have always been with me, always.

I would like to thank all of my professors, classmates, administrative auxiliaries, and my computer lab mates for their lessons, support, and unconditional friendship, especially to Dr. Kelly Peck Parrot, Dr. Mary Alfred, Latoya, Priyanka, Aga, Dan, Pat, Paula, Merlissa, Carlos, and Kathy. I also want to thank all of the consultants and staff at the Writing Center of Texas A&M for their patience and for sharing their knowledge with me. All of you played an important role in my stay in College Station.

Finally, I acknowledge the support received from the *Tecnológico de Monterrey*, the institution where I worked for the last 18 years, the one I attended as a graduate student twice, and my husband's and sons' alma mater. It is also the institution that good lifelong friends have attended, and the place where I have met very good friends, students, and colleagues. It represents the people who allowed me to come to the United States to pursue a dream I had 30 years ago, to study in a doctoral program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Furst and Reeves (2008) affirmed that management scholars attribute the failure

of women to reach the executive suite to a number of causes, such as stereotypical gender

roles, organization level factors, and structural constraints. Despite these factors, there

are women leaders whose experiences can help researchers examine the factors

associated with their success and the ways they have achieved top leadership positions in

México, a predominantly male-dominated culture.

México's History and Cultural Influences

Mexican culture is characterized as conservative, patriarchal, and machista

(Hernandez & Riva, 1995). The masculine culture so prevalent in México has manifested

inequalities in the education of females and their job opportunities throughout history.

Villa (2008) recognized that this situation can be traced to indigenous cultures. Aztec

and Mayan texts describe how girls needed to learn housework from an early age, and

how their education consisted of family values and obedience as female characteristics.

In contrast, boys studied subjects that led them to gain an occupation and prestige in their

society.

Villa (2008) also described the Spanish colonial period of influence in México

from 1575 to 1810. Education was based on one religion: Catholicism. The Spanish

government had an unequal social structure based on uneven wealth distribution, job or

profession, race, and gender. Spanish women were in charge of native and Spanish girls'

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This dissertation follows the style of *Human Resource Development Review*.

education. They encouraged one religion, Catholicism, and one language, Spanish. Reading and writing were not considered appropriate for women. Few schools taught women to read and write because it was a privilege given only to Spanish girls who belonged to high socio-economic classes. By the end of this colonial period, new ideologies from Europe brought the notion that all women needed to be educated (Gonzalbo, 1998).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, México was living its first years as an independent country. Some elementary and vocational schools were founded and gave women access to paid jobs (Villa, 2008). Additionally, new educational ideologies permeated Mexican society, and, as a consequence, new women's schools were created, such as the Escuela Secundaria para Personas del Sexo Femenino (Female Persons' Middle School). This school's curriculum included history, basic writing, mathematics, and subjects such as women's duties in society, mother's duties in families, home economics, and manual arts and crafts. Vocational subjects were directed to jobs that were *suitable* for women at the time, like teaching and gardening. Therefore, even though higher education was not forbidden for women, women did not have either a sufficient or a strong academic preparation to gain access to future educational opportunities (Montero & Esquivel, 1995, as cited in Piñera-Ramirez, 2002). There was a high school for men only, the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (National High School). Consequently, only two women graduated from higher education during the nineteenth century in México (Villa, 2008).

Garcia (2002, cited in Piñera-Ramirez, 2002) stated that, in the twentieth century, education in México continued to be influenced by social and political forces that

segregated women. Moreover, even to today, México's government has encouraged women to be teachers, a profession that continues to be saturated with women and is characterized by low salaries (Villa, 2008). In addition, Villa declared that popular media and religion have facilitated stereotypical gender roles by encouraging women to enter socially acceptable professions, such as teaching and fulfilling their domestic responsibilities. Therefore, media and religion made it clear to women that their primary responsibilities included reproduction, denying themselves, and being humble (García, 2002, as cited in Piñera-Ramirez 2002). As these inequalities can be traced throughout Mexican history, today this division is often veiled as cultural expectations. Stereotypes regarding women's roles are still promoted. Therefore, it is understandable that there are so few women in leadership positions in México.

Nevertheless, in the last decades, México has seen many women entering the work force and even breaking the glass ceiling that has historically prevented women from achieving leadership positions in almost any organization, but still women are not a majority; they do not represent even half of Mexican leaders.

<div align="center">Purpose, Need, and Significance of the Study</div>

The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a woman leader in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture; México, a country where machismo is prevalent (Hernandez & Riva, 1995). The purpose of this qualitative study was addressed through the use of in-depth interviews. Women have gained leading positions across different kinds of organizations in México. However, they still represent only a small percentage of leaders, despite the value that women might bring to leadership roles. Moreover, there is a discourse appealing to more

diversity, inclusiveness, and equality of opportunity for success for both men and women (Nelson & Quick, 2009). In my view, this phenomenon may have different causes, such as stereotyping gender roles, the priorities in women's choices, organizational practices, and cultural forces.

This study promises to add to the literature on women leaders in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. This study explored the experiences of women leaders in different organizations in México, such as corporate, academic, political, and non-profit organizations.

Understanding the needs of women in the workplace should be addressed by Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners and researchers as more women comprise today's workforce. Any organization should benefit from the knowledge, experience, and characteristics of women and how they practice leadership. There is a huge social cost to wasting the talent and energy that women could bring to organizations, with their unique style of leadership. Astin and Leland (1991) made the point that women's leadership style focuses on the idea of persons engaged in collective action rather than on the idea of leadership as leaders and followers. Astin and Leland also acknowledged that a woman's nurturing characteristic represents a strength instead of a weakness.

<div align="center">My Personal Interest in the Topic</div>

I was interested in exploring the experiences of women in top level positions in México for several reasons. First, I am a woman who has experienced gender discrimination. Second, women represent more than half of the population in México and more women are becoming working women. Third, I consider HRD scholars and

practitioners should integrate feminist voices to address the contradictions and challenges women face in the workplace (Bierema, Tisdell, Johnson-Bailey, & Gedro, 2002). Finally, according to Fontaine in his interview in *Business Week* (2010), "the best companies in terms of performance will be those that truly embrace diversity [by] hiring, developing, and promoting women to key leadership roles" (p. 8).

Research Question

I intend to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of women leaders in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. It was my hope to learn about their experiences while becoming leaders. This research addressed the following question: What is the experience like of being a woman leader in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture?

My History and Perspectives

Heidegger (1967) recognized that researchers have a personal history related to the study they are interested in pursuing. In addition, Dahlberg, Drew, and Nystrom (2001) acknowledged that the choice of a particular phenomenon comes from the researcher's values and personal experiences. Consequently, it is important for me to reveal my history and perspectives with regard to my experiences that could influence this study. I examined my experiences as a working woman, my family experiences, and my experience as an international student in the U.S., as reported in the following pages.

I approached this study critically conscious of how my position might have influenced the research process (Pillow, 2003). I am a Mexican woman who has lived and experienced gender discrimination.

My Working Experiences

On a sunny, Spring day in México City, 28 years ago, in April, 1983, I was working as the Administrative Director for the most important law firm in the country. There I was, a young, successful, executive woman leader, a middle-class person, happily married to her high school sweetheart, Victor Moreno. There I was, breaking the rules of a very conservative society in which gender roles were very well established: "The central point in the Western vision of sexual differences was that a woman's place was at home, leaving it to men to run everything that went on outside the front door. Men provided and protected; women served and deferred" (Collins, 2009, p. 5). This lifestyle was not for me.

In 1979, I was invited by the Tecnológico de Monterrey, which is comparable to an Ivy League institution in the U.S., to study an MBA with a full scholarship. In 1981, I was one of ten females in a group of 110 students who earned this degree. I had been married for two and a half years to the love of my life and an extremely supportive husband with whom I shared the same work ethic. We were starting to build our lives together, but on that sunny, Spring day of April, 1983, I was fired. Yes, fired!

Little did I know that this experience would mean so much to me during my professional life. I remember that I was in tears waiting for my husband to pick me up at 5:30 p.m. that same day at the corner of one of the most beautiful avenues in the world, Reforma Avenue. It was such a contrast; it was such a beautiful evening on such a beautiful avenue, and I was living such a bad experience. On one side, I was beginning a new phase in my life; I was about to become a mother as our son was going to be born in

a month. On the other side, I was forced to end a job relationship where I had felt like the

"Queen of the Hill" (Furst & Reeves, 2008, p. 372).

I had been hired for the position of Administrative Director by one of my former

classmates in the Graduate School of the Tecnológico de Monterrey, the same one who

had invited me to have lunch that sunny day in April, 1983, suggesting, "Let's talk

business." When we met during one of the last courses of the master's program, he was

a lawyer pursuing an MBA as he was the administrative partner of the law firm. When I

was hired for this director's position, I felt that I had the whole world in my hands: I had

a wonderful office; beautiful, elegant, and professional furniture; a secretary just for me;

an extraordinary salary for a 26year-old; and even a brand new car as part of the benefits

of this position. I was a successful, professional woman leader and a happy and satisfied

woman in the personal arena as well.

As we were about to have our first child, Victor and I counted on our double

income to buy a bigger and better house than the first one we had. I was devastated by

the decision that the board of directors of the law firm had made, and the administrative

partner communicated to me by saying: "We consider that the best place for you is in

your house, taking care of your baby." The firm had made the decision to fire me

regardless of how I felt or my needs and wants.

This law firm was founded by two traditional, conservative lawyers in México.

They founded the firm in 1947, and it is recognized as one of the largest and most

prominent law firms in México. When I started working there, I was not aware that both

were members of the Opus Dei, an organization of the Catholic Church, which is known

to be extremely traditional and conservative and is criticized for being a misogynous and

elitist organization. According to this view, it was not acceptable for mothers-to-be to aspire to a professional career outside her home.

This personal experience caused me to be reluctant to think that there was a possible way to be happily married and, at the same time, occupy a leadership position in the corporate world, at least in México. After leaving this law firm, a couple of years later, in 1985, I was invited to work in my alma mater, the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM), and I had the chance to experience a completely different situation as a working mother. I was pregnant with our second child when I was asked to be a faculty member in this institution. One of my former professors was the Dean of the Department of Administration, where I was invited to work. I remember the first thing I told her, before starting the job interview, was, "Let me tell you that I am pregnant. I am expecting this baby to be born in December." Her answer was, "Don't you worry. You can still finish the fall trimester and enjoy your maternity leave during the spring trimester. It fits perfectly with our schedule of classes." I also had good working conditions, such as morning and afternoon classes, and I could work from my house in preparing classes or grading. This was an ideal job for me while our kids were little; I worked there for six years. I was not interested in being promoted to any leadership position. I was very happy being a teacher.

I was a successful professor, and I discovered that this was my vocation, to be a teacher; I am a teacher at heart (Palmer, 1997). While at UAM, I was invited to work for the Graduate School of the Tecnológico de Monterrey, but I needed to complete a doctoral program in order to teach in the graduate school. At that time, my husband said, "No, no way. The boys are too little; who will put them to bed at night?" If I accepted

the job; not only would I need to enroll in a doctoral program, which is demanding in itself, but I was also expected to teach a class from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. on a weekly basis. My husband and I made a joint decision; I would not accept the job. We considered that it was not the right timing for me to enroll in a Ph.D. program.

My Family Experiences

I recognize from my personal experience that Victor, my husband, has been a key factor in balancing my professional and personal lives. He has been extremely supportive. He comes from a family comprised of working women. His mother studied for a secretarial career and began working after finishing school, but she quit the job when she got married. She became a full-time mom and wife. It was at the beginning of the 1970's, when my youngest sister-in-law was in elementary school, that my mother-in-law went back to work. She worked for almost 20 years until she retired in the late 1980's. My mother-in-law had an older sister who was a working single mother. Needless to say, she was a strong, determined woman who decided to be a single mother in the 1960's. His aunt was very influential on my husband; they developed strong bonds, and they shared many likes and dislikes. My husband's grandmother was also a working mother. She studied to become a teacher in Cuba, where she was born. When I met her in the mid-1970s, she was the union representative of the Asociación Nacional de Actores [National Association of Actors], and she also worked as a trainer for the same union. She used to travel alone from México City to nearby cities to deliver training programs. My two sisters-in-law are college educated, and both worked until they became mothers. Both sacrificed their careers for the sake of motherhood. So my husband was familiar with the idea of having working women around him.

By the mid-1980s, Victor had two dreams: one was to have his own business, and the other was to move away from México City. When we had the opportunity, we moved to Metepec, so I had to quit my job at UAM. After a couple of years living there, without being successful in the business, I started working for the Tecnológico de Monterrey on the campus located in Toluca. Three months later, I was promoted to Director de Carrera, Chair of the Program, which was a unique position in the institution. The Director de Carrera coordinates and oversees the Business Administration students.

Our sons were growing up, but I wanted to be closer to them, mainly during the evenings, because the working hours were from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 3 to 6 p.m. There were some times when I taught evening classes, finishing at 10 p.m., or even week-end courses. I also had to travel to different cities in México and to Ecuador and Venezuela. During this time, I was overloaded with work. Nevertheless, I earned a second master's degree while working at the Toluca campus of Tecnológico de Monterrey in International Marketing, graduating in December, 1996.

I asked the Director of the high school on the same campus, a woman who was also our neighbor, if there was any chance I could teach at the high school. It was my desire to have uninterrupted working hours from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. in order to be close to my sons when they came home from school. She agreed to talk to the Director of the campus, arguing that I wanted to be closer to my sons, who were 11 and 14 at the time. So I began teaching English as a second language.

But it happened again. I became pregnant with our third child, a daughter, and the Director of the high school did not like it at all. She told me that I had betrayed her. A couple of days later, the Campus Director asked me to see him in his office; he told me

that I could keep my job, under one condition. I had to go back to the undergraduate school, to the 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 3 to 6 p.m. schedule. This was in December, 1997.

Victor and I decided that I should quit the job after our baby daughter was born. However, I kept working for Tecnológico de Monterrey, but as a teacher/lecturer, a part-time job without fringe benefits. Today, in retrospect, when I think about these two turning points in my life--April, 1983, and December, 1997--I can better understand why the lawyers in that prestigious firm decided to fire me, even if I disagree with them. Having me work there was against their values, social norms, and beliefs. But the high school Director, a mother of three, not having empathy for a working woman, is something I cannot understand. She was neither supportive nor empathetic.

In addition, all of the women who were close to me, such as relatives and friends, who had decided to be working women, chose family as their priority rather than climbing the ladder of professional success, except for one. She was, until last December, the Director for a government institute in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries, and Food in México. Her husband not only supported her, but he was the one who always worked hard to keep the family together. He was the one who valued having a happy family, and who took care of the kids, even in difficult times, when they had hard times in their marriage. During the years in which I saw her climbing the ladder of professional success, I always thought she was a little selfish, because she always put her career and her personal interests as a priority. I never imagined that I was going to make a similar decision when I came to pursue a Ph.D. in the U.S., leaving my husband and sons back in México. I probably made the most selfish

decision of my life, perhaps even more selfish than my friend's decision to be a successful woman leader, a wife, and a mother, in that order.

I have worked for both public and private universities in México for more than 25 years. During these years, I have seen women colleagues become leaders, but they were single, divorced, or widowed. So their reality fit my paradigm; it was as if a necessary condition for a woman to become a leader included renouncing or giving up having a happy marriage and a happy family. I lived this experience myself as my mother and father were divorced when I was only 3, and my mother became a working mother in order to raise my older sister and me. Not only was I raised by a divorced mother in times when divorce was not common in México, but I was raised in an all-female environment. We were living in Veracruz when my parents were divorced. My grandfather had died a few months before, so my grandmother was living by herself with one of my cousins. My mother thought she could have more chances of finding a better job in México City without the social pressure of being in the same place as my father and his powerful family. We moved to México City in 1963 and started living in a household of five women: my grandmother, my mother, my sister, my cousin, and me.

Both my grandmother and mother had studied in the U.S., and they were more open-minded than many women their ages. My grandmother was born in Campeche in 1900. She was the oldest of four siblings. Her father had two families; my grandmother was what they used to call in those days, una hija natural [a natural daughter], meaning an illegitimate daughter. He belonged to a wealthy family, he was college educated, and he attended medical school in France. My grandmother's mother had died, and her father asked his two single sisters to help him raise the four kids. These two aunts were very

mean to the kids; they treated them badly. They accepted taking care of the four kids only for money.

Suddenly, the lives of these four kids changed as they were sent to a Catholic boarding school in Louisiana in the U.S. My grandmother was the oldest of the four, 10 years old, when they arrived in the U.S. At that time, México was living the Revolution, so my great-grandfather decided to send the kids outside the country. When my grandmother was still in school, he died. She was in college, pursuing a Public Accountant degree; she felt that she had the responsibility for her siblings, so she decided to help her siblings finish school and asked the nuns to let her and her siblings stay in the boarding school. She began working to support her siblings, and she became their mother. She was able to finish her bachelor's degree. She was the only woman in her class.

My grandmother met my grandfather in Tampa, Florida. He was on a business trip, and she was vacationing with her siblings there. He was a Mexican businessman; he owned a customs brokerage, and he was 14 years older than she. They were engaged when my grandmother lost her father. She already had the wedding dress and the date fixed for the ceremony. My grandfather suggested that she bring her three siblings back to México to live with them. She decided, rather, to stay in the U.S. until her siblings graduated from school. She recognized the importance of education. So she broke the engagement and stayed with her siblings until her youngest sister graduated. She sent my grandfather a telegram letting him know she was ready to marry him, if he still wanted to do so. They finally got married in 1926.

Here she was, my 26-year-old grandmother, a college educated woman in the U.S., holding her bachelor's degree and speaking three languages--French, English, and Spanish, coming back to México to live in Merida, as my grandfather was from the state of Yucatan. He belonged to a traditional, Catholic family. There were no more working hours in an office for her, nor professional attire; she came back to Merida to stay in her home, cooking, not only for her husband, but also for her in-laws. She truncated her career for the sake of marriage. After living a more independent life in the U.S., she was living in such a traditional place, where she did not have the right to go out of her home by herself, or to look outside the windows, as they were locked, a piedra y lodo [closed and bolted]. My grandparents had three children; my mom is the youngest. After she turned three, all the family moved to Veracruz. My grandmother went back to work as an English teacher 20 or 30 years after, when her children were grown up; she became the Director of the Universidad Femenina de Veracruz [Female University of Veracruz], but she always did something in her home, such as teaching English and Spanish (for foreigners), or raising birds to sell. She was a natural entrepreneur.

My mother also went to the U.S. to study high school; she also went to Louisiana to the same school my grandmother had attended. She met some of her mother's teachers, and one of my grandmother's friends was at the time the Mother Principal of the convent. My mother's conditions were very different from her mom's, but both were aware of the importance of living an international experience, of experiencing formal education, and of working hard to achieve goals in life. When my mother came back to México, she worked as an executive bilingual secretary until she got married. My sister had the opportunity to study in the U.S., too. She is an adventurous, brave woman who

was not married at the time. She worked in the hospitality industry in the 1970s as a

Public Relations Manager for an important group of hotels in México. She was asked to

move to places that were starting to develop wonderful resorts, but, in the beginning of

this decade, even reaching Cancun or Cabo San Lucas was an adventure itself.

So I had this image in my mind that working women were widowed, divorced, or

single, as my grandmother, my mom, and my sister were. I had never met a really

successful working woman in a leadership position who was also happily married and

trying to bring up children simultaneously.

My mother is an extraordinary woman, a very brave and smart lady, a role model.

There is a phrase she always uses, "No hay rosa sin espina," which means that there is no

rose without a thorn, so I conceptualized that; even in the best of times, there would

always be a little or big thorn, or even more than one thorn. I always thought to myself,

"Well, you can always cut the thorn away from the rose and be very happy." My mother

was a very happy woman until 1960, when, in the short period of five months, she lost

her father, a baby, and her marriage. So I understand her whenever she says this phrase,

and even when she gave me a book titled, "Tenerlo Todo" (To Have It All), in which the

author relates the experiences of a group of working women in England who were very

successful in the corporate world but were very unhappy in their personal lives. They felt

that their lives were empty.

By sending me these messages, perhaps my mother was trying to find a

justification for her own situation, and it was her way of telling me that it is okay if you

do not reach a top level position. Once she asked me, "Patricita, you are a loving and

good mother, a loving and wonderful wife, and a hard working woman. What else would you like to achieve in this life?"

My Experiences as an International Student in the U.S.

Why am I now living in the U.S.? The answer has been in my head and my heart for many years. I have wanted to live and to study in the U.S. I wanted my daughter, Ana, to have an international experience just the same as we had given our two older sons that opportunity. When each of them was about 11 years old they had come to the U.S.

Then, the opportunity to live with Ana and to study in the U.S. came when I was admitted as a Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University. But no one expects a happily married woman in her early 50's to leave her husband and two older sons and be willing to live outside the country to make her dreams come true. It is not common to think that way, is it?

The first time I was in touch with Texas A&M University was in December, 2006. Juan and Carmen Villa, two of our lifelong friends, had moved to College Station seven years previously. We have a very close relationship with them. We lived in the same neighborhood back in México City. Carmen and I went to the same all-girls Catholic school. Juan and Victor went to the same all-boys Catholic school, and later they went to the same college in Monterrey. We have shared this friendship for more than 40 years; we have also traveled together, and we are *compadres*. Being *compadres* is something really important for us in our Mexican culture. Juan and Carmen are the baptism godparents of our second child. We named him Juan Carlos, after Juan. They are also the confirmation godparents of our first child, Victor. We are the baptism and

holy communion godparents of their first daughter, Carmina. They are the kind of friends that have become family to us.

While visiting them that December, touring the Texas A&M campus was a must-do activity. I was totally thrilled and excited with the university campus; besides, Carmen was a Ph.D. student in the College of Education those days. I remember that we went back to their home after the tour, as we were staying there. We were having a glass of wine sitting around the kitchen table, and I asked Victor, "What would you think if I told you that I want to study for a Ph.D. at Texas A&M?" He answered, "Panchita, if you want to, go for it!" I thought that I was not going to be admitted; it was so unreachable for me, but I went back home to Morelia very motivated and started getting ready for the TOEFL and GRE exams and for doing all of the admission process. I asked my colleagues in the mathematics department in Tecnológico de Monterrey to help me in preparing for the mathematics portion of the GRE, to try to remember what I studied so many years ago. The Pythagorean Theorem was something I had buried in the depths of my memories of adolescence. I was studying one night with all of my papers, books, and laptop in the dining room of our house, when our oldest son came in. I looked at him and saw that something was not right. I stood up and reached for him. I asked him if everything was OK. He said: "I finally broke up with my girlfriend today, Mom. I couldn't take it any longer." I remember that I did not go back to my notes, books, or laptop. Rather, I gave him a big hug. I sat down next to him to listen to his story and the way he felt about ending a relationship after almost three years. He cried. I tried to comfort him. Even though I needed to study for the exams I was taking the next day,

from the bottom of my heart I wanted to be a nurturing and caring mother, and to be with

my son when he needed me the most.

I got admission from Texas A&M to begin my doctoral studies in August, 2007,

but I could not accept it. I did not have the economic means to do it then. I kept on

working for Tecnológico de Monterrey in the campus at Morelia. In March, 2008, I was

selected to be the professor of the Bajío geographic zone of the institution to go to China

for a year. I declined the invitation because I received an e-mail from Clarice Fulton,

then the Academic Advisor of the College of Education and Human Development at

Texas A&M. She was offering me a Graduate Assistantship and a Regent's Fellowship

Award. Victor and I made the decision to accept the offer of Texas A&M instead of

going to China for a year. We considered that coming to the U.S. was going to be better

for Ana and for me. Ana would have the opportunity for an international experience in a

developed country; I would have the opportunity to study for a Ph.D.; and Juan and

Carmen Villa were going to be close to us. There was another factor in this equation:

Victor was working as the Promotion, Public Relations, and Communications Consultant

for the Association of Producers and Exporting Packers of Avocados of Michoacán

(APEAM). There was the possibility of him moving to Texas because Texas represents

the biggest market for APEAM in the U.S.

Then, in the first days of November, 2008, everything changed. There was

another board of directors leading APEAM. My husband's contract was not renewed.

The possibility of him moving to Texas diminished. He called me and said, "But I don't

want you to be worried. We are going to do everything so that Ana and you can stay as

planned until the end of this school year (2008-2009)."

The last six years have been very difficult for us in economic terms, mainly the last two. Victor moved to México City at the end of 2008, so we were supporting three houses: the apartment in México City where Victor was living, the College Station apartment where Ana and I are living, and our house back in Morelia where our two sons are living. If we consider that I am not getting the income I used to before coming to the U.S., and my husband's income has also decreased lately, it has been really tough. But, as we say in México, "lo que no mata, fortalece" [what does not kill you makes you stronger].

In terms of our family dynamics, I believe we have become closer, even though this might sound paradoxical, because we are living one thousand miles away from each other. I have missed my husband and sons a lot, as well as my mother, my sister, my in-laws, and our friends, even though I am hoping for a better future for all of us. I have learned lots of new things: in class, from my professors and my classmates, but also from the experience of living in the U.S. as a single mother, which I am not. Nevertheless, I finally made a lifelong dream come true: to become a student in the U.S. Even though I have enjoyed being a student a lot, I still feel the price I have paid has been too high.

During these last two years away from my housewife responsibilities and my job, I have had the chance to think and reflect. There have been days when I have wanted to pack my things and go back home, but I am not the kind of person who does not finish what I started. I hope this Ph.D. degree is worth it. I do not know what I will do next. I would love to find a good job in the U.S., but then I do not want to be away from my loved ones and keep on living my life as a spectator…decisions, decisions, decisions.

During these last two years, I have learned many things. Much has been in a formal way: in class, from the professors and students, and from the books and articles I have read. Some learning has been accidental--one is the encounters I have had with Dr. Alfred, and the second is the exercises and assignments I have done for Communications, Organization Development, Facilitation of Leadership Programs, Adult Learning, and Epistemology.

Dr. Alfred asked me the questions that have made me self-reflect the most. I met her because I was assigned to work with her as her Graduate Assistant (G.A.). When I met her, while she was looking at my resume (Vita), she suggested that I had come to Texas A&M for "the badge." She said that I had sound experience as a professor in a higher education institution. Besides, she has been the only person in the College to ask me how I feel as a student and as a G.A. She has also asked me about my temporary loss of professional identity. I felt it when Dr. McLean, another of the professors for whom I worked as a G.A., asked me to host two professors who came from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC) to Texas A&M. I thought about how I would have been treated in a very different way if I came representing the institution I work for in México, Tecnólogico de Monterrey, instead of coming as a student and more precisely as a graduate assistant (G.A.). I enjoyed being the hostess for these two professors, but I realized that, as a student, nobody treated me that way by providing me with a host or hostess. I realized that I had changed roles, from being a professor to becoming a student again, but a non-traditional student who does not fit 100% in student activities and does not have the credentials to be part of the faculty club.

From the courses I listed above, I am going to describe what I have reinforced, learned, and discovered about myself in each of them.

Communications. I did the Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator (MBTI) for the first time more than ten years ago. I did it again in this course, but we focused on our communication skills depending on the type of personality we have. While this is a controversial tool, I have found that the results do fit me. I am an ENFJ (extrovert, intuitive, feeling, and judging). This means that I am a truly emotional person, and what I like the most about being "F" are the Fs in my life: food, family, friends, and fun. And those that sound like "F": photographs, philosophy doctorate in HRD, and, of course, the "F" for which it originally stands, feelings.   I also had to introduce myself to the group, so I decided to use a video my Mom did for my 50th birthday. I talked about myself during the presentation of the video. From an assignment we did for this course in order to know our strengths and weaknesses, I realized that I needed to improve in two areas: effective reading and assertive listening.

Organization Development. One assignment for this class was choosing a song to which we could relate, a song that represented us. I thought of several songs that would be good, such as the Beatles' "I Will," Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman," and Carole King's "You've Got a Friend." But I needed to choose only one, and I finally decided to pick one a friend of mine sent me by Internet: an opera singer performing "Mom." I loved it! I also presented myself with a big poster I made; the front showed my self-concept in two words: Interpersonal Intelligence. The back was a list in alphabetical order of my strengths and weaknesses with a picture of me in the middle, because I am very visual.

Facilitation of Leadership Programs. We were asked by the professor to do a Leadership Action Plan. Among the various sections it was to contain, the most representative for this autobiography is the timeline I did, "Telling My Story" and the graphic I did for the "Picture of the Future."

Adult Learning. The book I enjoyed the most, and perhaps learned the most from, was Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner's (2007) *Learning in Adulthood*. I found it very useful as an adult learner. It helped me realize my strengths and opportunities as an adult learner and how to use my life experiences to enhance my learning. In addition, as a teacher, I strongly believe that the theory studied in this course will help me in my future professional life. As an educator, I realize that my role is to encourage students to examine their assumptions and facilitate their critical reflection to enable the achievement of their own learning potential. This course reviewed women's midlife development from a psychological perspective. This model focuses on the internal experiences of women. As a Mexican woman in my early 50's, this section was especially meaningful for me. The section considered stereotypes, realities, and attitude behaviors and circumstances. Mexican culture is very masculine and patriarchal: *machismo* and stereotypes of women still abound. I decided to pursue my doctoral program at Texas A&M, leaving behind my husband, our two sons, and my job, rejecting cultural stereotypes. Stereotypes of women in México present them as mainly responsible for their houses and children, nurturing, and givers. Rosita Lopez Marcano's story, one of the chapters in *Making Space* (Lopez Marcano, 2001), was most enjoyable. I could imagine her journey to becoming a member of the faculty of Northern Illinois University. She makes a wonderful picture of Latinas in America, and the way she had to overcome

stereotypes. She reviewed her personal struggle to be torn between a desire to acculturate and be accepted by a new culture, while, at the same time, remaining true to her family expectations. I sometimes felt that she was telling my own story now that I am living in the U.S. Even though the decision I made was not well received by many, my husband and children supported me without the pervasive cultural stereotypes. Undoubtedly, this decision has been difficult; it has also been very rewarding. I have struggled not only with my new role as a student, but also in a different country and in a different language. However, it has given me the opportunity to grow, reflect, update, learn new cultures, and enjoy this transformational journey.

Epistemology. One of the assignments for this class was writing a reflective paper. We needed to disclose something personal in order to be aware of why we are the way we are. I realized that I am a very envious person, and I related this feeling to the fact that I felt my father did not love me. I feel he abandoned me. I needed him, and I loved him deeply. I looked for him many times during my life, until I decided not to do it anymore. I have suffered from the way my father simply took us, my sister and me, out of his life. I always looked for his approval and love; I missed him in so many ways: as a male authority figure, as a protector, as a father.

Recently, at an event of the College of Education and Human Development, Dr. McLean, my committee chair, asked me what I like the most. His question reminded me that someone had asked me the same question when I was a little girl; I guess I was ten years old or so. That time I answered without hesitating, "Eat, sleep, and study." The answer to Dr. McLean's question did not come that fast, but it was still related to the things I liked the most when I was ten. I answered, "Study." After thinking a little more,

I added "cooking, knitting, taking care of kids." While I was jogging some days later in the morning, I kept thinking about Dr. McLean's question and related it to Elizabeth Gilbert's (2006) book *Eat. Pray. Love.*

I think that the things I like the most are still "Eat, sleep, and study," but I would add "love, pray, travel, cook, knit, take pictures, scrap-book, rock 'n' roll, chick movies, puzzles, novels, and Broadway musicals." What I have enjoyed the most in my personal life has been building my family with Victor and raising our family together, as well as giving my mother her three grandchildren. What I have enjoyed the most in my professional life has been being an honor roll student, an award-winning professor, and a Ph.D. international student at Texas A&M University.

On a sunny spring day in 2023, I would like to be with my family and friends celebrating my 66th birthday and getting ready to celebrate our oldest son's 40th birthday. I picture myself living in College Station with Victor, the love of my life, and close to our children--Victor Manuel, Juan Carlos, and Ana Patricia--and some grandkids playing in our house garden. I also picture us together, healthy, and living with financial freedom, and working as a professor. I also see that the people who are celebrating my 66th birthday are basically the same ones with whom we have celebrated other events in my life: my family and lifelong friends.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a woman leader in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. In this chapter I have described the importance of and the need for exploring the question of what it is like to be a woman leader in predominantly male dominated organizations in

México. Previous literature has concentrated mostly in the characteristics of male leaders and leaders from the U.S. I suggested the need to explore the experiences of women leaders who have succeeded in México, a male-dominated culture. The information gained from this study can help working women in México and Mexican organizations understand the deeper aspects of female leadership. In addition, it can help HRD professionals who work with these women or with these organizations.

In order to be fully transparent about my own perspectives related to this topic, I have also, then, shared my personal background and what has motivated me to enhance leadership in my career. Throughout my life I have seen brave women in my family who served as strong leaders. My teachers and bosses have also influenced my leadership journey, both positively and negatively. Finally, observing and living with young adults as their professor has been the most rewarding work I have done in my 30-year career. I would like my female students to see the opportunities that they have in the future to come by reading the experiences of those women leaders who have successfully overcome all odds in their professional lives. The results of this study should help women interested in pursuing leadership roles.

Chapter II overviews the literature I reviewed while formulating my research question. Chapter III describes the research methods, methodology, and assumptions I made about the phenomenon under investigation, and it also describes how I analyzed the text from the interviews. Chapter IV reports the study´s themes. Chapter V describes the results of the post-analysis literature review and how it relates to the themes that emerged from the analysis. Chapter VI summarizes the study, including my own reflections, and suggested recommendations for both practice and future research.

CHAPTER II

PRE-ANALYSIS LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses findings from the literature reviews that occurred before finalizing the topic. As the researcher is expected to approach phenomenological research without biases or preconceived notions of the outcomes, the extensive literature review will take place after the data analysis and will be presented in a later chapter.

Women Becoming Working Women and Leaders

During the last 50 years, there has been a shift from the traditional role a woman was expected to play, from being a housewife and a mother to being a working woman (Collins, 2009). Some working women have also chosen to be working wives and working mothers. This phenomenon has different causes, both internal and external. Among the internal causes are that more women are pursuing college degrees, more women are supporting their families, and more women want different ways to achieve self-actualization rather than only getting married, having kids, and being good housewives. The most important external cause has been the need for working women because of the huge economic crises faced during the last century, including the Great Depression, World War II, the 1970's oil crisis, and the current economic downfall.

The conditions under which Mexican women began working are completely different from the U.S. American ones. U.S. American women began with feminist ideologies that were then imported by Mexican women. These ideologies were completely strange and far away from Mexican women's reality; economics, politics,

social environment, education, and working conditions were very different (Hernandez & Riva, 1995).

According to Iturbe and Talan (2006), one of the major reasons of the noticeable increase of Mexican women in the job market is due to the migration of Mexican men to the U.S.; in Mexican economy, the main source of income comes from the money that is sent by Mexican people living and working overseas, mainly in the U.S. Iturbe and Talan stressed that women are increasingly the economic support for their homes in most of the big cities in México, whether they are the sole source of income for their families or shared income responsibilities with their husbands.

However, today we find more commonalities than differences in working women´s situation in both countries, México and the U.S., such as women comprise more than half of the working force in both countries, but are still under-represented in the top executive positions; there still are differences in the level of salaries that women earn compared to men; and the work/family conflict has not eased for women (Berman & Maerker, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Vargas, 2007).

Besides, the number of working women has increased all over the world in the last five decades, and it has been in this short time period that they have reached directing and leading positions in every kind of organization, field, and arena (Collins, 2009, Iturbe & Talan, 2006).

Still, there are some circumstances and factors that are not permitting women to be fully treated as equally as men in the workplace, for example, culture. Cultures differ in how strongly they value traditional gender role distinctions and cultural pressures reinforce traditional gender roles (Stephenson, 2010; Verderber & Verderber, 2007).

Reinforcing the importance of culture, Iturbe and Talan (2006) concluded that the most relevant finding in a study they conducted among 30 women in educational leadership positions in México is that culture limits the acceptance of the abilities of women to succeed in the workplace due to machismo. Iturbe and Talan concluded that machismo is prevalent in Mexican culture. Machismo is a behavior that is transmitted in home, schools, and communities, to both males and females; the macho male does not like women to be more successful than men, and deliberately tries to minimize and criticize the contributions of women in the workplace (Hernandez & Riva, 1995; Iturbe & Talan, 2006).

Confirming this macho stereotype, Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002) concluded that career women in the U.S. are seen as nontraditional women, disliked, competent, and dominant; while housewives are seen as traditional women: likeable, incompetent, and dependent.

On the other hand, the research firm Catalyst conducted a study in the U.S. in 2005 in which 296 leaders were surveyed (128 men and 168 women); there was a common perception among the male executives surveyed: women take care while male take charge.

García-Retamero and López-Zafra (2006) agreed that the characteristics associated with leadership roles have been related more to men than to women in a cross-cultural comparison they made in German and in Spain. Confirming these characteristics, Furst and Reeves (2008) argued that women have made steady progress in ascending the managerial ranks in American corporations during the last 20 or 30 years, but they also recognized that women continue to lag behind in advancement to top

management. Furst and Reeves credited the stereotypical gender roles men and women adopt to be socially accepted. If we transfer these roles to the work setting, men are expected to be leaders and women are expected to be followers.

In addition to these preconceived ideas that associate leadership with men, Valenziano (2008) stated that over half of the workforce in the U.S. is comprised of women, and, despite exceptional gains in pay, promotion, and benefits, there is still a tremendous lack of workforce equality.

Resilient women who reach the top in U.S. institutions are those women who successfully overcome the barriers and obstacles to break the glass ceiling; and most of the time, women are more competent and higher skilled than men. According to Eagly and Carli (2003), while there are doubts about women's leadership ability, women in leadership positions are generally viewed as more competent than men in the U.S. However, Eagly and Carli concluded that women may also be disadvantaged in those contexts where men are the majority on in male-dominated environments, and women who succeed in climbing to the top are the survivors of discriminatory processes, and therefore, tend to be more competent.

Haslam and Ryan (2008) recognized that women not only are breaking the so-called glass ceiling, but also, when women finally climb to the top of the corporate ladder, they have to survive; and this is not easy. Haslam and Ryan acknowledged that there is a phenomenon that they called the glass cliff because women's leadership positions are relatively risky or precarious as they are more likely to involve management of organizational areas that are in crisis.

Besides, Eagly and Carli (2003) conducted a meta-analysis to show that women may have an advantage as leaders when compared to men. They found that women are more effective than men in educational, governmental, and social service organizations, supporting Hoyt (1994, as cited in Northouse, 2007) who affirmed that due to women´s inherent characteristics of being nurturers, they are most effective as leaders than men in education, government, and social service organizations. However, Vecchio (2003), in a critique of Eagly and Carli, argued that women are found in specialty areas such as human resources, public relations, customer service and sales, and training/education.

Manning and Curtis (2003) listed six success factors for women in high leadership positions that the Center for Creative Leadership has identified: help from those above them, a superior track record, a passion for success, outstanding people skills, career encouragement, and mental toughness. Similarly, Scheckelhoff (2007) stated that it is important to hear successful women leaders' recommendations and suggestions to understand better women in leadership. Sheckelhoff described commonalities among successful women leaders. First, they were raised in families who loved them, took good care of them, set good examples, and had high work ethics. Second, women leaders made conscious choices and recognized the struggles they face in balancing their lives and their jobs. Third, formal education is important in order to become successful women leaders. And, finally, besides integrity, honesty, strength, and vision, they are passionate about their work.

In addition, Christman and McClellan (2008) stated that, there are some female characteristics that women leaders develop and show more when holding and maintaining

leadership positions: empowerment, teaching, role modeling, openness, collaboration, and working through people, caring and nurturing, and listening.

Despite all of these arguments, there is still the belief that men are better suited to become leaders because they have been leaders for more time; thus, leadership tends to be perceived as a masculine domain (Lafreniere & Longman, 2008).

<center>Women's Under-representation in Leadership</center>

Rosener (1995, as cited in Grint, 1997) affirmed that there is role confusion in today's societies, as we grow up with specific expectations about how we are supposed to behave as girls or boys. She said that boys and girls are treated differently from the beginnings of their lives. Despite all of the research and literature in defining these differences and environmental factors or heredity, this gender socialization takes place everywhere, within and outside the home. In today's society, "As children grow up, they see nurses are women and doctors are men, teachers are women and principals are men, secretaries are women and CEO's are men, and so on" (Rosener, 1995, as cited in Grint, 1997, p. 212). In spite of the age of this reference, the quote still accurately describes the culture in many organizations today, though it appears to be changing (Iturbe & Talan, 2006).

Despite increases in the number of women, from workers to politicians, from scientists to writers, from movie stars to sports heroes, artists to musicians and dancers, there is still a great difference in the number of women in leadership positions compared with men (Holland, 2002). According to Furst and Reeves (2008), management scholars attribute women's failure to reach the executive suite to different causes, such as stereotypical gender roles, organization level factors, and structural constraints, such as

organizational practices and social structures, "ranging from internal labor markets to job segregation…Women may be passed over for job offers or promotions in favor of men because males, who are in a position to hire, are predisposed to hiring individuals similar to themselves" (Furst & Reeves, 2008, p. 373).

Women's current situation is not new. Bierema (2002) stated that, more than 60 years ago, Virginia Wolf noted society's contradictions when it came to women's social devaluation as compared with men. Today, those contradictions still persist as women lag behind men in salary, promotions, and social stature.

Mexican women's circumstances are similar. Zabludovsky (2007) analyzed Mexican women in private sector managerial positions and concluded that, although the percentage of working women doubled from 1970 to 2006, women were still in jobs that were lower in social status, and their income was lower compared with men in the same positions. Mexican women consisted of 50.9% of those enrolled in universities (Zabludovsky, 2007). But, despite women's greater participation in the workplace and in education, their presence in top level jobs does not reflect those numbers. Zabludovsky attributed this gap to social and cultural factors and to organizational culture.

Miramontes (2008) conducted a qualitative study to examine the characteristics of Mexican leaders. She acknowledged that Mexican leaders valued the same characteristics as their American counterparts, but, as Mexican leaders are immersed in a paternalistic culture, they have archaic beliefs about women in leadership. She affirmed that male Mexican leaders still have a notion that motherhood is preeminent and that maternity is similar to a disability.

Supporting Zabludovsky's and Miramontes' points of view, Robles (2010) concluded that women in México are relegated to those jobs in the workplace that resemble the activities done in a house, due basically to the lack of education and training opportunities, as only 7% of Mexican women are college educated and 0.5% have a post-graduate education. Robles believed that this is the reason why women represent only 20% of middle management positions, and only 3% of women participate in top level positions with higher responsibilities and where strategic decisions are taken.

<div align="center">Women Leaders in the U. S. and in México</div>

Surprisingly, there are more commonalities than differences between women in leadership positions in México and in the U.S. Women in both countries face many of the same barriers in becoming leaders in any kind of organization. Women in both countries have to overcome stereotypes, prejudices, paternalistic societies, and gender roles determined by conservative societies. According to Miller, Washington, and Fiene (2006), the educational system is similar to the traditional home, where men are without question dominant, and, therefore, society has viewed the ideal leader as one with masculine qualities.

For example, Glover (2009) investigated the key success factors among women in leadership positions in universities. These women leaders have background factors similar to women leaders in other arenas: hard work, mentor support, formal and informal learning experiences, desire to grow, and strong preparation. All 341 women participants had obtained a doctorate, which is expected in a higher education context. The most significant barrier that these women faced in their career path was balancing their work life and home. This shows how important it is for many women to maintain both the

traditional role in a house and her professional expectations, but mostly trying to keep everything in perspective and in balance.

Collins (2009) recognized that women have come a long way in the last 60 years, but many have not yet figured out how to raise children and hold down a job at the same time, or keep marriages from cascading into divorce. Today, more women are pursuing college degrees and entering the workforce, but not many are occupying leadership positions. Furst and Reeves (2008) argued that there is gender stereotyping "with respect to work-family issues in ways that can impede the advancement of women…women face scrutiny regarding their ability to balance work and family demands, to work longer hours and weekends, and to travel" (p. 373). Dominici, Freid, and Zegger (2009) also found that gender stereotypes represent the root cause of under-representation of women in academic leadership. They admitted that it is more difficult for women than for men to survive career decisions made for them, such as tenure, because these decisions often coincide with the optimal childbirth years, requiring women to resolve individually the conflict between biological and career clocks. They also concluded that academic women who have children still shoulder the majority of domestic responsibilities. As a result, Dominici et al. (2009) concluded that women are less likely to be in tenure-track jobs or to achieve tenure than their male counterparts.

Additionally, leadership positions are less attractive to some women than to many men, mainly because of the expectations of having to work any time, being available 24/7, and the inadequate recognition of women's leadership contributions as perceived by women (Dominici et al., 2009). Balancing work and life is not a new issue for women in leadership positions in the twenty-first century, but many authors have theorized that the

current global economy and today's competitive work environment require longer and more intensive work days that are in conflict with women's family life. Astin and Leland (1991) recognized that women have found ways of coping with those challenges and renewing themselves.

Later on, Clark, Caffarella, and Ingram (1999) studied a group of 23 mid-level women managers. Fifteen were married, while eight were single or divorced and not remarried. These authors were interested in how women negotiate their professional and personal demands. All interviewees reported satisfaction with their careers but admitted that they had paid a significant personal price for being leaders; all spoke about their struggles to balance their professional and personal lives. The authors concluded that there is a common key factor among married women who balance their professional careers and personal lives--a supportive husband.

Christman and McClellan (2008) also reported the importance of relationships and support from others for women in leadership. They revealed, in opposition to the previous authors, that these relationships and support from others were not the number one ingredient for resiliency by the seven top women administrators they studied. Instead, these women ranked number one as possessing gender masculine norms, such as being somewhat driven; they ranked number two as perseverance. The number six ingredient was support from families, partners, husbands, and other colleagues.

There is also a belief that there is a conflict between work and family for those women active in the managerial workforce. Collins (2009) argued, "America has not yet figured out exactly how a woman can handle the duties of both career and family" (p. 137). Rudderman, Ohlott, Panzer, and King (2002) approached this issue from a role

accumulation perspective, studying the benefits of multiple roles for managerial women. Rudderman et al. concluded that there are positive effects from multiple roles that can be enriching rather than depleting. Women garnered satisfaction, confidence, and esteem from multiple roles, and, when women are committed to a variety of work and personal roles; they have multiple opportunities for satisfaction and pleasure. Supporting Rudderman, et al., Christman and McClellan (2008) recognized that the identities of women are multiple and complicated. They acknowledged that women must fulfill many roles when they assume leadership roles in academe. Thus, they concluded that women's characteristics help them adapt and succeed within the organizations' complexity, because women already know how to do the different and multiple roles they perform in their lives.

Women leaders in México live similar experiences as women leaders in the U. S. Schools have historically been a natural place for women to work, but there is still the idea that women are teachers and men are principals (Rosener, 1995, as cited in Grint, 1997). This is the same in any kind of school, from elementary to higher education in México, and, moreover, in any kind of organization because leadership in traditional societies is associated with men (Garcia, 2008).

Westrup (2007) conducted a qualitative study on the influence of mothers in the development of Mexican female transformational leaders. She found that mothers who were leaders had raised those women leaders. According to Madsen (2007), family background influences women university presidents in the U. S. The role mothers have played is determinant in the self-confidence and leadership development of these women. Madsen (2008) focused on ten women leaders' experiences in universities in the U.S.

She explored how these women became leaders in academe, and how they not only

obtained these leadership positions, but also maintained them. Madsen (2008) also

analyzed these women leaders' childhood and adolescent experiences, as well as their

college years. Madsen concluded that the factors influencing the development, decisions,

and perspectives of these women include that women know and understand themselves,

they are particularly self-reflective, and they love to learn from everything, even from

their failures and mistakes.

   Women are underrepresented in both México and the U.S. in top level positions.

Many organizations are filled with working women, but, when it comes to women

leading these organizations, the numbers decrease.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

   Regardless of the vast literature surrounding women in leadership in general, it is

still an interesting topic as gender inequality has shaped social, political, and economic

life in México. The women leaders' lived experiences in a predominantly male-

dominated culture can be examined through the lenses of feminism, social construction of

gender, and leadership.

   Both feminist and leadership theories are grounded in many other theories, such

as biology, physiology, sociology, economics, philosophy, and the humanities

(Valenziano, 2008). Besides, social construction of gender helps define the roles males

and females are expected to play, specifically in such a conservative and patriarchal

society as México (Hernandez & Riva, 1995, Iturbe & Talan, 2006).

   An important consideration for understanding women's underrepresentation in top

leadership positions is gender socialization. Each society around the world shares a

system of beliefs among its members that is culturally determined and creates different expectations and norms for men and for women. This belief system pressures individuals to conform to gendered roles. There is research focused in how women are expected to work, if they do, in jobs that are more feminine, and also the behaviors women should have or are expected to have as leaders (Christman & McClellan, 2008; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Hoyt, 1994, as cited in Northouse, 2007). Sümer (2006) explained the under-representation of women in leadership roles as a consequence of the perceived incongruity between the managerial role and the feminine role ascribed to women.

Feminism has different meanings for different scholars; authors such as Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) referred to it as the movement that started as a political call for women's rights and equality. Simone de Beauvoir wrote *The Second Sex* in 1949, 61 years ago (Berman & Maerker, 2000). This book is considered by many to be a contemporary feminist foundational tract. According to de Beauvoir, feminism is an identity category, together with race, class, and religion. She then claimed that women are as capable of choice as men.

Finally, to understand better Mexican women leaders' experiences in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture, I draw from leadership theory, recognizing leadership as a universal and timeless concept, but not a theory based on gender. There is a vast literature in leadership, mainly focused on men's characteristics and examples. Theory focused on women in leadership is a recent focus, mainly because women entered the workplace in greater numbers during the second half of the last century. Women's roles before were more home oriented. Working women have different needs from

working men; they also face different challenges, and I found great examples that can help increase the status of women in society (Berman & Maerker, 2000; Christman & McClellan, 2008; Collins, 2009; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Furst & Reeves, 2008; García-Retamero & López Zafra, 2006; Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Hernández & Riva, 1995; Hoyt, 1994, as cited in Northouse, 2007; Iturbe & Talan, 2006; Lafreniere & Longman, 2008; Manning & Curtis, 2003; Scheckelhoff, 2007; Valenziano, 2008; Vargas, 2007; Vechio, 2003).

In the next section, I will discuss how the literature on working women has reinforced stereotypes about women as leaders and has over-generalized the differences between men's and women's leadership styles. At the same time, this literature does not pay enough attention to how organizational structure and organizational culture reinforce gender stereotypes.

Feminism

Feminism refers to a philosophical and political perspective rather than a gender or biological sex; it started with a definite focus on women's liberation and women's oppression (Schiebinger, 1999). Bierema (2002) defined a feminist as "a person who seeks economic, social, and political equality between the sexes" (p. 246). Thus, feminism becomes a strategy to end oppression (hooks, 1984), There are other theorists, such as Flax (1977, as cited in Kemp & Squires, 1977), who have argued that the main goal of feminist theory should be to analyze gender relations. Morawski (1997, as cited in Bierema, 2002) stated that feminism aims "to remedy the disadvantages of women" (p. 246). Bierema described feminists as participants in and supporters of organized activities to advance women's rights and interests. Flannery and Hayes (2001, as cited in

Sheared & Sissel, 2001), acknowledged that there are different feminisms, as women are not alike. Flannery and Hayes stated that feminism includes more than biological factors. To them, feminism is gendered, that is, to realize that feminism is a product of social and cultural beliefs and practices about being a woman.

Feminism is a lens through which I will examine the underrepresentation of women in top level positions in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. Women have gained substantial leadership positions in many arenas, but they are still underrepresented. It is imperative to respond to women's needs and to assure that they are treated equally. Consequently, my study is in line with the larger feminist agenda of equality and social justice. Feminism is still a developing field of study, and the doors are open to investigate more about the topic and implications in society, recognizing that the experiences and interests of different women are not the same although they are all interests and experiences of women (Baker, 2006).

Social Construction of Gender

Feminist theorists, such as Connell (2000) and West (1984), have argued for the importance of gender construction and have emphasized the nature of gender socialization in relational processes. Socialization was defined by Anderson (2002, as cited in Villa, 2008) as "a process wherein the norms and values of an existing value system are transferred from one generation to the next" (p. 50). Similarly, West and Zimmerman's (1987, as cited in Myers, Anderson, & Risman, 1987) idea of "doing gender" involves "a complex of socially guided perpetual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures" (p. 168).

West and Zimmerman (1987, as cited in Myers, Anderson, & Risman, 1987) also described and analyzed how men and women act according to a perceived biological and natural division, which by any means is not natural at all, but rather is socially and culturally constructed. In addition, Anderson (2002, as cited in Villa, 2008) described how "gendered individuals negotiate culturally accepted expectations in such ways that they reproduce gender appropriate behaviors associated with masculinity and femininity. As a result, the construction of gendered identities appears natural" (p. 50). The concept of negotiation focuses the active role of the individual, at the same time recognizing that these negotiations are well thought out by hierarchies of power that form individual conduct.

Garfinkel (1967) conducted a study about a boy who began presenting himself as a girl in his late teens and underwent surgery for sexual reassignment later. West and Zimmerman (1987, as cited in Myers, Anderson, & Risman, 1987) referred to Garfinkel's (1967) study that illustrates that gender is not tied to biology; it is created through interaction. According to West and Zimmerman, "doing gender" appears almost as a natural act that reproduces and legitimizes sexual characteristics. This concept includes social structure and emphasizes individual actions and elements of social control. Since 1967, when Garfinkel's study was published, socially acceptable gendered behavior has changed for both men and women. Thus, the notion of masculinity has changed even though there are places where the machismo male image still prevails (Anderson, 2002, as cited in Villa, 2008). Recently, Bierema (2009), in a critique of the dominant masculine rationality in HRD, concluded that society is saturated in masculine rationality

and usually lives automatically with its assumptions that encourage unequal social systems and practices, such as management, capitalism, sexism, and racism.

García-Retamero and López-Zafra (2009) observed that, although gender stereotypes have changed, men are still perceived as more managerial than women. Nevertheless, popular media are still reminding women and men of society's expectations for women. In addition to the stereotypes women face, there is still a belief that men are better suited to become leaders.

Leadership

Northouse wrote in 2007, as Stodgill (1974, p. 7) pointed out in a review of *leadership* research, there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it … In the past 60 years, as many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership. (p. 2)

Finally, Northouse (2007) stated, *"**Leadership** is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal"* (italics and bold in original) (p. 3). Similarly, Manning and Curtis (2003) declared that leadership is a current and timeless concept and defined it as a social influence. As with many more authors, they wrote on examples of great leaders throughout human history, but the examples are mainly of men.

Regarding women leaders, Hoyt (1994, as cited in Northouse, 2007) affirmed that men and women are equally effective leaders, "but they [women] were somewhat more effective than men in education, government, and social service organizations, and substantially more effective than men in middle management positions, where communal interpersonal skills are highly valued" (p. 268). However, Hoyt observed women are less

likely to self-promote and negotiate than men. Other characteristics Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) found in women's leadership style compared with men is that women are more interpersonally oriented, democratic, and transformational.

Additionally, Christman and McClellan (2008) conducted a study about resilient women administrators in educational leadership programs. The theoretical framework supporting their study was the social construction of gender and leadership theories. They found that women leaders developed a feminine set of characteristics and behaviors in order to sustain their administrative roles. Christman and McClellan argued that "gendered leadership norms are too simplistic and that women leaders must be willing to shift into multidimensional gender and traverse conventional borders" (p. 3).

<center>Summary</center>

This chapter summarized prior research and literature related to women in becoming working women and leaders that I had reviewed prior to beginning my data collection and analysis. This review highlights the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and the importance women give to balancing their personal and professional lives. I read little literature on the topic of women in leadership positions or ways to prepare women for these positions in México. This study will shed light on what Mexican women leaders experience while in the leadership position in a predominantly male-dominated culture.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The primary purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of women in leadership positions in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. It was my interest to gain a deeper understanding of their lives, experiences, and perceptions to understand better the challenges, obstacles, struggles, and satisfactions that these women have faced in becoming effective leaders in such a patriarchal society as the Mexican one (Hernandez & Riva, 1995).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a Methodology

Selecting the appropriate research methodology depends on identifying the research question and the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2002). The purpose of the study and the research question I was interested in conducting suggested the use of phenomenology as the methodology; therefore, this study used qualitative methods (Bryman, 1984, Creswell, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam (2009) stated that researchers who conduct qualitative studies "are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 14). Phenomenology is the most appropriate type of inquiry for this study because its objective is to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of women in leadership positions in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture.

Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher and mathematician, is considered to be the founder of phenomenology (Sawicki, 2005). According to van Manen (2001),

phenomenology is the study of the lived experience of the life world. "Phenomenology is the study of essences and possible human experiences. It is based on the belief that the human world can be understood only through the experiences of those who live in it" (Tunheim, 2008, p.37). Phenomenologists believe that knowledge and understanding are embedded in the everyday world; and they believe that truth and understanding of life can emerge from people's lived experiences. Phenomenology helps discover the meaning of life experiences. Merriam (2009) stated, "From the philosophy of phenomenology comes a focus on the experience itself and how experiencing something is transformed into consciousness" (p. 24).

Phenomenological Methodology

In opposition to the scientific method's supposed objectivity and a fixed, orderly reality as the sole approach to knowledge discovery, Husserl was looking for a logical method to gain understanding of the experience of human consciousness. To do this, he utilized bracketing: "a process of suspending one's judgment or bracketing particular beliefs about the phenomena in order to see it clearly" (Laverty, 2003, p. 23). Husserl's assumption was that people can separate their personal knowledge from the lived experiences of others, something that is hard to accomplish. "Husserl saw this method as a way of reaching the meaning through penetrating deeper and deeper into reality" (Laverty, 2003, p. 23). In addition, van Manen (2001) stated that phenomenology studies the essence or the meaning of the lived experiences that people often forget is present.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The interpretive methodology that will be used is hermeneutic phenomenology. Phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretative

rather than purely descriptive (van Manen, 2001). Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with how experiences emerge and with letting experiences speak for them (Tunheim, 2008). The foundation of this methodology is the experiences that are complex. The way we can make meaning of these experiences is through language. Van Manen (2001) stated that words build concepts, insights, and ways of thinking out of lived experiences to bring understanding; therefore, he concluded that every form of human awareness is interpretive.

Hermeneutic phenomenology offers the opportunity to be deep, insightful, aware, sensitive to language, and open to experience. It is a methodology that is both descriptive and interpretative because it claims that phenomena are always interpreted and meaningful (van Manen, 2001). This study used hermeneutic phenomenology as a process of understanding the lived experiences of women leaders in a predominantly male-dominated society, Mexico, through interpretation of language in text. The text comprised the transcripts of the interviews with participants. This approach gave me a better understanding of the lived experiences of Mexican women leaders through their words and voices.

Laverty (2003) discussed commonalities and differences between phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology, as she concluded that both Husserl and Heidegger could not take away their own lived experiences in their work. Husserl stated, "At heart…seemed to have a deeper need for certainty that pushed him in the direction of making philosophy a rigorous science" (Laverty, 2003, p. 23). Husserl could not eradicate, erase, or forget his background as mathematician. On the other hand, Heidegger, as a theologian, "was about his personal spiritual journey rather than

philosophy" (Laverty, 2003, p. 23). Both authors were profoundly influenced by their backgrounds.

Laverty (2003) concluded, "Phenomenological research is descriptive and focuses on the structure of experience," while "Hermeneutic research is interpretative and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels" (p. 27).

Research Methods

Hermeneutic phenomenology consists of six research activities, according to van Manen (1990). It is not a linear process, but, instead, consists of "dynamic interplay" (p. 30) between and among these tenets. These research activities served as the basis of this research:

1. turning to a phenomenon that seriously interests us and commits us to the world

2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it

3. reflecting on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon

4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting

5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon

6. balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole. (pp. 30-31)

Tunheim (2008) affirmed that phenomenology is not a science of empirical facts for generalization. Thus, the findings of this study are not meant to be generalized. These findings are intended to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied as experienced by the participants.

I was, as the researcher, the primary instrument of data collection. "The human instrument builds upon his or her tacit knowledge, and uses methods that are appropriate to humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues, and the like" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 187). Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) proposed that the human instrument allows data to be collected in an interactive process, and this is what I did as a researcher.

I conducted the interviews of the participants in person who shared their experiences as leaders. My desire was to hear the leaders' own voices as they described their journeys and reflected on their own beliefs and interpretations (Madsen, 2008). I wanted the women leaders to share their feelings, thoughts, reflections, and stories. According to Schein (2004, as cited in Madsen, 2008), stories can assist in offering an understanding of culture, and culture can help in understanding leadership. I expected this study to "provide insights into the development of the leadership competencies that are essential for effective leadership" (Madsen, 2008, p. 8).

Research Participants

I recruited participants by based on convenience. I attended to two different conferences during the Spring 2011 semester in México. This is where I met two of the participants and I introduced myself when they ended their lectures. Then, I explained them the study I was going to conduct in partial fulfillment of my doctoral studies, and both accepted to participate. They gave me their information in order to contact them, and I did it as soon as I got the IRB approval. I knew the story of other three participants because they are former students of Tecnológico de Monterrey, the institution I worked for. The bios of two of them were published in an agenda that was distributed t the

students, and the third one was my undergraduate student. I looked for them via Internet, and I was successful in contacting them and in their willingness to participate in this study. Two participants more are relatives of a friend of mine and one took me to the other. Again, I was successful in contacting them and in their willingness to participate in this study. Finally, the last participant is a very talented and renowned personality in the agribusiness in Morelia, who I contacted through my husband´s job as a consultant.

Eight Mexican women leaders confirmed their willingness to participate in this study; however, one did not keep our appointment. Thus, I interviewed seven leaders-- women from different organizations that are predominantly male-dominated in Mexico. I interviewed women leaders from different types of organizations, including corporate, non-profit, political, and academic; their ages ranged from 28 to 57, and they are single, married, and divorced.   All of them are college educated, speak at least two languages and are from middle and middle-high socioeconomic status. All of them attended private elementary, middle, and high school, and six of them at least attended three years at an all-girls Catholic school. Five of the interviewees attended private universities, and the other two attended the largest public university in México. A brief description of each participant is presented, and I will refer to two of them using a pseudonym, to respect confidentiality.

Daniela is a young politician in her late twenties. She entered politics by chance, thanks to an invitation of a well-known politician in the capital of Michoacán State, Morelia, who had been mayor of the capital city four times and who was looking to attract young voters by being surrounded by a group a young college-educated team members.   She had just finished college at the time with a major in business, but, as she

recognized the importance of being well prepared for the job, she enrolled a master's degree in public administration. She was the first woman to become a síndico in Morelia City, a position that is equivalent to a city vice-major, a popular election position. Besides, she was the youngest síndico in the country. She resigned from this position last year to run for local congress and won the election. She got married two years ago, and their plans are to become parents in two years.

Silvia, who is in her early fifties, is a top executive in the finance world in Mexico. She is the Regional Director of a major stock exchange company. She has a major in tourism administration but realized that she had to be better prepared for the job with updated knowledge and skills, so she has studied for several certificates in finance. She became the first woman to occupy an executive position in the company and in the sector, which has been a *macho* feud for many years. She began to work very young; she is in her late forties now and still wants to go for more. She is single and recently adopted a boy, after seven years of fighting for him in international courts. Her grandfather, whom she never met, has been her inspiration all of her professional life.

Lorena is a young professional, in her early thirties who is the Executive Director of Social Responsibility of Cinépolis, the largest movie theaters in Latin America, headquartered in México, and the number four worldwide, with over 11,000 employees. She is a member of different nonprofit organizations all over Mexico and teaches social responsibility in one of Mexico´s most prestigious Catholic university. She has a major in industrial engineering and a master´s in public administration and public policy. She recognizes that she is a privileged person who discovered her social vocation from a very

early age. She recently married and anticipates that this personal decision will affect her professional career in the future.

Adriana, in her mid fifties, founded AMDAHTA in 2000, a nonprofit organization that helps kids suffering from attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and their mothers, after having an ADHD boy. She declares that she was a non diagnosed ADHD but had the fortune of been raised in a great family that supported her and finally attended the right high school that fit her personal characteristics. She was the first woman to become a manager in an insurance business in Monterrey in the 1980s, when it was not common to see women in top executive positions. Today, she runs her own business, a firm dedicated to recovering the pre-Hispanic Mexican cuisine.

Helena, who is in her late fifties, was the first woman to become a vice-rector in one of the largest and most prestigious private universities in Mexico, with more than 8,600 professors and 99,200 students. She is the former academic vice-rector and the former vice-rector for social development. She is in her late fifties with a major in computing sciences and two masters´ degrees, one in artificial intelligence and the other in science in industrial administration, both overseas. She has always been a leader, since her early days in school and decided to use this capability on behalf of the people surrounding her. Helena retired from the institution she worked for in the Summer 2009 and is working as a consultant for different universities today, mainly in the start-ups. She is the older of two sisters who were raised in a very strict, "old fashioned" family, with parents who always asked their girls for results. She is single.

Gabriela´s professional career was very successful in the 1980s and 1990s when she was very young. She is now in her mid fifties, and she worked for large corporations

in Mexico in the finance area, although her major was biology. She recognized the need for another academic background in order to succeed in the finance arena, so she enrolled in finance certificates to extend her knowledge and expertise in the accounting field to become a treasurer when she had the opportunity. Nevertheless, she occupied an executive suite and finally became an independent consultant when she got married and had a daughter in her early 40s.

Ana Luisa, in her late thirties, had always been an honor roll student and now owns one of the few legal firms specializing in real estate in México City. She majored in law and has an MBA, both from one of the most prestigious Catholic universities in Mexico. She married ten years ago but now is single, a blow in her traditional Catholic family and has no kids. She is the older of two daughters; her father is also a lawyer and a very influential person in her life. She is a member of different associations, such as Mexican Women´s Civil Rights and the Mexican Association of Executive Women.

Interviews

To conduct my research, I used in-depth face-to-face interviews, when possible, to collect direct information from the women leaders about their experiences in top level positions in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. Interviews are a method that is consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology. I recorded each interview with the participants' permission and personally transcribed them verbatim later. I also collected demographic information before each interview from the Internet and during the interview, both to describe the participants and also to break the ice during the interviews. I took field notes, where applicable, both during and after each interview, focusing primarily on non-verbal behavior (Gibson, 2008).

I conducted the interviews in July-August, 2011. Following IRB approval, I contacted the participants by e-mail or by telephone, to secure an interview. The interviews were conducted in Spanish although every participant is fluent in English, all felt more comfortable in their native language. Most interviews lasted at least one hour and, at the most, two hours. There was a follow-up approximately four to six weeks after the first interview for the purpose of assuring the accuracy of the interview.

I was well aware that I needed to use affirmative, nonverbal communication and expressions, such as nodding, and promoting each participant to extend their responses. As each interview was conducted at the convenience of the participant and in the location where she felt confident, I tried to give each participant the necessary confidence to share her experiences with me. Three participants were interviewed in their offices, two were via Skype, and the remaining two by phone, as the participants requested.

While Lincoln and Guba (1985) acknowledged the existence of two types of interviews, structured and unstructured, hermeneutic phenomenology uses only unstructured interviews to ensure that responses are not influenced by the researcher's biases and preconceptions that might arise in structured interviews through the choice of questions. Thus, I posed only one question: Could you please share your experience of being a woman leader in predominantly male dominated organizations in México? I let the interviewees talk without any other planned or structured question. I used the probes listed in Appendix A to encourage participants to continue talking.

I anticipated that women leaders were going to be willing to participate in this study, considering that all of them are college educated, and, therefore, they recognize the formality and protocol of a doctoral dissertation. It was surprising that the only one who

was a doctoral graduate was the one that did not show up for our appointment. I also believed they would like to share their lived experiences with not only more women, but also with any person who realizes the importance of equity. At the beginning of the interview, I asked each participant to read and sign a Consent Form (Appendix B), in order to meet the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). After interviewing all of the participants I sent them a thank-you letter via e-mail.

Creating and Verifying Transcripts

Six interviews were recorded, with permission; one was not recorded, upon request of the interviewee, resulting in the need for detailed handwritten notes. I transcribed the tapes verbatim into written documents, doing the same, so far as possible, with the handwritten notes. I stored the recorded interviews and handwritten notes in a locked file cabinet in my home office in Mexico. I assured the women leaders that the tapes would remain confidential and not be shared with anyone else but my advisor. The tapes will be destroyed two years after defense of the dissertation.

I asked each participant to review the transcription of her interview by e-mail, and I asked her to make any additions or changes if she wanted to, in order to assure the accuracy of the interview. One of the e-mails sent to the participants is shown as an example in APPENDIX C. All of the participants agreed with the transcripts, and only two of them made a slight change, that was to introduce the term driven to their innate characteristics. As two participants chose not to be identified, I asked them to pick a substitute name to use for the study. The real names of the other five participants are used all over the study.

Analyzing Transcripts

The interviews were then subjected to hermeneutical phenomenological reflection to allow themes to emerge. Van Manen (1990) described a theme as:

- the experience of focus, of meaning, of point

- a simplification

- a description of "an aspect of the structure of the lived experience"

- the "process of insightful invention, discovery, disclosure"

- the means to get a notion, the content of the notion, and a reduction of the notion (pp. 87-88)

I read the texts of the transcripts twice completely. I was looking for the material that was at the center of the experience (Tesch, 1987). I highlighted the lines in the text that represented the most insightful experiences of the interviewees and noted them in the margins of the text. Afterwards, I made a table with these statements. I then categorized the comments of the Mexican women leaders and clustered them. I shared those tentative themes with the participants via e-mail (Appendix D). All of them agreed on the six themes that emerged, four of them with sub-themes. To this point everything was done in Spanish; the interviewees felt more comfortable in their native language, and expressing their feelings and sharing their experiences was easier in Spanish (Knorr, 2006). Otherwise, according to Merriam (2009), in phenomenological qualitative studies, the assumptions, experiences, and background of the researcher may jeopardize the interpretation of the data collected.

The next phase in working with the interviews was the process of working with the transcripts. As referenced by van Manen (1990), a major part of the analysis of

phenomenological research is in the writing and rewriting. Thus, I began to develop each theme, supported by quotes from the interviews. To maintain the integrity of the language, the quotes were included in the writing in both Spanish and English, based on my own translation. This translation was checked by a native Spanish speaker, who is a bilingual, bicultural communication specialist and validated by the external committee member, who is also a native Spanish speaker, bilingual and bicultural. The process of writing and rewriting continued until I was satisfied that I had indeed captured the voices of the women.

Institutional Review Board

I sent the forms and necessary attachments to the Texas A&M University IRB Office in order to get their approval to conduct this study. I expected that this study would have a minimal impact on the participants. The only impact I could foresee was that the interviewees might have remembered or felt some pain about a sad or frustrating experience as a woman leader in a predominantly male-dominated organization. I did not begin any of the work on the study until I received the approval, without modification, from the IRB.

Summary

In this chapter, phenomenology was defined as the study of essences of human experiences. Hermeneutic phenomenology was used in this study because it is concerned with understanding lived experiences through language.

The basis of this study was van Manen´s (1990) six research tenets:

turning to a phenomenon that seriously interests us and commits us to the world;

investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; reflecting

on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon; describing the

phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; maintaining a strong and

oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and balancing the research

context by considering the parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

Seven Mexican women leaders served as participants in the study. I interviewed

them in-depth using face to face, Skype, or phone, after participants signed the consent

form. I then followed up with a second contact by phone or e-mail to validate the themes

that emerged. All of the study was conducted with approval from the Institutional Review

Board (IRB).

The data analysis included reading the transcripts, writing, and re-writing. I used

a highlight approach to identify statements that were important to my research question.

CHAPTER IV

IDENTIFIED THEMES

This chapter presents the themes that emerged from this study. Six themes emerged, with sub-themes for four of them: preparation (academic), innate characteristics, act under principles and ethical values (desire to impact through social responsibility activities), the job itself is very important (challenges and being competitive), finding a balance between personal and professional time as a goal, and benefits from the position (recognition and independence). The participants´ own words were used to describe the themes. My language is used to connect the participants´ comments and bring meaning to them, as I understand them.

Preparation

Preparation is critical for all of the participants. All of the women leaders interviewed are college educated, speak at least two languages (Spanish and English), and two are fluent in a third language (French or Italian). Four of the participants have a master's degree and the other three have studied at least one certificate in the field in which they work. All continued studying while working and three have taught in prestigious private universities in México. Five studied overseas or traveled for business around the world.

Academic

These seven women leaders were privileged; they comprised the 7% of Mexican women who are college educated, and the 0.5% who have a post-graduate education. All attended private schools in elementary, middle, and high school. Six attended at least

three years at an all-girls Catholic school; only one attended a secular, co-ed school. Five

attended private universities, and the other two attended the largest public university in

México. Two completed their master's degrees overseas; one has two masters´ degrees,

one from the U.S. and the other from Scotland. Every one recognized the importance of

studying hard to reach their goals. Daniela shared the following comment about

beginning her duties as the first woman *síndico* in Morelia, without any previous

experience as a politician:

> Cuando iba a empezar mi trabajo como Síndico, platiqué con una persona que fue
>
> síndico con el Lic. Fausto (su jefe): Paco Bernal. Él me dijo: este trabajo no tiene
>
> nada de complicado, es de mucha responsabilidad y lo que importa es que tengas
>
> una buena agenda, que estés organizada y que resuelvas las cosas importantes en
>
> el día. Me tranquilizó mucho. El puesto es muy pesado, pero no difícil mientras
>
> estudies y estés al día.
>
> [When I was to start my job in this position, as sindico, I talked to a former
>
> sindico who had worked with Mr. Fausto (her boss): Paco Bernal. He told me
>
> that the job was not complicated, that it was a lot of responsibility, and that it was
>
> critical to have a good agenda, to be organized, and to solve the important things
>
> on a daily basis. He gave me peace of mind. "The position is a tough one, but not
>
> difficult as long as you study and you are updated."]

Every participant in this study recognized the importance of being updated in their

field of expertise and in their competence area, not only earning different certificates, but

also reading and self-study. One participant stated, Yo he estudiado mucho para estar

aquí.   [I have studied a lot to be here.] Another one said, Las cosas que no se,

simplemente las estudio. [The things I do not know, I just study them.]

Four graduated cum laude from college, and six were honor roll students during

their elementary and secondary studies. One worked in corporate finance in spite of

having a degree in biology, but she knew that she had to study for a certificate in finance

to keep on her job responsibilities if she wanted to keep on growing and moving up the

executive ladder. In accordance with this, she said:

Yo manejaba las áreas de finanzas; áreas de contabilidad no las manejé nunca,

pero para entender el negocio, para hacer mi trabajo, se necesitaba de inteligencia

y de conocimiento del negocio, y contabilidad muy básica, que aprendí en el

diplomado en finanzas del ITAM (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México).

[I managed the finances; I never managed the accounting areas, but to understand

the business and to do my job, I needed to be intelligent, to know the business,

and to know the basics of accounting principles, so I studied for a certificate in

Finance in the best private school at the time for those matters, the Instituto

Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM)].

Another of the interviewees realized that the university she attended was

determinant in her becoming a successful leader:

Tenías que estudiar mucho y si te metes ahí, Universidad Panamericana (UP), ya

sabes que vas a tener que estudiar muchísimo y si vas a eso es para dedicarte a

trabajar profesionalmente y en serio, ¿no?

[You really had to study hard there. And if you decided to enroll in this

university, the Universidad Panamericana (UP), you already knew you had to

study hard and lots, but if you go for that, you have to be professional and

responsible and take it seriously, don´t you?]

Adriana belongs to an upper middle class family and finished high school in

Tecnológico de Monterrey (one of the most prestigious and expensive private schools in

México). She earned excellent grades; her grade average was 99/100. She wanted to

stay there for college, but her father, a former military officer, told her, ¿Cómo te voy a

pagar el Tec (Tecnológico de Monterrey), la escuela más cara de México, para que te

cases?, [How am I going to pay the Tec (Tecnológico de Monterrey), the most expensive

tuition in México if you are going to end up getting married?] She continued her story:

Entonces, desde su óptica [de su papá] era muy clara, en mi familia no habían

mujeres profesionales, ni mi mamá, ni mis tías, ni mis hermanas. Mis hermanas

son 8-9 y 15 años mayores que yo. Estudiaron estenografía bilingüe y trabajabas

con un tío o un banco mientras te casabas y ¡¡¡te casabas!!! Dada la negativa de

mi papá a pagarme el Tec, yo le solicité una beca al Vicerrector del Tec y él me

dijo, no te puedo dar una beca porque tienes suficiencia económica, pero te puedo

dar un préstamo, fui quizá la primera generación a quien el Tec le dio un préstamo

o financiamiento para su carrera. Entonces pude estudiar lo que quise y en la

institución que yo quise, por mi propios méritos. Yo estoy muy orgullosa de esto,

que hasta lo comparto con enorme orgullo y lo incluyo en mi curriculum vitae.

[From my father's point of view it was very clear; there were no professional women in

my family--nor my mother, my aunts, or my sisters. My sisters are 8, 9, and 15 years

older than me. They studied bilingual stenography and worked for an uncle or at a bank

until they get married, and they got married!!! Because of my father's negativity, I asked

the Vice-rector of the Tec for a scholarship, he said I couldn´t be granted with a

scholarships, because my family had the economic capacity to pay for it, but I could ask

for a loan. I guess I was the first generation to be granted student loans to finance their

studies. So I could study what I wanted and in the institution I wanted, by my personal

means. I am so very proud of it that I even write it down in my resume].

<div align="center">Innate Characteristics</div>

The seven Mexican women leaders are self-aware about who they are and what

they want. They are sure of themselves and particularly self-reflective. All stated that

discipline, dedication, and hard work were key factors in preparing for their leadership

roles. Ana Luisa was very assertive when she said:

Como mujer te conoces y las conoces. Soy de la generación de mujeres en la que

empezó a haber más apertura. Yo soy abogada. Ya las mujeres tenían un camino

andado. Cuando yo estaba estudiando, ya había mujeres ejecutivas y la

perspectiva de la mujer en el área profesional se había abierto bastante, ya había

mujeres ejecutivas y la perspectiva de la mujer en área profesional estaba más

amplia. Las mujeres creo que, por lo menos en la etapa que a mí me tocó teníamos

la capacidad de elección; nivel académico, nivel cultural. Pero tienes más

alternativas, piensas en casarte y poder desarrollar tu carrera. Pensé en casarme y

también en desarrollarme en mi carera profesional pero mi matrimonio no

funcionó. Desde el principio yo siempre quise ser una abogada exitosa y continué

poniendo el cien por ciento de mi stamina en eso.

[You, as a woman, know yourself, and it´s easier to know other women and what

they want, as well. I was fortunate to belong to this generation when women

already have gone a long way, and we have more alternatives as women. I am a

lawyer. When I was in law school, there were already women in executive

positions, and women's perspectives in the professional arena were broader.

There were more women lawyers in legal firms. I believe that women, at least in

my days, have more choices in the academic level and the cultural level. But you

certainly have more choices; you think about getting married and also about

developing your professional career. I thought about getting married and being

able to perform my professional career, but my marriage did not go well. From

the very beginning, I always wanted to be a very successful lawyer, and I

continued delivering 100% of my stamina on it.]

Two of the participants affirmed that they are very driven. One stated,

Es una fuerza interior, "drive" que te impulsa, es entusiasmo. Algo interno que te

impulsa que no tiene que ver con si eres hombre o mujer.

[It is an inside strength that pushes me, drives, it is enthusiasm. It is this inner

impulse that motivates me, and it does not have anything to do with whether I am

a woman or a man.]

The other one said, Tengo un impulso interno de que tengo que destacar, tengo

que ganar, que hacerlo bien. Participé en cuanta competencia y en concursos

escolares… otra de las cosas en que siempre estuve fue en concursos de oratoria.

Soy buena para hablar en público.

[I have an inner impulse that pushes me. I need to excel, I need to win, and I need

to do it well. I participated in every academic and school competition… another

thing I always participated in was oratory contests. I am very good in public speaking.]

Helena, who is single and does not have kids, said:

He ocupado puestos de responsabilidad y de autoridad porque cumplo, me va bien, siempre he trabajado mucho para lograrlo. Atrás de esos logros hay mucho esfuerzo, dedicación, disciplina. Me comprometí con algo y lo voy a lograr. Pero no ha sido gratuito, es producto de mi trabajo. Ha sido fácil porque lo único que yo he hecho es trabajar. Nunca, por ser mujer, me limité. Mi papá siempre nos dijo que nada es imposible, tal vez es difícil pero no imposible, todo se puede. Yo no podía llegar a mi casa sin una respuesta, tenía que llegar con una solución. [Because I have always met my duties, I have occupied authority positions and had lots of responsibility. I do well; I have always worked hard to reach goals. Behind these achievements, there is a lot of effort, dedication, and discipline. If I undertook something, I'm going to achieve it. But it has not been for free; it has been a product of my work. It has been easy for me because all I have done is work. I have never limited myself because I'm a woman. My father always told me and my sister: nothing is impossible, maybe hard to achieve it but never impossible; and I could not arrive home without an answer, I had to find the solution because he always demanded results.]

These women are also aware of their intelligence and capabilities. One of them did not hesitate to self-define in the following terms:

Tengo varias inteligencias, múltiples inteligencias y todas muy desarrolladas.

También tengo lateralidad 50-50. Soy buena para las matemáticas, la literatura;

me guastan las bellas artes, el teatro.

[I have several intelligences, you know, multiple intelligences, and all of them are

very developed. I also have 50-50 laterality. I am very good in math, but I am

also very good in literature, and I love the fine arts, the theater.]

Lorena one said:

No soy tonta, soy Ingeniera Industrial y de Sistemas. Se administrar. Y, lo que no

sé lo estudio.

[I am not stupid; I am an industrial engineer. I know how to manage, and

whatever I don't know, I study it!]

Gabriela admitted not only being intelligent, but also to have other abilities that

helped her in her performance: Yo se cómo negociar con hombres. Me puedo sentar con

cualquiera a hacerlo! [I know how to negotiate with men. I can sit with anyone at the

same table to do that!]

Two realized that their physical appearance has helped them to have a specific

social weight wherever they performed. Adriana said:

Me choca decirlo pero yo soy notable, destacada, desde lo físico. Yo soy de físico

grande, voluminosa, ruidosa, "opinionated" dicen en Estados Unidos, eso hace

que las mujeres se sientan celosas de que alguien opine.

[I hate to say it, but I'm not unnoticed. Everyone notices when I enter, due to my

physical appearance. I am big, voluminous, and noisy.   They call it opinionated

in the U.S., and that makes other women jealous of me and my opinions.]

Another of the participants, Helena, affirmed that she was born a leader.

Si soy mandona. Nunca fui modosita. Así soy, no es como me he propuesto ser.

Sí lo he disfrutado. No creo que haya sido una meta. He visto oportunidades y las

he tomado.

[Yes, I am bossy. I was never girly. That´s the way I am, and it is not that I have

proposed to be that way. That is how I am. And I have enjoyed it, yes, I have! I

don´t think it has been a goal. I´ve seen opportunities and I have taken them.]

She added:

El liderazgo para mí es un impulso interno, una responsabilidad y un compromiso.

De niña no sentí eso pero si el reconocimiento y muchos años de mi vida funcioné

así. Si te vuelves soberbia. Te lo da el puesto, la responsabilidad y que te hagan

caso, claro que eso es soberbia. No hay un líder humilde. Ni Mahatma Ghandi ni

esta monja Teresa, nadie. No se puede ser humilde mientras seas visible y estoy

trabajando en eso. Desde que dejé de trabajar en la Institución en la que estuve

por muchos años y en donde hice una labor muy destacada, hace dos años, he

trabajado en un proceso de humildad y ahora voy a hacer lo que el Señor me pida

que haga. Pero siento desesperación cuando nadie toma la iniciativa. Esa

satisfacción de ser como soy, mujer libre pensadora, no tener miedo.

[Leadership is an inner impulse, a responsibility, and a commitment. When I was

a girl I did not feel that, but I remember the recognition I had, and I functioned

that way for many years. You become arrogant. Of course, it is arrogance; it is

something that a big position and responsibility give you, and everybody starts

doing what you say. Of course it is arrogance. There is no humble leader. Not

even Mahatma Gandhi or that nun, Teresa, no one. You cannot be humble while

you are visible, and I am working on it.   Since I decided to leave the institution

where I worked for so many years, and, where I excelled, I began working on a

process of becoming humble and know I am ready to do what the Lord asks me to

do. But, I become desperate when nobody takes the initiative. Despite all of this,

I am very satisfied being the way I am, a free woman, not being afraid.]

This participant left the higher education institution where she worked for many

years after being the first woman to become vice-rector of the system. She occupied

three different vice-rectories: academic, research and development, and social

development. Although she recognizes that she enjoyed her leadership positions very

much, she also said that she does not want to hold a new one anymore:

Ahora quiero ser competente, no competitiva, pero ya no quiero ser líder, no más.

Ahora quiero ser mentor. El mentor no se ve, también guía, pero no es líder. No

asume, sugiere, orienta pero ya no asume. Me acaban de ofrecer dos rectorías, en

marzo y en junio. Les ayudo en la parte de la estrategia y físicamente la energía

que se requiere, ya no gracias. Ya no me veo encabezando nada.

[Nowadays, I want to be competent, not competitive, but I do not want to be a

leader, not anymore. Now I want to be a mentor.   A mentor is not as visible as a

leader; thus, a mentor also leads, without being seen. A mentor doesn´t take

responsibilities, but suggests, gives orientation, but does not take responsibilities.

They offered me two presidencies, both last year, in March and in June, but I did

not accept them. I said, no, thanks. I help develop strategy, but I don´t even want

to go through the energy that is required to perform as a president, not anymore. I do not see myself leading anything.]

Finally, all of these women are self-confident. One of them affirmed:

Esto sí es importante, la seguridad que yo tengo no por bonita sino por lo que sé. Yo no puedo poner mi seguridad en manos de nadie. Tengo una gran seguridad y eso es una gran ventaja.

[This is really important; the security I have is not from being a pretty face, but because of what I know. I cannot put my security in another one´s hands. I am self-confident, and that is a great advantage].

Another said: Yo lo puedo hacer porque he estudiado mucho, se lo que tengo que hacer y siempre he dado buenos resultados.

[I can do it because I have studied a lot; I know what to do, and I´ve always given good results].

Lorena declared:

Me siento orgullosa de mi misma. Me gustaría seguir adelante. Me gusta compararme conmigo misma.

[I am so proud of myself; I like to keep on going further. I only like to compare with myself.]

Move under Principles and Ethical Values

One participant, Ana Luisa, was very decisive when talking about ethics; she affirmed that she works under ethical values that are not movable. She said that she has been very fortunate to work with good people who are honest and respectful. Helena said

that she was very proud that every penny that has entered her house is clean and

uncorrupted. She shared the following story that exemplifies this:

Trabajé en CONASUPO, una cadena de tiendas de autoservicio que vendía

productos básicos a precios bajos para los pobres. Había corrupción con los

productos que iban a caducar. Yo propuse con el contador y con el auditor otros

métodos.   Me parecía espantoso que se desperdiciara toda esa comida con las

necesidades que hay en este país. Tener que hacer cosas con las que no estoy de

acuerdo, no. Tuve que renunciar. El Gerente regional era del TEC, la misma

institución en la que estudié, esa razón fue por la que yo trabajé ahí. Era un

ambiente de corrupción, era la época en que la CONASUPO estaba el hermano de

Salinas, Raúl Salinas de Gortari y había mucha corrupción. Yo tenía 30-32 años,

era muy joven.   Siempre he sido muy agresiva. Siempre he estado dispuesta a

dejar un trabajo que va en contra de lo que pienso y de lo que soy. Las cosas que

valen la pena para mí son cosas que no son para los demás (status, sueldote) yo

actúo por principios.

[I used to work for CONASUPO, a government supermarket system that sold

basic products cheaper for the underprivileged. There was corruption in the

system regarding the products that were going to expire. I proposed methods to

the auditor and the accountant to avoid selling them close to the expiration dates.

I thought it was horrible to spoil all that food with so many people in need in this

country. Having to do things I didn´t agree with was more than I could cope with.

I had to resign. The regional manager graduated from the same college I had

attended; that´s why I worked there. It was a corrupted environment; it was the

time when the brother of Salinas (México´s former president), Raul Salinas de

Gortari, worked for CONASUPO, and there was a lot of corruption. I was 30-32

years old; I was very young. I have always been very fierce. I have always been

ready to leave a job if it goes against what I think and what I am, because I act

under ethical principles. The things that are worthwhile for me are not the ones

others value. For example, I have never cared for a big paycheck or status.]

Daniela, the politician said that she realized that there is corruption, but she said

that it is the system that allows it, because there are not as many locks to keep people in

check as there should be. She argued:

Los jóvenes estamos muy desilusionados de la política por muchas cosas, pero el

saber que todavía hay gente honesta y buena te da gusto. También siento que el

problema no es la gente sino el sistema. Es como si llegas a una empresa donde

robar es muy fácil y es fácil robar porque no hay candados. Por ejemplo, si llegas

a Cinépolis y ves que es fácil robar y además te dicen que todos lo hacen, por qué

tu no? Pues por tus principios y valores. El problema es que el sistema político así

está, no tiene candados como debería de tener. He permanecido al margen de toda

esta corrupción por mis principios y valores. Es muy fácil desviar recursos o

quedártelos, pero no lo hago porque soy una persona honesta y he tenido la

oportunidad de trabajar con mi jefe, quien es un político honesto.

[We as young people are very disappointed about politics for many reasons, but

knowing that there are still honest and good people make one happy. I also feel

that the system is the problem, not the people. It is like if you enter a business

that is very easy to rob, and it is easy because there are not any locks. For

example, you start working for Cinépolis (a major company in the country that is headquartered in in Morelia), and you find out that it is very easy to steal, and besides they tell you that´s what everyone does. You say, why not? The answer is because of your principles and values. The problem is that the political system is like that; it has no locks. But I have stayed away from all of this corruption because of my strong principles and values with which I was raised. It is very easy to divert resources or even keep them to yourself, but I haven´t done that because I am an honest person, and I have had the chance to work with my boss who is a very honest politician.]

Desire to Impact through Social Responsibility Activities

For Lorena, this is her field of work and has been very active in social responsibility activities, not only for the company for which she works, but also for different associations of which she is a member. She said that she was fortunate to discover her social vocation from a very early age. She shared this story:

Mi mamá es de Morelia y mi papá de Monterrey. Vivíamos en Monterrey pero veníamos a Morelia todas las vacaciones. Mi madre acostumbraba recolectar ropa para dársela a la gente que en la carretera pedía limosna. Mi papá detenía el vehículo para regalar la ropa; mi mamá iba cargando a mi hermana de dos años y quien llevaba puestas unas sandalias. Una señora salió de entre la muchedumbre, cargando a una niña, también de dos años, como mi hermana. La niña se quedó viendo a las sandalias de mi hermana, por lo que mi mamá se las quitó a mi hermana y se las dio a la niña. Recuerdo la cara de interrogación de mi hermana y a mi mamá diciéndole," Está bien, ya te compraremos otras. Esta niña realmente

las necesita¨. Viendo la acción de mi mamá, comprendí que necesitamos apoyar a

la comunidad y compartir nuestros privilegios.

[My mother is from Morelia and my father from Monterrey. We lived in

Monterrey but came by car to Morelia every vacation. My mother used to collect

clothes to give away to people who are in the highway begging for things. My

father stopped to give all these clothes away; my mother was carrying my baby

sister who was two years old and wearing a pair of sandals. A woman from the

crowd reached for us; she was also carrying a two-year-old baby girl, just like my

sister. This poor baby girl was staring at my sister's sandals, so my mom took

them away from my sister and gave them to the poor girl. I remember my sister's

questioning face, and my mom telling her, "It is OK, it is fine, and we will get

some others for you. This girl really needs them." By seeing my mom's action, I

realized we needed to give back to the community and to share with them our

privileges.]

Nevertheless, the other participants are aware of the needs of Mexican society and

the impact they can have in it. One of the women cited an example that described the

underprivileged and precarious situation of women and of some indigenous minority

groups in México:

En lo personal, nunca me he sentido discriminada por ser mujer, pero tengo que

reconocer que desventajas si las hay a nivel colectivo. Los números son terribles,

las mujeres son las, menos educadas, las de menores salarios. En algunas

comunidades de Chiapas, hoy en día, las mujeres indígenas no pueden heredar.

Las visitas a las cárceles son mucho más las visitas a los hombres contra el

número de visitas a mujeres. Socialmente sí es una desventaja ser mujer. Quiero

decirte que la primera vez que fui consciente de de las restricciones de las mujeres

fue cuando empecé a estudiar mi maestría en la Universidad de Iowa. Ahí empecé

a estudiar las condiciones sociales, políticas y económicas de las mujeres en el

Tercer Mundo. Y primero me dije; ¿Qué van a saber estas gringas de esto? Tomé

la clase con una profesora de Stanford; éramos doce gringas y dos extranjeras. Fue

la primera vez en que me dí cuenta de las restricciones de las mujeres. Fue un

shock para mí. Me dí cuenta de que éramos lo más subdesarrollado de lo

subdesarrollado. Las estadísticas eran muy claras. En lo personal, de hecho en

varias ocasiones me sentí así, porque hay cosas que yo no acepto como las

condiciones en las que viven las mujeres indígenas mexicanas. Sencillamente no

es justo. Es por eso que participo en organizaciones no lucrativas en todo el país,

al sur en Chiapas y al Norte con la Fundación Tarahumara en donde me dedico a

apoyar a los indígenas que sufren hambre.

[I never felt that I was discriminated against for being a woman, not personally,

but I have to recognize that there are a lot of disadvantages for women, as a

collective. Statistics are terrible--women are less educated and earn less money.

In some indigenous communities, for example, in Chiapas, women nowadays

cannot inherit. People visit more men in jails than women in jails. Socially,

there is a disadvantage of being a woman. I want to tell you that the first time I

was conscious of the restrictions women have was when I started studying for my

master´s degree at the University of Iowa. It was there where I began studying the

social, political, and economic conditions of women in the Third World. The first

thing that came to my mind was, "What are these American women going to know about that?" I took the class with a professor from Stanford; we were 12 American students and two foreigners. It was the first time I was conscious of women´s restrictions. It was shocking to me. It was the time that I realized that we were the most under-developed of the under-developed. Statistics were very clear. There are things that I cannot accept, and one of them is the conditions under which so many Mexican indigenous women live. It is simply unfair. This is why I participate in some non-profit organizations all over the country to the south in Chiapas and to the north in the Fundación Tarahumara, where I am an advocate for the indigenous people suffering hunger.]

Daniela, who performs in the political arena, affirmed that she wants to keep on working in politics because she wishes to serve, because she is sensitive to the needs of the population. She is in a position to help the community solve its day-to-day problems, such as improving security, or building a daycare center for maids who cannot afford to pay one and do not have any social security benefits.

Adriana, another woman leader was in the corporate world until she became a mother. Her son demanded all of her time. He had an accident, fell down, and broke his head. She said:

Yo fundé la Asociación Mexicana para el Déficit de Atención, Hiperactividad y Trastornos Asociados (AMDAHTA) en el 2000, después de que le diagnosticaron a mi hijo. Se quebró el cráneo en un accidente, en una caída. Yo estaba desesperada de encontrar muy poca información a nivel social y gracias al privilegio económico como tuvimos nosotros de llegar a un buen médico que

diagnosticó a Gino (su hijo) y luego el médico que fue muy lindo y encontró con que yo tenía niveles de stress muy altos. Me decía tú eres igual. Entonces entendí muchas cosas, pero quizá la más importante es que teniendo ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) y ser mujer, fueron los dos ingredientes que me han dado el éxito.

[I founded AMDAHTA (Mexican Association for the Attention Disorder, Hyperactivity, and Associated Disorders) in 2000, after my son was diagnosed. He broke his head, in an accident, he fall down. I was desperate; there was so little information around this topic at the social level. But, thanks to our condition of being economically privileged, we met a great doctor, and Gino (her son) was finally diagnosed with ADD. This doctor was also very kind. He told me I had very high stress levels. He diagnosed me, and I was the same as my son, ADD. Then I understood many things, but the most important was perhaps being ADD and being a woman were the two ingredients that led to my success.]

So she affirmed that she wanted to open spaces for mothers with kids with problems, even though these kids don´t have the problem, they have a condition; it is their mothers who have the problem. So she founded the AMDATHA, the Mexican Association for the Attention Disorder, Hyperactivity, and Associated Disorders in 2000. She worked hard to be heard, even in the Mexican Congress. She did not want all these ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) kids to be discriminated in their schools or even to be expelled; she wanted them to succeed. She started lecturing and empowering mothers who lived in the same situation as she lived.   She ended this theme saying how her son defines her: "Mi Mamá cambia destinos", ["My mother changes destinies."]

This woman leader is really passionate about today´s women's conditions in México. She totally disapproves of young girls who belong to the economically privileged class in México not assuming their social responsibility but instead are attending college because it is a fad, because it is socially accepted, and because they might even meet a nice, wealthy guy to marry him. She would like to see her nieces and all youngsters embracing social causes, not going to the nail spas to have these long fake nails and going to the trendy coffee shops, wearing big brand bags to pass the time driving their big SUVs instead of working hard in the construction of a better México for themselves and for their families. She said:

Es una pena que estas niñitas que pagan una fortuna en colegiaturas en universidades privadas para asegurar su status económico dejen de trabajar en cuanto se casan. Y no es que esté generalizando, pero al menos todas mis sobrinas fueron a la universidad, y ninguna está trabajando, ni siquiera por una causa social. Es una pena. Me da coraje personal porque son mi familia, pero me enoja que no quieran insertarse en la vida productiva en esta sociedad con tantas necesidades, Yo creo que el 50% de la vida de un país es la mujer, pero no es justo que este 50% no quiera contribuir al desarrollo del país.

[It is a shame that these little girls pay so much in tuitions in private universities, just to assure their economic status and then stop working as soon as they get married. It is not that I am generalizing, but at least all of my nieces are college educated, and none of them is working or fighting for a social cause. It is a shame. It makes me mad, because they´re my family, but it makes me mad that they do not want to be productive in this society with so many needs. I think that

50% of this country´s life is women, but it´s not fair that this 50% do not want to contribute in the country´s development.]

The Job Itself Is Very Important

The job itself is very important for all of these women. They talked about their jobs in a very enthusiastic and even passionate way. As Gabriela affirmed:

Lo que más me motivaba era que el trabajo me encantaba, me fascinaba. Todo el mundo se burlaba de mí porque yo les decía que los sábados y domingos que no tenía que trabajar, no tenía qué aprender. Un sueldote tampoco era lo que me llamaba. Mira mi trabajo me llamaba. Era un reto constante. Mi trabajo era muy padre y el tener independencia económica no era lo más picudo sino el trabajo en sí. Es un negocio muy demandante, de muchos retos, entonces era así constantemente inventando, viendo que hacíamos para mejorar y todo era muy emocionante.

[The one thing that motivated me was that I liked my job, really, truly, I just loved it; it fascinated me. Everybody made fun of me whenever I said that I didn't have anything to learn on the weekends when I didn't have to work. The big check did not move me; what really moved me was my job. It called me. My job was a constant challenge, and I loved it. My job was exciting, and having economic independence was not the best part of it, it was the job itself. It was a very demanding business, with lots of challenges, so that was the way it was, a constant invention, looking forward to better ways of doing things, and everything was really interesting.]

It seems that the job itself gives adrenaline to these women. Ana Luisa declared that her job was very demanding and added:

Me encanta ese "rush" profesional del que me provee. Me da una satisfacción enorme. Estoy muy contenta.

[I just love this professional "rush" that my job gives me.   I am very satisfied, contented, and happy with my job.]

Otherwise, Silvia affirmed about her job that is a very demanding one. It is also stressful, because she has to make decisions regarding other people's financial investments. She pointed out that a major satisfaction comes when her clients recommend her to other investors:

Mi gran satisfacción es que me agradezcan mis clientes quienes, en su mayoría, son clientes por recomendación.

[This is quite a gratification because it means my clients like the way I work and the way I manage their money. It means a lot to me!]

Lorena added:

Mi trabajo es mi alimento diario. No me puedo imaginar mi vida sin mi trabajo. No sé que vaya a pasar en el futuro cercano. Me voy a casar en octubre y te puedo anticipar que voy a tener que estar mejor organizada para encontrar balance, pero no estoy pensando en dejar mi trabajo. Lo necesito mucho. Mi trabajo me llena. Pero la realidad es que un puesto ejecutivo demanda mucho tiempo, muchos viajes y no vas a poder tener una casa preciosa, unos hijos como yo crecí y además que tu esposo te vea guapísima.

[My job is my daily bread. I can´t imagine my life without my job. I do not

know what will happen in the near future. I´m getting married in October and I

can anticipate that I will need to be better organized to find balance, but I am not

planning to quit my job. I need it so much. It fulfills me. But the truth of the

matter is that an executive position is very demanding, you have lots of business

trips, and you cannot have the beautiful tidy house, children like I was raised, and

besides that your husband finds you beautiful.]

Two of the participants were not in the corporate world anymore; both quit their

jobs after becoming mothers. Gabriela affirmed:

Es que yo verdaderamente disfruté mucho mi trabajo, mis jefes, mis compañeros,

todo. Todo era muy divertido, muy divertido, era todo, todo en mi vida

corporativa.

[I loved my job. I loved it. I really enjoyed every single aspect of my job: the job

itself, my bosses, my co-workers, everything. Everything was fun, lots of fun, it

was all, everything, everything in my corporate life.]

The other said that it was very hard to leave her job because her job gave her so

much satisfaction.

Me costó mucho salir de la vida corporativa, sufrí mucho porque es tu vida, la

chamba, tienes el coche, mundo ecuestre y siempre en la parte más, me choca

decirlo, más superflua digamos que es Mercadotecnia y Relaciones Públicas, los

banquetes y eventos de las empresas. YO estaba acostumbrada a los viajes,

siempre en primera clase, conocí a la Reyna de Bélgica. Te puedo decir que una

de mis más grandes satisfacciones fue cerrar un negocio en los 80´s. Mucha gente

había tratado de conseguirlo, pero no pudieron cerrar el trato. Esa emoción era resultado de MI trabajo. Esa emoción no tiene precio, es algo que toda mujer merece sentir, que tú puedes. Yo insisto en que la única independencia verdadera es la de ser auto-suficiente. Cuando fui auto-suficiente y tenía una cena, si veía una blusa de 400 usd que me gustara, me la compraba, hoy no puedo. Pero entonces me compré el coche que quise, el maquillaje caro, me acuerdo de mi papá cuando entrábamos a una tienda en McAllen y decía esta tienda huele a caro, me encantaba. Mi abrigo de mink que sí lo tengo aún, con mi nombre bordado: Adriana Pérez, y yo traía mi sonora tarjeta de crédito en la bolsa, esas satisfacciones, qué pena que sean tan superfluas; que viajé por el mundo sola, fui a África, a España, porque era la única de mis amigas que podía hacerlo, eso mismo me hacía sentir diferente. Ese glamour corporativo me hacía sentir diferente y especial. Muchas veces el logro de ser notable, me choca decirlo, pero sí es satisfactorio.

[It was very hard for me to quit the corporate life, I suffered a lot because it was my life; my job was everything to me. I had my car, a chauffeur, the equestrian world, and always, I hate to say it, always in the most superfluous part of the organizations: Marketing and Public Relations, the banquets and the events of the companies. I was used to the trips, traveling first class, meeting the Queen of Belgium. I can tell you that one of my greatest satisfactions was when I closed a deal back in the 80s. Many people went after that account but couldn't close the deal. This emotion was the result of MY job. That emotion is indescribable; every woman deserves it, to know you can. I even insist that the only real

independence is to be self-sufficient. When I was self-sufficient and had a dinner,

if I saw a $400 blouse I liked, I bought it. I can´t do it anymore, but in those days,

I bought the car I wanted, expensive make-up, I remember my father when we

entered those stores in McAllen where he used to say: "These stores smell

expensive." I loved it. I know it may sound superfluous today, but I had my mink

coat, you know, the one with my name embroidered inside: Adriana Pérez. I had

my gorgeous credit card in the bag; these satisfactions, I am so sorry to sound so

superfluous, but I traveled the world alone, by myself. I went to Africa, to Spain,

because I was the only one of my friends who could do it, it made me feel

different. I hate to say it but that corporate glamour made me feel different and

special. I hate to say it, but that achievement of being noted was wonderful.

They Like Challenges and Being Competitive

Some of these leaders realized that they were competitive from a very early age,

since they were little girls, in their relations with their siblings or in school activities.

Gabriela said:

Yo sólo tengo un hermano mayor y creo que es muy lógico que desde el principio

tienes que aprender a defenderte y no en el mal sentido. Tu hermano es

evidentemente más fuerte, más rápido. Te quita algo y corre y pues corre más. Te

vuelves competitiva. Y quizá piensas qué gachada le puedes hacer para ganarle.

[I only have an older brother, and I think it is very logical that from the beginning

you have to learn how to defend and not in a bad way. Your brother is definitely

stronger and faster. If he takes something from you and runs away, you have to

run faster. You become very competitive. And you start thinking what you can do

to defeat him, even if this something is rude or nasty.]

Another, who is the older of two girls, said that she has always liked being a

leader and a winner, and that it represents a role that she has always been very

comfortable to play:

En el ámbito escolar siempre asumí roles de liderazgo. Era la comandante de

cuando se hace la marcha, en los desfiles. También en el área deportiva siempre

fui la capitana de todos los equipos en donde participé. También tengo que decirte

que me choca perder. No me gusta nada. El esfuerzo por no perder es soberbia.

Tengo un impulso interno de que tengo que destacar, que ganar, que hacerlo bien!

[I always like to win; I am very competitive. I always assumed that I am a leader.

In every activity I performed, in school and in extra-curricular activities, I was

always the captain. I also need to tell you that I hate to lose; I do not like it at all.

The effort not to lose is arrogance. There is an inner impulse that tells me that I

have to excel and that I have to win, and that I have to do it right!]

Another one affirmed: Tengo muchos retos en mi trabajo pero estoy muy contenta

de enfrentarlos. [I´ve had lots of challenges in this job, but I am very happy that I can

face them all.]

Four said that they knew that they had to work twice as much in order to be

successful: Tienes que trabajar el doble y demostrar que quieres trabajar y crecer

profesionalmente. Tienes que remar el doble.   [You have to work twice as much and

demonstrate that you want to work and grow professionally. You have to row twice.]

One was very dramatic when she said: Nos ha costado sangre demostrar lo capaces que

somos. El precio que hemos tenido que pagar por eso ha sido alto, muy alto. ["It has cost us blood to demonstrate how capable we are. The price we have got to pay for this has been high, very high.]

> Soy la mayor de dos hermanas, creo que un poco de las expectativas paternas se depositaron en mi persona. También fui la primera nieta del lado de la familia de mi mamá y aún y cuando fui la consentida y la muy mimada pero con todas las expectativas encima, ahí puestas en mí. Esta educación, este tipo de formación te hace intolerante al fracaso pero a la vez muy competitiva. En algún momento de mi vida me causó conflicto pero al final del día se los agradezco. Sin duda alguna me ha ayudado en tener una vida ejecutiva exitosa y hasta mi propio despacho. [I am the older of two sisters, and as the older one, many of my father's expectations were set on me. I am also the oldest of my grandparents´ grandchildren, and even though I am spoiled, I tell you, all of my family expectations were set on me. This education, this formation makes you very intolerant to failure, but it also makes you very competitive. It was hard for me when I was younger, but nowadays, I can tell you, I am even grateful that they were so strict with me. Undoubtedly, this has helped me in being a successful executive and even to own my own law firm.]

To Find a Balance between Personal and Professional Time as a Goal

Regardless of their marital status, all agreed in the importance of living a balanced life. All recognized that their jobs were very demanding, with lots of responsibility, but they needed to keep a healthy balance between their jobs and their personal life. The owner of the legal firm said:

Soy soltera y no tengo hijos, pero es muy importante el tiempo para mí. Trato de

tener tiempo para mí. Es importante tener un tiempo para desarrollar otro tipo de

habilidades y no nada más el trabajo. Hay una edad y un momento en que tienes

que trabajar un 150% pero ahora doy el 100% en mi trabajo y el otro 50% es mío.

[I am single and do not have any kids, but there is something that is really

important for me, and it is my personal time. Time is my most precious resource

because I have so little time, but it is also very important for me. I try to have

time on my own. It is very important to develop other abilities and not only the

job. There is an age and a time when you have to work 150%, but nowadays I

give 100% of my time to my job and 50% to me.]

The woman who is a politician realized that her schedule is a very complicated

one, and being married and enrolled in a master's degree sometimes can be very

overwhelming, but she said that she needed to find time for herself. She also admitted

that it has been crucial for her to count on a supportive husband to find balance. She

argued:

Es muy importante que tu esposo te apoye. Hasta en eso he tenido ese apoyo. En

pareja es muy importante saber que no eres dueño del tiempo de la otra persona.

Yo ya tenía una vida hecha, al final somos complemento. Hay que seguir

respetando. Creo que estoy consciente de que voy a estar aquí a lo mejor un mes o

seis meses, si sé que ya con hijos es otro papel. Yo veo por ejemplo a algunas

funcionarias. La situación es más complicada con hijos, que dependen de tí al

100% o al 50% si es que el papá decide asumir su responsabilidad.   A veces me

siento como con falta de energía, agotada. Llego a mi casa y él (mi esposo) me

pide que lo acompañe a una fiesta, no quiero ir porque estoy muerta pero no le

voy a hacer la grosería a mi esposo porque él no tiene la culpa de que yo tenga

tanto trabajo. Hasta encuentro el tiempo para ir diario al gimnasio, si no, me

volvería loca.

[It is very important that your husband supports you. I have even had this

support. As a couple, it is very important to know that you do not own the other

person's time. I already had a life, but, at the end of the day, we complement

each other. You have to keep on respecting each other. I think that I am

conscious that I am going to be here for a month or six more months, and I know

that with kids it is another role. I see, for example, other co-workers. The

situation becomes more complicated with kids who depend a hundred percent on

you, or 50% if the father assumes his responsibility. I sometimes feel exhausted,

and I do not have enough energy to keep on. I get home, but he (my husband)

asks me to go with him to a party. I cannot be rude to him; I go with him because

it is not his fault that I have so much work. I even need to find the time to work

out every day; if I do not do it, I'll be driving crazy.]

Two who decided to become mothers also decided to quit their corporate life.

One affirmed: Crecer a los hijos es algo que las mamás pagan. Necesitaba quedarme en

casa con mi hijo [Raising kids is something that the mothers pay for. I needed to stay

home to be close to my kid.] Gabriela acknowledged that Mexican culture is very

traditional. She claimed that becoming a mother was extremely hard and expensive; she

had to do those fertility treatments, so she wanted to enjoy her maternity without the

hectic schedules, the late working hours, and the traveling that corporate responsibilities

demanded of her. She argued:

> Cuando tu chamba representa el segundo ingreso familiar, la mujer no toma el
> riesgo de dejar el lado familiar. La mujer se ve más limitada por la familia.
> Extraño mi vida corporativa y me gustaría seguir haciéndolo pero bajo mis
> condiciones y no se puede todo en esta vida y estoy en otra etapa de mi vida, soy
> mamá de tiempo completo y doy asesorías. No puedo pensar en mi esposo como
> "house-husband", porque no es normal en México, de hecho sólo conozco a uno,
> americano, papá de una amiguita de mi hija del Colegio Americano.
> [My job represented the second income in our house, so I did not want to take
> chances on the family side, and, yes, I saw myself limited by my family
> responsibilities. I surely miss my corporate life because I'd love to keep on doing
> it, but I am aware you can't have it all, and I am in another stage in my life. I am
> totally dedicated to being a mother, and what I can do is be a consultant. I cannot
> even think about the figure of my husband as a "house-husband," because it is not
> common here in México. In fact, I know only one "house-husband," an American
> parent from my daughter's school, the American School.]

However, one of the interviewees, in contrast to these two mothers, affirmed that

she has studied and worked very hard to reach the top, so she is not going to sacrifice her

professional success for the sake of motherhood. She and all her female classmates are

professional leaders, and she believes that this is because of the university they attended.

She affirmed:

La UP (Universidad Panamericana) es súper estricta. Tienes que estudiar mucho y

si te metes ahí, ya sabes que tienes que estudiar muchísimo y si vas a eso es para

dedicarte a trabajar profesionalmente y en serio.

[The UP (Universidad Panamericana) is super strict. You have to study hard, and,

if you enroll here, you know in advance you are going to work hard, but if you

chose it, it is because you are going to take it seriously, and you want to work in a

professional way.]

<div align="center">Benefits that the Leadership Position Give to Them</div>

All of the women, in one way or another, believed that being a leader has let them

enjoy different benefits, such as being heard, meeting important people, traveling to

different places, performing in different social settings, having social mobility, or having

the opportunity to help others. But the greatest benefits, they acknowledged, were

independence and recognition.

Independence

For all of these woman leaders, working has been a great experience. For some,

being independent is worth the efforts. This independence is not only economic, but also

being able to make their own decisions and taking initiatives when they considered them

important. One of them affirmed that being self-sufficient was a very good feeling: El

impacto social que puedas tener es bueno, pero nada se compara con tu independencia

económica y libertad. [The social impact you may have is good, but nothing compares to

your economic independence and freedom.] Daniela was very decisive when she said:

El ver a mujeres que dependen de sus esposos nunca me ha gustado, ver que una

mujer no pueda tomar sus decisiones no me gustó, creo que te desvaloras un

poquito aunque no quieras. Aún y cuando te digas a ti misma, "hago todo muy

bien en la casa y todo perfecto con los niños¨ pero al final, el depender

económicamente del hombre creo que no te desvalora pero no te da la fortaleza

para tomar decisiones. Y creo que a mi eso nunca me gustó porque no sabes si el

matrimonio no va a funcionar o que te tengas que separar. Ser una mujer

independiente en el sentido de luchar por ti y salir adelante siempre lo tuve en

mente. No depender de los demás.

[I never liked seeing that women are economically dependent on their husbands,

seeing that they cannot make their own decisions; on the other hand, I think that

even if you do not want it to be like that, you underestimate yourself a little when

you economically depend on another person. It is as if you were devaluated.

Even though you say to yourself, "I am doing fine in my house and taking good

care of the kids," but finally depending on a man doesn't give you the strength to

make decisions, and you underestimate yourself a little. I never liked this idea

because you don't know if your marriage is going to work or if you have to

separate. Being an independent woman in the sense of fighting for you and being

successful was something I always had in mind, not to depend on anyone.]

Silvia shared the following story when talking about her beginning in the

corporate world:

Fue un momento en que tenía muy buen ingreso por ventas. Era muy exitosa e

independiente. Pude comprar mi casa propia y mi propio auto. De hecho a los tres

meses de trabajar en esa empresa, me pude comprar un coche propio. Eran los

80´s. Aún sigo haciendo mucho dinero, pero eso no es todo para mí. Se que puedo

hacer lo que yo quiera.

[That was a time when I was making a lot of money. I was very successful and

independent. I could buy my own house, my own car. In fact, I could buy my car

after three months of working in the sales department of that company. It was the

80s, you know. I'm still making lots of money, but that is not everything for me.

I am happy to know I can do whatever I want to.]

Recognition

For some of these interviewees, recognition is a very important issue. But

especially for the woman in politics, it is not so important, as she affirmed:

He tratado de mantener bajo perfil en los medios, creo que me he mantenido al

margen de eso. Trato de evitar salir, no me gusta tanto el protagonismo como el

servir a la gente, escucharlos y asumir la responsabilidad.

[I have tried to keep a low profile. I think that I have been reluctant to be in the

media. I do not work in this job for the recognition but to serve the people, to

listen to them, and to assume the responsibility.]

In opposition, three of the participants emphasized that recognition is very

important. For Ana Luisa, this feeling is something she has liked since she was a girl in

her first school years:

Siempre me ha gustado el reconocimiento. El reconocimiento casi siempre venía

de tus maestros, de tu casa, obviamente, ¿no? Pero creo que más de uno mismo. Me

gustaba saber que estaba haciendo las cosas bien, haciendo las cosas muy bien. ¡A mí me

gusta!

[I´ve always liked recognition. I´ve always enjoyed recognition my teachers and my parents gave me, always. But, mainly, I believe in self-recognition. I like to know I am doing the right things and very well. I like it. I really do!]

For one of the women who made the personal choice of leaving the corporate world to be a housewife and a full-time mother, the recognition she earned as a top executive was priceless:

El trabajo de una oficina tiene un reconocimiento público y el de una casa no. Ahora disfruto enormemente mi casa, mi hija y mi marido. No hay comparación con el de tu casa. Claro que lo extraño; ¡Me encantaba!

[Working in a big office gives you public recognition and a great sense of satisfaction. But being a mother and a housewife gives you different satisfaction, and it can never be compared with the job satisfaction I felt, never ever! I surely miss it!]

For Lorena, recognition is as important as the job itself. She argued:

Esa confianza está alimentada por el reconocimiento. Crecí muy orientada por eso. Mi mamá ha sido mi porrista nata y mi fan número uno. Hay gente que no lo necesita, yo sí.

[Such confidence is reinforced by the recognition. I grew up very oriented to it. My mother has been my natural cheerleader and my number one fan. There may be people who don't need the recognition, but I do, I really do.]

Silvia declared that recognition has helped her overcome many obstacles:

Viví muchas trabas en mi carrera por la mentalidad de los mexicanos, pero siempre he tenido buen reconocimiento y he sido premiada. Mi jefe siempre me

dio su lugar. A los dos años de trabajar en Morelia, me dan un premio como la mejor asesora de las Casas de Bolsa a nivel nacional. También hice mucho dinero. [I encountered lots of barriers because of the macho mentality of Mexicans, but I have always had good recognition, and I have been awarded. My boss always supported me. After two years working in this place, I was selected as the best account executive nationwide. I also made lots of money.]

One interviewee realized that she loved not only public recognition, but also public speaking:

Imagínate, yo que me encanta el bla, bla, bla y pido mi público. Mi esposo dice que por eso me dedico a lo que me dedico, porque tengo mi público. También adoraba cuando mis jefes estaban orgullosos de mí y lo hacían público frente a otros. ¡Se siente muy bien! Cuando para los 60 años del TEC, mi alma mater, en una publicación de "Lo mejor del TEC, su gente", fíjate que me sacaron a mí junto a Zambrano y a Romo. No creo que haya sido por mis logros, sino porque en ese entonces no había nadie en lo social, ahora sí la empresa social y todo pero antes no, y me hizo sentir muy orgullosa, muy orgullosa. Si, la sociedad también te da recompensas. No hay nada más halagador que ver tu nombre y tu foto en un impreso, pero impreso y que huela.

[Imagine, as much as I love to speak, and always bla, bla, bla, I ask for my public. My husband says that this is the reason why I work in what I do, to have my public, and to be listened to. I also loved it when my bosses were proud of me and boasted of me in front of others.   It was a great feeling! When my alma mater, the Tec celebrated its 60th anniversary, I was in the group of alumni leaders

whose bios were published in a special publication: "Lo mejor del Tec, su gente" (The best of the Tec, its people), side by side with Zambrano and Romo (important businessmen in the country), as an important contributor to social initiatives, and it made me feel so proud, so very proud. Yes, society also gives you rewards. It was very flattering to see your picture and name printed in a hard copy, but "printed and smelling printed."]

Helena acknowledged that recognition was more like positioning herself in the institution in which she participated:

La vice rectoría académica fue muy desgastante. Yo hice el proyecto de ética, de CONACYT, de las academias, todos ellos fueron proyectos muy complejos. Si en ese momento hubiera habido una votación en el TEC, yo hubiera sido la rectora. Logré posicionarme a todo lo largo y ancho de la institución como alguien confiable como líder. En mi discurso yo era empática, pude entusiasmar. Yo iba a tratar de seducir a todos: patronos, catedráticos, ex-alumnos y estudiantes. Era congruente con mi narrativa, oral y escrita.

[Being the academic vice-rector was extremely exhausting. I did the ethics project, the CONACYT one, the academies; all of them were extremely complex projects.   If in that time there would have been a poll to be the rector of the system, I would have been the "rectora" (female rector). I was able to position myself nationwide, as someone reliable, confident, as a leader. In my narrative I was very empathetic; I was enthusiastic. I was trying to seduce them all: donors, faculty members, alumni, and students, as well. I was congruent, consistent in both, my oral and written narratives.]

Summary

This chapter reviewed the themes associated with the experiences of being a woman leader in a predominantly male-dominated organization in México. Six themes emerged from the transcripts of the participants in this study, which are: preparation, innate characteristics, move under principles and ethical values, the job itself is very important, to find a balance between personal and professional time as a goal, and benefits of the position.

The woman leaders who participated in this study reflected on many personal discoveries about their experiences in leadership roles.

In regards to the first theme, preparation, all of the participants declared that preparation has been critical to reach leadership positions. All of them are college educated, bilingual or trilingual; they have enrolled in graduate studies, in México and overseas; four of them studied business and social sciences, and three engineering and science. All of the participants believe in being informed and up-dated in their fields of expertise.

The second theme that emerged from the transcripts was innate characteristics. The participants know themselves very well and are aware of their capabilities, abilities, skills, and capacities. They are self confident, too. They recognized being intelligent women, and capable of negotiating with anyone; they assured that they were excellent communicators, and realized they have always been leaders, and enjoyed being leaders.

Move under principles and ethical values represent the third theme that emerged. All of the participants demonstrated to value honesty, respect, hard work, and strong ethical values. They completely disagree with corruption. All of the participants are

aware of the needs of the Mexican society and the impact they can have in it. Five of them are currently involved in social responsibility activities.

The next theme was the job itself is very important. For these women their jobs mean everything, they are passionate about their jobs. It seems as if the jobs give them adrenaline. Two of the participants made the personal choice of leaving their top corporate jobs in the sake of motherhood; however both remember their corporate life as the most gratifying experience in their lives. A sub-theme in regards of the job itself is very important, was they like challenges and being competitive. The participants are very competitive women. Some of them realized they have always been competitive, and they have liked it. Four of them realized that they had to work twice as much in order to be successful, and demonstrate they wanted to work and grow professionally.

To find a balance between personal and professional time as a goal was the fifth theme that emerged. All of the participants agreed in the importance of living a balanced life, and the need to keep a healthy balance between their jobs and personal life.

The last theme that emerged was benefits that the leadership position gives. Among the benefits mentioned by the participants, such as being heard, meeting important people, and social mobility, the participants acknowledged that independence and recognition are the most important ones. Being able to make their own choices is valued by these women, and this is how they defined independence, not only in economic terms. For most of these women, recognition has accompanied them since their early ages.

In the next chapter, the post-analysis literature review is presented to determine what was found in this study compared with what has already been published in the

literature. That chapter also includes a discussion about the findings relative to the

existing literature.

CHAPTER V

POST-ANALYSIS LITERATURE REVIEW AND COMPARISON WITH FINDINGS

This chapter presents a post-analysis literature review focused on the themes that emerged from this study and discusses the themes in relation to the existing literature. There were six main themes: preparation, innate characteristics, move under principles and ethical values, the job itself is very important, to find a balance between personal and professional time as a goal, and benefits that the leadership position give to them. Four of these themes have sub-themes: academic, the women leaders want to have an impact in social responsibility activities, they like challenges and being competitive, independence, and recognition.

Preparation

The woman leaders in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture who participated in this research study reported that preparation was critical to them and was indispensable in their professional growth and in becoming leaders. They talked about the importance of studying hard, of being updated in their fields of expertise, and of keeping informed to perform at their best and to be competent. This is consistent with Yoder (2001) who concluded, "The final strategy that women can adopt for enhancing effectiveness in masculinized settings is to be exceptionally competent" (p. 820). Frieze and Pauknerova (2008) also recognized that, for women who want to become leaders, it is important to prove one´s competence. Chrisler and Clapp (2008) also realized how extraordinarily competent women leaders are. The literature review in Chapter II suggested that women in leadership positions are the ones who are competent and have

the academic credentials and personal skills to perform (Eagly & Carli, 2001; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Glover, 2009; Madsen, 2008; Manning & Curtis, 2002; Scheckelhoff, 2007).

Academic

These seven women were college educated, and most of them had studied in graduate schools, in Mexico and overseas. The literature agreed, affirming the importance of education for women who seek leadership positions (Burke, 2002; Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Helms Mills, 2005; Ortiz-Ortega, 2009; Pompper, 2001; Trigg, 2006). Attending college and continuing their studies are crucial for women; higher education allows them to grow professionally and reach leadership positions (Robles, 2010). While Gabriela and Silvia did not earn a master´s degree, they had acquired several certifications in their areas of expertise. Jogulu and Wood (2008) recognized that women who are searching for leadership positions "are equally or better qualified in terms of educational attainments than their male counterparts" (p. 601); Eagly and Carli (2002) found that women emerge less commonly than men as leaders because women have to meet a higher standard than men do in order to be considered highly competent. Finally, Yoder (2008) affirmed that "women need to be better than men to succeed" (p. 491).

Chávez-Arellano and Vázquez-García (2011) interviewed 14 women who had been rural municipal presidents in Tlaxcala, México from 1992 to 2010 in municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants; what these 14 women had in common was that schooling was higher than the average in their communities, supporting the importance of preparation for women leaders.

What is clear in the literature is that, whether you are a man or a woman in a leadership position, preparation is critical (Madsen, 2008). Madsen (2010) concluded, "learning is an important precursor for effective leadership" (p. 88). Knorr, Garzon, and Martinez (2011) observed that "a greater number of women have achieved advanced levels of education, with more opportunities to access executive positions" (p. 392).

<div align="center">Innate Characteristics</div>

The participants knew themselves and were aware of their capacities, skills, and capabilities, and were particularly self-reflective (Madsen, 2008). The seven women who participated in this study were very self-confident and showed high self-esteem when they shared their accomplishments, acting in a way that was not socially acceptable according to Frieze and Pauknerova (2008) who affirmed that it is not socially acceptable for women to brag about their own accomplishments. This judgment is consistent with Méndez-Morse (2004) who reported that Hispanic women leaders are aware of their leadership capabilities. Moreover, Helena realized that she is a very good public speaker, a communication skill that Leatherhood and Williams (2008) suggested as a key factor in effective leadership. But contrary to Hoyt (1994, as cited in Northouse, 2007), who observed that women are less likely to negotiate than men, Gabriela affirmed that she could sit at any table to negotiate with anyone.

Most of the participants shared their experiences of being raised in family environments that did not limit them, confirming Matz (2002), who said, "families are the first role models for interpersonal skills and directly affect the future leader´s ability to motivate and relate to others" (p. 31). Matz also recognized that self-confidence is a characteristic of leadership and stated "Those with self-confidence are more likely to

attempt a leadership position" (p. 30). For most of the participants, it was clear that their self-confidence was instilled in them at an early age by their mother, their father, or both their parents, consistent with Matz's (2002) findings. Two of these women specifically talked about their fathers, not only as being supportive, but also men who encouraged their daughters and told them that nothing was impossible. Matz (2002) recognized that fathers have an influential role in determining why women leaders are who they are and act like they do; Matz argued that one of the women she interviewed for a study on women leaders had styles, confidence, and influences that were influenced by their father and "recognized that she could do anything that she wanted to" (p. 83). Lavin (2011) agreed with what these women shared about their fathers; she was the first daughter of liberal parents who had told her "when you turn 18, you can do whatever you want" (p.35). Supporting this idea, Ortiz-Ortega (2009) acknowledged that those women who have leadership positions are the result of the hard work of many other women and the collaboration of some visionary men.

Consistent with Christman and McClellan (2008), two participants affirmed that they were very driven, and one said that she was never girly. Additionally, two participants were aware of their physical characteristics as determinant to being noticed wherever they perform, confirming what Flanz (2011) affirmed: "Physical characteristics may also have significance in how women are perceived as leaders" (p. 48). These two participants overcame the barrier that Frieze and Pauknerova (2008) recognized in the book review they wrote about Eagly and Carli´s (2007) *Through the Labyrinth*: *The Truth about How Women Become Leaders*: that men are taller than women. Adriana and

Helena realized that they were "big, voluminous, and noisy" women who are noticed in any place they perform.

While several authors, such as Madsen (2008), Matz (2002), Mendez-Morse (2004), Miramontes (2008), and Westrup (2008), have acknowledged that women leaders are influenced by their mothers as role models, leaders, or mentors, none of the participants in this study talked about their mothers this way.

<div align="center">Move under Principles and Ethical Values</div>

All seven women talked in great detail about their principles and ethical values, and how decisive they have been in their lives. Similar to this theme, Fine (2009) affirmed that the stories 15 women leaders shared with her "focused on rules of personal conduct governed by honesty, trust, and caring" (p. 195). Living under the principles of honesty and truth is determinant for Mexican women leaders who participated in a phenomenological study conducted by Hernández-Palomino, Rodríguez-Mora, and Espinosa (2010) in micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises in México. Honesty was the common characteristic shown by the 14 women municipal presidents in Tlaxcala, México, who were interviewed by Chávez-Arellano and Vázquez-García (2011), and the determinant factor that led them to the presidencies. Additionally, respect and integrity, according to Lagarde (1999), supported women aspiring to leadership and power positions.

Desire to Impact through Social Responsibility Activities

Five of the interviewees mentioned that they wanted to have an impact in social responsibility activities, confirming Fine's (2009) findings. Fine affirmed that one motive of these women to lead was to make a positive contribution in the world and

concluded that "moral purpose is a guiding principle of leadership" (p. 190). Ortiz-Ortega (2009) reported that women in leadership and power positions are committed to look for better life conditions for women and for greater opportunities and equal rights.

Five described her role of advocacy for social needs as a vocational call to serve, Adriana´s concern about Mexican girls attending college nowadays is consistent with Gonzalbo (2011) when she affirmed:

> I am worried and mad because there still are many women who aspire to live without working and find a good husband, which means a rich husband that supports them and transforms them into the queens of the house. The goals for many girls and youngsters are still to improve their body image, find the right make-up, dress fashionable, look like the top models and being valued for their physical appearance, not for their character or intelligence. (p. 27)

<div align="center">The Job Itself Is Very Important</div>

All of the participants were passionate when sharing their experiences as leaders, regardless if they performed in the corporate, academic, non-profit, or political arena. They were especially passionate when talking about their jobs and their performance as leaders. Supporting this idea, Zigarmi and Nimon (2011) reviewed an employee work passion model that acknowledges job characteristics and personal characteristics affecting organizational role behaviors and job role behaviors as consequences, recognizing the need to measure the intention in work passion research. Zigarmi and Nimon defined the essence of work passion as "…the intention to act consistently using behaviors that are constructive for the organization´s desired outcomes as well as the individual´s" (p. 451). All of the participants not only shared their passion about being

leaders, but also their commitment to their jobs, to their responsibilities, to their co-workers, and to their performance.

Motivation theory provides support for understanding this theme. Herzberg´s (1968) two-factor theory maintains that the job itself is a motivating factor. Herzberg argued that people are motivated "by interesting work, challenge, and increasing responsibility" (p. 53). All of the participants in this study stressed the great satisfaction that their leadership positions gave them. Lorena even stated that her job was her daily bread, and Ana Luisa did not hesitate when saying that she loves the professional rush that her job gives her. All of the participants' affirmations about how satisfied they were as leaders are consistent with Herzberg: "But it is only when one has a generator of one´s own that we can talk about motivation. One then needs no outside stimulation. One *wants* to do it" (p. 54).

Participants in this study reported a high level of job satisfaction. Consistent with Spector (1997) who defined job satisfaction as "how people feel about their jobs and the different aspects of their jobs" (p. 2), the seven women leaders cited the most satisfying aspects of their leadership positions as the opportunities of meeting interesting people, the opportunities to serve people, the traveling, the social mobility, the high income, but mainly the job itself. Brewer and McMahan (2003) also realized that job satisfaction has been widely studied and that "the literature contains numerous definitions for the concept, most of which have similarities" (p. 66).

They Like Challenges and Being Competitive

Similar to what Madsen (2010) reported, these Mexican woman leaders are "intensely focused on high achievement…they were driven to hard work" (p. 87).

Belausteguigoitia (2011) also acknowledged that she learned to be a competitive and

fierce woman from the lessons learned from her father. "My father taught me that when

one competes is to win, nothing less" (p. 44).

However, the literature presented somewhat contradictory perspectives.   For

example, Buckle and Thomas (2003) suggested that there are commonly observed

behaviors characteristic to men and women: "masculine sense-making tends to value

independence, self-sufficiency … competitiveness" (p. 434), characteristics that most of

these woman leaders showed. Only one of the participants, Silvia, showed what these

authors considered to be a feminine characteristic, to nurture and care for others. Silvia

has always cared for her co-workers and has worked with the same team for many years,

confirming Hofstede´s (2001) findings in relation to the characteristics of women in such

a culture as the Mexican one, that values "women when they are nurturing, caring, and

service oriented" (Verderber, Verderber, & Selldown, 2010). Silvia recognized that she

would not be as successful if it were not for her team's support. However, she was also

competitive and values her independence.

Gabriela, one of the interviewees, who has an older brother, affirmed that she

knew that she had to defeat him by developing other abilities different from his, as he

was faster and stronger than her. Harrison and Lynch (2005) acknowledged that physical

attributes of men and women are different: "men are more likely to fulfill tasks that

required speed, strength" (p. 227). This participant realized that, while growing up, she

developed these competitive skills, and they helped her in being always competitive; this

was affirmed by Olabuenaga (2011) when she remembered the lessons her father taught

her: "the taste, the vocation, the profound obsession of the competence, a basic male characteristic. He taught me to compete, and demanded me to win" (p. 40).

To Find a Balance between Personal and Professional Time as a Goal

Buzzanell, Meisenbahc, and Remke (2005), Contreras-Garduño, Camacho-Fernández, and Cortés-López (2010), Chávez-Arellano and Vázquez-García (2011), Chrisler and Clapp (2008), Frieze and Pauknerova (2008), and Wildgrube (2008) reported the factors and barriers of woman leaders, acknowledging that the number one obstacle for women to occupy top leadership positions is the need for balancing their professional and personal time and responsibilities; besides, family obligations still rely on women. This theme occurs frequently in the literature, both in the U.S. and in Mexico. Clark, Caffarella, and Ingram (1999) reported that, in a study of 23 mid-level women managers, all spoke about their struggles to balance their professional and personal lives.

Ortiz-Ortega (2009) mentioned that some women forget or put aside the idea of having a personal relationship or even a family, and some have postponed the decision of becoming mothers, as Ana Luisa, Adriana, and Gabriela mentioned in the interview. Frieze and Pauknerova (2008), and Ortiz-Ortega 2009) confirmed Adriana´s conclusion: mothers are responsible for raising kids, organizing the family, and housekeeping. Similarly, Berman and Maerker (2000), Eagly and Carli (2007), and Vargas (2007) affirmed that the work/family conflict has not eased for women.

Some women have the need to achieve both career and maternal goals (Miramontes, 2008; Warner, Winter, & Breshears, 2005), as Adriana and Gabriela shared, which is also consistent with Aldoory (2006), Fröhlich and Peters (2007), Hewlett

and Luce (2005), and van Auken and Werbel (2006). In the later case, two women reported that they had decided to be self-employed, developing their entrepreneurial skills in order to cope with the challenges of motherhood and their jobs, consistent with Neidermeyer, Buenn, and Edelman (2008) who reported that "Women often become entrepreneurs for a better work-life balance" (p. 71). They added that "Family is often argued to play a more important role for women than for men" (p. 75). Gabriela and Adriana´s decision to quit the corporate life when becoming mothers in their early forties was consistent with Matz's (2002) argument, "married women are choosing motherhood instead of a career if the family doesn´t need two incomes to survive" (p. 47).

Hirschman (2006) reported that there are women who leave their jobs for personal reasons; Clancy (2007) agreed, arguing that there may not be as many women at the top of the corporate ladder because of the personal decisions and choices women make during their professional careers. Clancy argued that being at the top requires a total commitment to one´s job and being able to travel, to work overtime, and sometimes even to move to another place. She concluded: "This may be a price many women simply are not willing to pay" (p. 2). Scheckelhoff (2007) stated that women leaders made conscious choices and recognized the struggles they face in balancing their lives and their jobs. Finally, Furst and Reeves (2008) argued that "women face scrutiny regarding their ability to balance work and family demands, to work longer hours and weekends, and to travel" (p. 373).

<div align="center">Benefits that the Leadership Position Give to Them</div>

Among all of the benefits that accrue to women from being in leadership roles, two dominate: independence and recognition.

Independence

These women said that being independent is being able to make decisions on their own, to make choices, and to be self-sufficient economically. Ortiz-Ortega (2009) affirmed that women began making their own decisions in the late 90s in the Third World. Contrary to this statement, four of the participants became independent before this decade, as they began working and climbing the ladder to top positions early in the 80s.

Independence is an important issue for women in order to feel they are equal to men and have the same rights. Abedi and Khodamoradi (2011) suggested that, if rural women could work through receiving credits and loans at favorable rates, there would undoubtedly be changes in social, economic, and cultural relations. These rural women would be self-sufficient, self-reliant, and independent, causing, among other consequences, self-confidence.

Recognition

Motivation theory differentiates two main work motives (Herzberg, 1968; Maslow, 1943). From both authors´ perspectives, recognition is important and both relate recognition to job satisfaction. Herzberg recognized that recognition for achievement is an intrinsic motivator that leads to satisfaction. Maslow identified different kinds of needs people were looking to fulfill and developed the pyramid of needs. His assumption was that people have different needs--physiological, security, and social, and when one has fulfilled one level, the person is motivated by the needs in a higher level. Recognition occupies the fourth level of Maslow´s pyramid, and people who have reached this level are people who feel satisfied with what they have achieved.

This is consistent to the findings of Mayo and a group of researchers from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration when they conducted a study in the mid-20s. Mayo and the researchers were looking at the environment and its effects on the workers of a textile company, considering aspects such as job monotony, rest periods, workday length, the effects of light, and the environment in general. What they found was that money and conditions were not as important to workers as other factors, such as recognition, respect, team membership, inclusion, and information sharing (Matz, 2002).

Every woman interviewed emphasized that recognition was, and for some of them still is, critical.   Mendez-Morse (2004) also acknowledged that Hispanic women leaders needed others to recognize their leadership capabilities. Ana Luisa affirmed that she has always enjoyed recognition, from her early days in elementary school, and recognized that it was not only her teachers' and parents' recognition she liked, but her own recognition, the satisfaction that she had achieved wonderful things was, and still is, important for her, confirming Maslow´s theory. Adriana also emphasized how she has been motivated by recognition; she even affirmed that, whenever she saw her name or photograph in hard copy, she felt something incomparable to anything else. In contrast, however, Daniela affirmed that she was aware that her job was continuously under reflectors, but she did not like to have a great deal of exposure. She would much rather live under a low profile.

<center>Summary</center>

This chapter discussed the lived experiences of seven women leaders in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture and compared the identified themes and sub-themes by what has been published in literature. Even though the majority of the

literature on women leaders found was from the U.S., it can be related to the experiences of the participants in this study, seven Mexican women leaders.

There is a significant amount of literature on woman leaders, mostly about the characteristics of these women, the differences between men and women as leaders, and their different leadership styles (Duff-McCall & Schweinle, 2008, Matz, 2002; Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005), but few focused on Hispanic woman leaders, including Mexican woman leaders (Chávez-Arellano & Vázquez-García, 2011; Clancy, 2007; Miramontes, 2008; Ortiz-Ortega, 2009; Sherman & Rivers-Wrushen, 2009; Westrup, 2007). The same is true in phenomenological studies on the topic in México.

The literature offered one perspective not mentioned by the participants in the study. None of the participants mentioned that her mother was a leader, represented a role model as a leader, or was a mentor in relation to their leadership roles.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter contains a summary of the hermeneutic phenomenological research study I conducted with seven woman leaders in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture. In it, I delineated the themes and sub-themes that emerged from this study, and I reflected on my own experiences. I then discussed the implications of these findings and made recommendations for HRD professionals, both for theory and for practice, related to the development of woman leaders in Mexico in the 21st century and to those interested in knowing about the experiences of woman leaders in corporate, academic, political, and non-profit organizations. I realize that there are limitations in this study, which I describe, and I offer recommendations for further study.

Research Summary

This research study described the experiences of being woman leaders in México in a predominantly male-dominated culture. A preliminary literature review, summarizing the literature I reviewed in preparing my research proposal, exhibited the absence of this kind of study in México. The current literature is focused mainly on those leaders who are men, the differences between men and women as leaders, and the obstacles or barriers that women encounter in becoming leaders. Nevertheless, very little has been published on the experiences of Mexican women who are leaders. A need to gain understanding of the experiences of Mexican woman leaders brought to light some of the current woman leaders in Mexico for those women aspiring to become leaders in the future. Additionally, it can help executives and managers who are responsible for

hiring, for managing their performance, and for designing and delivering training and development programs in different kinds of organizations.

This research contributes to HRD by focusing on the experiences of Mexican woman leaders to assist in the development of such women in the future. It is centered on a topic not explored or studied sufficiently in HRD. It will increase awareness of HRD scholars and practitioners, as well as current and future Mexican woman leaders and the workforce needs of such leaders. It is critical for organizations to be able to take advantage of talented women.

My personal story, involving family, education, and work experiences, has determined my life´s journey as a person influenced by the values of education and leadership. Consequently, I have been a professor in Mexican universities for more than 25 years. I have been a lifelong learner who earned two masters' degrees and went back to school as a non-traditional international doctoral student. Because of my personal experiences as a Mexican woman who has been somewhat discriminated against due to my gender, age, and marital status, I was interested in conducting this research. I have also experienced the changes that México has undergone during the last 40 years when I have been fortunate to witness the gains and achievements of women in different areas, such as social, political, economic, business, academics, sports, and science (Ortiz-Ortega, 2009).

Phenomenology is the study of essences of human experiences. It is based on the belief that the human world can be understood only through the experiences of those who have lived the experience (Tunheim, 2008). Thus, the appropriate methodology to use to study the experiences of Mexican woman leaders was phenomenology. These woman

leaders have shared their thoughts, perspectives, stories, experiences, meanings, and attitudes that supplied the text for the phenomena under study. The researcher can find meaning in the experiences through the language in the texts. Phenomenology studies the essence or the core meanings of lived experiences that people often forget are present (van Manen, 2001). This research study will contribute to better understanding of the world in which Mexican woman leaders live and find meaning to their experiences in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture.

For this research study, hermeneutic phenomenology became the particular interpretive methodology. This is a method of inquiry based on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as they are perceived or understood in human consciousness, and they need to be captured through language. It is a detailed description of conscious experiences without recourse to explanation. Lived experiences and understanding of woman leaders in Mexico have been captured and analyzed through their personal interpretation.

The question I formulated for the woman leaders to gain understanding of their lived experiences was: What is the experience like of being a woman leader in México, a predominantly male-dominated culture? I interviewed seven Mexican woman leaders, in Spanish at their request, after gaining their approval to participate in this research and having them sign the IRB-approved consent form. I followed up with probing questions only, such as, What did you learn during this experience? How did you feel when you experienced it? I want to make sure I understand what you are saying; do you mean…? Can you give me an example? The purpose of these probing questions was to evoke particular situations and examples. I listened deeply to understand their unique

experiences. I was also aware of their non-verbal communications. I audio-taped six of the seven interviews, with permission, taking detailed notes of the seventh interview, capturing as much as possible verbatim. I also took field notes during and after each interview. Then, I transcribed the interviews. I asked each woman leader to read her transcript to verify its accuracy.   After their approval, I read the texts twice again. I read them a third time, highlighting important statements. This time, I noted the themes that appeared to be surfacing on a separate tablet. I wrote and rewrote the descriptions of the themes. I put the themes into two separate documents: I classified first by leader and the second by theme. Afterwards, I communicated the themes with the seven woman leaders, asking them how the themes resonated with their own experiences and if they were meaningful to them. All of the women accepted and validated the themes. This feedback resulted in six themes. Four of the themes are comprised of subthemes, making a total of five subthemes.

<div align="center">Preparation Theme</div>

This was an outstanding feature in every woman leader who participated in this study. One sub-theme emerged.

Academic

All of the participants were college educated; five had earned a master´s degree. All participated in continuous education programs and certifications. The woman leaders in this study and the literature reported that preparation is crucial in becoming leaders (Madsen, 2008; Mendez-Morse, 2004).

Innate Characteristics

The seven Mexican woman leaders were self-aware of who they are and what they want, and these women were also aware of their intelligence, capabilities, and skills (Mendez-Morse, 2004). Two realized that their physical appearance helped them to have social weight wherever they performed (Flanz, 2011). Another characteristic that everyone shared was self-confidence.

Move under Principles and Ethical Values

All of the participants highlighted their commitment to ethical values and principles, and described themselves as responsible, honest, respectful, and uncorrupted women.

Desire to Impact Trough Social Responsibility Activities

The interviewees were aware of the needs of Mexican society and the impact they could have on it through their positions. The seven woman leaders were sensitive to the needs of the population (Ortiz-Ortega, 2009). One described the under-privileged and precarious situation of indigenous minority groups in Mexico; she was not only aware of their situation, but also actively participated in different advocacy organizations. The politician wanted to keep on working in politics because she realized that from her position she could help the community to solve their problems. The interest of two of the participants in social responsibility actually led them to become actively involved in forming non-profit organizations, one is AMDATHA. Finally, one participant worked as the Director of Social Responsibility for Cinépolis.

The Job Itself Is Very Important

Supporting Sherman and Rivers-Wrushen (2009), the seven participants "all spoke with passion and enthusiasm about their work as leaders and described themselves as lifelong learners" (p. 183). It seems that the job itself provides adrenaline to these women.

Even though two of the participants were not in the corporate world any more, as both quit their jobs after being mothers, they remembered their life in the corporate world as very satisfactory and rewarding. Clancy (2007) stated, "Success often requires total commitment to one's job and a commensurate reduction of time people can devote to their families and to their personal lives. This may be a price many women simply are not willing to pay" (p. 2).

They Like Challenges and Being Competitive.

Some of these leaders acknowledged that they had been very competitive since an early age. Even though their competitiveness came from different venues, one developed specific skills as a girl to defeat her older brother; another had an inner impulse that told her that she had to excel always, and another worked hard to meet her family's expectations. Four leaders realized that they had to work twice as much to demonstrate that they were capable of performing in a successful way.

To Find a Balance Between Personal and Professional Time as a Goal

Regardless of their marital status, all concurred in the importance of a balanced life, recognizing that they needed a healthy balance between their jobs and their personal lives. One participant was single when interviewed. She was getting married in a few

months and anticipated that she would need to be better organized to find balance because she had no intention of quitting her job.

Finding this balance was critical to two participants, to the extreme that both quit their jobs for the sake of motherhood. Raising kids was something that mothers pay for, according to one participant. Another wanted to enjoy her maternity without the hectic demands of corporate life; after becoming a mother, she kept on working but as an external consultant.

The owner of a legal firm affirmed that she was not going to sacrifice her professional success for the sake of motherhood. She added, "I have studied and worked very hard to reach the top."

Benefits that the Leadership Position Give to Them

Independence and recognition are the main benefits of leadership, according to the participants.

Independence

Being independent is worth the effort that these women have made, not only in economic terms, but also in making their own decisions. One affirmed that you underestimate yourself a little when you economically depend on another person; it is like being devaluated. Another stated that she was still making lots of money, but that was not everything for her. She was happy to know that she could do whatever she wants to do.

Recognition

Six interviewees emphasized that recognition is a very important benefit of being a leader. Three had enjoyed recognitions since they were little girls. One argued that

confidence in the job is reinforced by recognition. Another declared that, in a Mexican macho mentality business world, recognition helped her overcome many obstacles that she had faced as a top executive.

My Personal Reflection

I have been a higher education professor for more than 25 years. I have taught leadership courses for many of these years, and I have seen many female students in the classroom and participating in extracurricular activities. I have also witnessed the changes in Mexican women's conditions in the last 40 years and the ways women have gained access and excelled in different areas in México (Ortiz-Ortega, 2009).

I have also seen first hand the struggles of many women to become leaders, and I have seen some of them excelling against all odds. I have learned a great deal from my students and from other Mexican leaders. However, there were some things that came out of this study that surprised me:

- Self-knowledge. Regardless of their age, these women affirmed that they knew themselves very well. My perception was that we might never get to know ourselves that well, as we keep changing, discovering, and adapting in the lifelong journey. All of the participants demonstrated through the whole process the high self-esteem that they have had during their entire lives.

- The job itself is very important. Jobs are dominant in these women's lives. The job is the principal source of fulfillment of their main needs and wants, physical and emotional. It represents almost everything for them. It defines them.

- Recognition. While I perceived recognition as a way to reinforce high self-esteem, it surprised me how immense was the need for recognition that these women sought, as a critical motivator for their performance. Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation (1966) is consistent with these women; they are strongly motivated by this motivation factor.

- During the pre- and post-analysis literature reviews, I realized that Mexican women leaders have much in common with U.S. American women leaders. Before coming to the U.S. as an international student, I thought that women in the U.S. had overcome the prejudices and obstacles that Mexican women face, but literature says they have not.

It was fascinating to conduct this study; it represented an interesting learning experience for me. It is the first time I have conducted this type of study, and almost everything was new to me. I realized that the participants were willing to share their stories, and, particularly for two of them, it represented a reflective exercise. Both were very happy and grateful to participate. One affirmed that the opportunity to remember her experiences was meaningful to her; it reminded her that she was more than *only* a mother and a wife; the other said it helped her "accommodate" her experiences.

The majority of the themes that emerged were somewhat expected, mostly the preparation and the balance between personal and professional time as a goal. In the sub-themes, it was also not a surprise to see academic preparation and self-knowledge as crucial. It was surprising to see the extent to which these women saw themselves. It was also surprising that physical appearance did not show up as more of a factor, as only two participants recognized that they are noticed wherever they perform, because they are big.

It meant a great deal to me to hear how decisively these women talked about moving under principles and ethical values, and to confirm this by seeing how these women leaders were involved and committed to different social responsibility activities and their participation in several non-profit organizations and foundations in looking forward to contributing with their time and knowledge to social causes.

These women were motivated by the job itself, but for some of them the job represented all of their lives. I began working when I was in high school, and I have always tried hard to balance my personal and professional time; thus, this was not new for me. What was new for me was the different ways these women viewed their personal time, and how culture was prevalent, determinant, and influential in the decisions these women made. Two of the women decided to quit their successful corporate leadership jobs for motherhood but did not quit working; both found self-employment to be an answer (Frohlich & Peters, 2007; van Auken & Werbel, 2006) to their need of achieving both career and maternal goals (Warner, Winter, & Breshears, 2005). Only two of the participants openly talked about the great satisfactions that their high income has given them. Others talked about serving people.

I never imagined that independence was such an important matter for these women leaders, and the need for recognition was preeminent for at least four of them (Mendez-Morse, 2004).

My final personal reflection is that I wanted to conduct this study in the hope that the words of these Mexican women leaders who participated in it might create space and inspire others in tracing their paths to becoming leaders. I realized that I belong to the generation that paved the path for the future generations of women that want to become

leaders in México. It was harder for me to succeed personal and professionally, I was fired when I was pregnant of our first son in 1983, and 15 years later, I was fired again for the same reason, being pregnant again. However, the young women leaders that participated in this study perceived that their professional development has been easier because of the effort that women leaders in my generation made and they do not struggle as much as I did. After interviewing these seven Mexican women leaders I found out that self-esteem and self-knowledge are the main assets that have helped them to reach leadership positions. I learned from these women that I need to increase my own self-knowledge and self-esteem to realize my potential and strengthen my leadership position.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

As Madsen found in the UAE, I also found in Mexico that "given the nature and history of the UAE [Mexico] there are few female leaders and gaining access to them is challenging" (p. 89). Today's lack of security in the country also added to my difficulty. There is another cultural characteristic that served as a barrier. Mexicans are not time oriented (Hofstede, 2001) and setting an appointment, for the interview and for feedback was a challenge. To exemplify this, there was an eighth participant who had confirmed her participation and simply did not keep her appointment. Another example that held up progress on completion of the study was that one of the participants took more than two months to review her transcript and another two months to confirm the themes.

A further limitation, as with all phenomenological research, is my own inability to fully bracket my previous experiences in interpreting and finding meaning in the words of the interviewees.

One interviewee did not wish to have her interview taped; thus the richness of the other interviews was missing in this interview as I needed to rely on my handwritten notes of the interview.

Finally, all interviews, at the request of the interviewees, were conducted in Spanish, the first language for all of us. Nevertheless, under university policies, all dissertations must be written in English, causing some loss in the authenticity of the interviewees' language. In part, to overcome this, direct quotes in Chapter IV were provided in both Spanish and English. A further limitation is that my advisor does not have Spanish-language skills, limiting his ability to verify the accuracy of the translations and the meanings contained in the original Spanish language quotes. To compensate for this, in part, a native Spanish speaker did review all Spanish quotes for accuracy.

Recommendations

The results of this research suggest possible recommendations for HRD practitioners, academics, and executives. By its nature, phenomenology does not lead to generalizations; as a result, great care and caution must be exercised in formulating and following these recommendations. Recommendations will be presented for practice, theory, and future research.

Practice Recommendations

By better understanding the lived experiences of Mexican woman leaders, HRD practitioners can design more effective interventions, can deliver more effective training and leadership development programs, and can provide opportunities that are focused on women interested in reaching top executive positions in mostly any kind of organization. Based on this research and the review of the literature, one component of preparation

appears to be academic. Women who aspired to leadership positions in Mexico should consider the value of higher education, not only at the undergraduate level, but also at the master's level. The importance of recognition also needs to be addressed. As this is consistent with the literature and with these women's stories, opportunities need to be found to recognize women who are aspiring to leadership roles.

Theory Recommendations

One of the purposes of phenomenological research is to suggest ways in which theory might be developed and tested empirically. Though most of the themes that surfaced in this research are not new to the literature of women's leadership development, it does raise some issues that have confronted leadership researchers.

The perennial question related to leadership is whether it can be developed or is inborn. Most of the themes presented by these women suggest that leadership can be developed, or at least enhanced, through modeling, parenting, mentoring, education, and competition, among others. Only a few theorists have suggested that leadership is inborn through physical appearance, energy levels, and birth order. This duality begs for more research to determine what theories of leadership apply to women, and, especially, to Mexican women.

Another theoretical issue that surfaced is whether there are differences based on culture or ethnicity. As nothing surfaced in this research on Mexican women that is inconsistent with research done on women in the United States, perhaps, at least in the case of Mexican women, there are some universal theories of leadership that need to be confirmed.

This research has certainly suggested that existing motivational theory applies today just as it did in Herzberg's (1966) day. It also has suggested that research that challenges the dominance of money as a motivator is appropriate, given the importance of the job itself, achievement, and recognition.

Future Research Recommendations

Needless to say, this research has suggested the importance of future research, both quantitative and qualitative, in Mexico, focusing on research of women, Mexican women, and Mexican woman leaders.

This study did not find anything unique to these seven Mexican women leaders that is different from the literature on women leaders in the U.S. It may be because México began to be economically and technologically dependent on the U.S. for more than 100 years. This dependence has enabled the establishment of a great number of U.S. American companies in Mexico, influencing organizational structures and corporate cultures. Moreover, business schools in Mexico, in both private and public universities, use U.S. literature and textbooks, in almost every topic, including leadership. Instead of using U.S. books translated to Spanish, doing research in México, about Mexican women, would allow the creation of knowledge for the Mexican reality.

Even though these seven women participants are Mexican, born to Mexican parents, they do not fully represent the average Mexican woman. All of them are also influenced in one way or another by the U.S. lifestyle: one was a graduate student in the U.S.; five of them went to bilingual schools, where they learned English as a second language; two of them are from Monterrey, a northern state capital that is known as the most American city in Mexico; finally, all of them have visited at least once the U.S. on

vacation or on business trips. More research is needed to determine the effect of the U.S. culture on the development of women leaders in Mexico.

Because the results of this study revealed few differences between Mexican women and U.S. women in leadership roles, much more research is needed on women leaders from other countries. Is there a universal set of characteristics that lead women to have success in leadership roles? Such research would contribute significantly to our understanding about women in leadership roles.

Conclusions

Even though women represent more than half of the population in México and comprise half of the workforce, they are still under-represented in top leadership positions. I expect that the experiences of the seven Mexican woman leaders who participated in this research will serve as an example and as an inspiration for many more women aspiring to become leaders in their area of expertise.

Women in Mexican culture have been for centuries under the control of men, even before the Spaniards arrival in the 1500´s. Women have always been the ones responsible for raising children, observing religion, and keeping the family traditions and have transmitted these traditions to their descendants, reinforcing their role and supporting men´s role as the main one in every aspect of the Mexican society, unintentionally reinforcing machismo.

However, due to changing times, many things have changed in Mexican society. Since the 1950s, the role of women in Mexican society has been gaining ground in different areas, such as corporate, entrepreneurial, political, and higher education realms. It has not been an easy change because it has been like an earthquake in the conservative

Mexican society. However, women have demonstrated that they can accept challenges and deliver interesting and important results for the organizations for which they work.

It is important to notice that the seven women who participated in this study were privileged; they comprised the 7% of Mexican women who are college educated, and the 0.5% who have a post-graduate education. Their socioeconomic background has allowed them to better academic opportunities than the majority of the population; therefore this privileged condition has influenced their roles as leaders.

Based on Hofstede's (2001) culture dimensions, Mexico is a collectivist society, a high uncertainty-avoidance culture, characterized as having a high power distance, and is masculine. This means that Mexicans value traditional gender role distinction, and "…expect people to maintain traditional sex roles and maintain different standards of behavior for men and women" (Verderber, Verderber, & Sellnow, 2010, p. 114). Mexicans "…are likely to value men when they are assertive and dominant and to value women when they are nurturing, caring, and service oriented." (Verderber et al., 2010, p. 114). This explains why in Mexico there are more women leading in non-profit organizations, non-manufacturing businesses, and service industries, where the female characteristics are a competitive advantage for these kinds of organizations.

For this dissertation, I interviewed seven Mexican women who have broken the glass ceiling and who have become leaders in these arenas, with the hopes of understanding their experiences, of knowing their challenges and the threats that they had to face, and of knowing the important decisions that they had to make, not only professionally, but also in their personal lives, in order to motivate and inspire future generations of Mexican women to take advantage of the gains that these women have

achieved in their professional lives and to continue with this effort on behalf of women and on behalf of the future of Mexico.

Finally, I would like to cite Peggy Anderson (1997) that pictures what I believe about these seven Mexican woman leaders:

> Great women are not considered so because of personal achievements, but for the effect their efforts have had on the lives of countless others. From daring feats of bravery to the understated ways of a compassionate heart, great women possess a common strength of character. Through their passion and persistence, they have advanced womanhood and the world. (p. 5).

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF PROBES

Core Question

- ✓ Could you please share what is the experience like of being a woman leader in México, a predominantly male dominated culture?

Possible Probes

- ✓ I want to make sure I understand what you are saying. Do you mean…?

- ✓ What was the experience like?

- ✓ What did you learn through this experience?

- ✓ Tell me when you experienced it and how did you feel?

- ✓ Please recall a specific time or event in which you felt that way.

- ✓ I am interested in what you said. Please tell me about a specific situation where you felt that way.

APPENDIX B

Moreno IRB Approval for Dissertation:

Consent Form

"Experiences of Women Leaders in Mexico"

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the experiences you have lived as a woman leader in Mexico. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a woman leader in predominantly male dominated organizations in Mexico. You were selected to be a possible participant because you occupy a directive position in the organization you work for or you have worked for lately.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to tell me your experiences as a woman leader in Mexico in a first interview. This study will take approximately from 60 to 90 minutes. After I transcribe each interview verbatim, I will do the analysis of all of them and there will be some arising themes. I will share these tentative themes with you via e-mail, and I will call you back via telephone to discuss your thoughts about these themes. This phone call will last approximately 30 minutes. Your participation will be audio recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefits of participation will be to share the experiences of women leaders with other women that are willing to become leaders in Mexico, and anyone concerned about equity.

Do I have to participate?

No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

Texas A&M University IRB Approval	From: 7-11-11	To: 7-10-12
IRB Protocol # 2011-0521	Authorized by: KR	

APPENDIX C

Ana Patricia Nuñez Cervera

apnm_57@hotmail.com

- Cambiar imagen
- Ver perfil

Para

De: **Ana Patricia Nuñez Cervera** (apnm_57@hotmail.com)
Enviado: viernes, 30 de septiembre de 2011 01:38:23 p.m.
Para:

Hotmail Vista activa

1 dato adjunto (28.3 KB)

Interview...docx
Ver en línea
Descargar(28.3 KB)
Descargar como zip

Estimada _____:

Te informo que tuve que poner en un"stand-by" mi tesis doctoral, por poco más de un mes y te platico la razón: el 12 de agosto tuve una entrevista de trabajo en Dallas y nos ofrecieron trabajo a mi marido y a mí en EEUU. Regresé a Morelia y en un mes a toda prisa tuvimos que cancelar cuentas, empacar y tratar de vender casa y auto; incluso organizamos una gran venta de garage el último fin de semana que estuvimos en Morelia.

Hace dos semanas que salimos de México y ya estamos instalados en un suburbio de Texas muy cerca del aeropuerto de Dallas Ft. Worth: Grapevine, y he retomado mi investigación para la tesis por lo que te voy a solicitar que por favor leas la transcripción de la entrevista que me ofreciste y tengas a bien darme retroalimentación con respecto a ésta, si yo capté adecuadamente tus experiencias como una mujer líder en un ambiente laboral principalmente machista como lo es México.

Esta retroalimentación es sumamente importante para que pueda continuar con mi investigación doctoral y así cumplir en tiempo y forma los requisitos para graduarme en diciembre de este año. Si consideras que hay algo que no interpreté correctamente y/o hay algo que deseas agregar, por favor házmelo saber.

Nuevamente te reitero mi agradecimiento en este proyecto, atentamente,

Patricia Núñez de Moreno

APPENDIX D

Ana Patricia Nuñez Cervera

apnm_57@hotmail.com

- Cambiar imagen
- Ver perfil

Para

De: **Ana Patricia Nuñez Cervera** (apnm_57@hotmail.com)

Enviado: martes, 01 de noviembre de 2011 02:27:29 p.m.

Para:

Hotmail Vista activa

1 dato adjunto (12.4 KB)

TEMAS-1.docx

Ver en línea

Descargar(12.4 KB)

Descargar como zip

Estimada _____:

Te estoy enviando la lista de temas que surgieron después de haber analizado las transcripciones

de las entrevistas que me otorgaron mujeres líderes como tú, para el tema de mi tesis doctoral.

Te solicito que por favor los leas y me digas si estás de acuerdo con ellos y si tienes algún

comentario adicional nos pondríamos de acuerdo para tener la oportunidad de volver a platicar

acerca de ellos. ¡Muchas gracias!

Te mando un abrazo, Patricia

VITA

Name: Ana Patricia Moreno

Address: Department of Education Administration and Human Resource
Development

                   4226 TAMU College Station, TX 77843-4226

Email address: apnm_57@hotmail.com

Education: Ph.D. Human Resource Development, Texas A&M University,
                   2012
                   College Teaching Certificate, Texas A&M University, 2010
                   Training and Development Certificate, Texas A&M University,
                   2009
                   Master in International Marketing, Instituto Tecnológico y de
                   Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM)-Campus Toluca, 1996
                   Master in Business Administration, (ITESM)-México City, 1981
                   Bachelor of Arts, Major in Administration, Universidad Autónoma
                   Metropolitana-Unidad Azcapotzalco, México City, 1979

Professional Experience:
                   Graduate Assistant in the Department of Education and Human
                   Resource Development in the College of Education at Texas A&M
                   University, College Station, TX, 2008-2011
                   Full time professor at ITESM-Campus Morelia, 2004-2008
                   Part time professor at ITESM-Campus Toluca, 1998-2003
                   Invited professor at Universidad Panamericana, México City, 1998
                   Full time professor at ITESM-Campus Toluca, 1993-1998
                   Invited professor at Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México,
                   College of Business and Accounting, Graduate School, 1993
                   Invited professor at Universidad Iberoamericana, México City,
                   1991
                   Full time professor at UAM-Azcapotzalco, México City. Position
                   earned by opposition, 1985-1993