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## Editor's Letter

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This issue contains four research articles, subjected to the peer-review process.

*The Right to Disconnect: Influence on Competitiveness, Productivity and Creativity*, is the first article, written by Werner Horacio Varela-Castro, María de los Angeles Briceño-Santacruz, and María Olivia Castro-Solano. It determines which variables and factors are obtained as benefits or advantages of the observance of the right to disconnect law and whether it will influence labor and educational competitiveness.

Connectivity is undoubtedly an essential element for business and education in today's globalized and digital world. The commercial aspect plays an essential role, and as a company's ability to serve customers, satisfies their needs and requirements, and likewise gives them follow-up, advice, and post-sale support, and regardless of the size of the sale, both suppliers and customers can communicate in real-time, without complications.

Today more than half of the world's population is connected to the internet. Undoubtedly, the health emergency, situated as a pandemic due to COVID-19, has driven the apparent need for efficient digital connectivity. Its effectiveness has been proven since it has been precisely this that has allowed many companies. Institutions do not stop their activities and continue the productive, educational, social, entertainment, cultural, information processes, adapting, adjusting, or modifying the previous versions. The purpose is to continue despite the pandemic, mainly to avoid the total collapse of the economy in all areas.

Initially, existing literature was reviewed, and an own elaboration instrument was applied to 73 sample subjects. The found result was the need for recognition and awareness of organizations to respect the obligation of the right to disconnect to generate work and academic independence of workers, teachers, and students to take advantage of the free time of these people to improve their social relationships and strengthen their knowledge to perfect their work and increase their job and educational competitiveness.

The second article was written by María Isabel Rodríguez Salazar. Its title is *Omnichannel Marketing Model Applied at the Shopping Centers in Medellín City*. The objective was to form an omnichannel marketing model applied at the shopping centers in Medellín city.

The shopping center industry has based its business focus during the last decades on constructing physical experiences. However, due to the digital transformation and, specifically, the crisis caused by the pandemic (covid-19), most shopping centers in Colombia and the world had to close their doors for several months. At this point, the question began to be asked: "how to reach our customers?". An industry that was always ready to receive them in person should now reach their homes digitally.

For this, a qualitative methodology was applied. Two (2) focus groups with shopping center customers, two (2) in-depth interviews with experts in Omnichannel, Sandiego Shopping Center case study, and a theoretical review were carried out to obtain the fundamental components of the omnichannel marketing model applied to this category. The model is proposed in a circular structure, made up of orbits that revolve around the Omni-client. The model is made up of the consumer's journey, from 5A; the levels of transparency, coherence, and fluidity based on: (+) Greater consistency = (+) Greater loyalty; and the levels of online and offline interaction, which are transversal in the entire proposal of the model.

*Is Organizational Resilience a Competitive Advantage?* is the next article. Its authors are Irene Juana Guillén Mondragón, Araceli Rendón Trejo, and Andrés Morales Alquicira. The objective of the research is to investigate and expose what organizational resilience is and to determine whether it is a source of competitive advantage that drives the efforts of leaders and other stakeholders towards competitiveness.

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Today, the current and unexpected COVID-19 pandemic has affected the whole world, transforming social dynamics and how organizations operate; this represents an uncertain future and increased risk.

A documentary review was carried out for this work. In addition, qualitative research methodological strategies and case study data collection tools were applied. The main findings of this work are that organizations that cultivate organizational resilience have a more significant learning opportunity to navigate through crises, overcome them and transform.

Tania Marcela Hernández Rodríguez and Irma Janett Sepúlveda Ríos wrote *Empowerment through Femvertising: Reality or Myth?* which is the fourth article. The article's objective is to study female empowerment and stereotypes through femvertising. Empowerment and stereotypes were characterized by the roles generated by the sexual division of labor, developing a qualitative analysis through the perception of young Mexican women.

In recent years, feminist movements worldwide have caught the attention of diverse spaces that have transcended academic and political discussions and accompanied several actresses who have openly defended the cause. As a result, feminism has been incorporated into their

public speeches, which have simultaneously echoed among young women, who have become visible, and organized through support networks and collectives.

The challenges of this advertising strategy were identified as the role of messages and content. The results suggested the construction of new stereotypes without modifying the patriarchal structure..

Like always, we thank our authors for their papers. We thank the readers for recommending and citing *Mercados y Negocios*, and our editorial team for not giving up in times of hard work.

José Sánchez Gutiérrez  
Coeditor



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## The Right to Disconnect: Influence on Competitiveness, Productivity and Creativity

*El derecho a la desconexión: influencia en la competitividad, la  
productividad y la creatividad*

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine which variables and factors are obtained as benefits or advantages of the observance of the right to disconnect law and whether it will influence labor and educational competitiveness. Initially, existing literature was reviewed, and an own elaboration instrument was applied to 73 sample subjects. The found result was the need for recognition and awareness of organizations to respect the obligation of the right to disconnect to generate work and academic independence of workers, teachers, and students to take advantage of the free time of these people in order to improve their social relationships and strengthen their knowledge to perfect their work and increase their job and educational competitiveness.

Keywords: The Right to disconnect; free time; Telework; COVID-19.

JEL code: J08, J81



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### RESUMEN

Es incierto cuándo terminará el proceso pandémico y si las empresas dejaran permanentemente el teletrabajo y evitaran con ello el hostigamiento laboral y la violación del derecho a la desconexión digital laboral promulgado en abril del 2021. el objetivo de esta investigación es determinar que variables y factores se obtienen como beneficio o ventaja de la observancia de la ley, y si esta influirá en la competitividad laboral y educativa. Inicialmente se revisó la literatura existente, y se aplicó un instrumento de elaboración propia a 73 sujetos de muestra. Encontrándose; la necesidad de reconocimiento y concientización de las organizaciones a respetar la obligación de la Desconexión Digital para generar independencia laboral y académica de los trabajadores, profesores y estudiantes con el fin de aprovechar el tiempo libre de estas personas en mejorar sus relaciones sociales y reforzar sus conocimientos para perfeccionar su trabajo e incrementar la competitividad laboral y educativa.

Palabras clave: Derecho a Desconexión Digital; tiempo libre; teletrabajo; COVID-19.

Código JEL: J08, J81.

## INTRODUCTION

The right to disconnect in the work and educational environment is defined as “the right of a worker to be able to disconnect from work and refrain from participating in electronic communications related to their employment, such as emails and messages, calls or other forms of communication, for hours non-work” (HolmesHR, 2021).

Since leisure is free time dedicated to non-work-related activities, nor essential domestic (or educational) activities, but to a recreational and motivating time. Rest is the interruption of work to relax. Both are essential for physical and mental health (DHpedia, 2019).

These issues are of great relevance and have been dealt with in the International Labor Organization (ILO) since the beginning of the 20th century, from its foundation. Later in 1948, in a decree, article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was integrated, recognizing rest, free time, and periodically paid vacations as human rights (DHpedia, 2019).

Faced with the importance and challenges of using digital tools in employment relationships, the French Law in 2016 about work, the modernization of social dialogue, and the protection of professional careers introduced a right to disconnect for workers (Cialti, 2017; Taléns, 2018; Zamora, 2019; Serrano, 2019; Ruiz, 2020; Treré et al., 2020; Foro Jurídico, 2021).

More recently, in Mexico, the pandemic generated by Covid-19 accelerated the need to legislate new forms of remote work. In April 2021, unanimously, the Senate approved the addition of Article 68 bis to the Federal Labor Law that establishes the right of workers to right to disconnect and thus, ensure respect for their resting time, permits, vacations, and personal and family privacy outside the working day and privileges the reconciliation of work with personal life. By supporting the right of the working class to disconnect and refrain from participating in electronic communications related to their employment, such as emails, messages, calls, or any other forms of communication, during non-working hours (Senate of the Republic, 2021).

That is why this research work has, in the first instance, the purpose of pointing out the need for a labor regulation manifested in the federal labor law and likewise, to analyze the proposal of the Disconnection Law as a mechanism to avoid labor abuse, which it has shown in favor of effective and efficient performance and productivity of employees and companies.

In the second instance, this work seeks to determine how the lack of respect for the right to digital disconnection in different organizations influences labor and educational competitiveness. This way, they will know, among other questions, how the factors that

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motivate personal digital disconnection influence emotional balance, productivity, physical and mental health, and computer fatigue, both in the workplace and in education. This knowledge is helpful to evaluate the differences between the activities carried out before the pandemic and the post-COVID-19 activities and has contributed to developing a better job in the new work and educational reality that we must live. In the literature review, this research looks for the most recent to preserve the current state of the art. Below is described the methodology to be used. Then, the statistical analysis from the information obtained is carried out, generating the results section and the approach to the respective conclusions.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Context*

Technology and its constant evolution have made it possible to achieve wide accessibility and connectivity in all areas and contexts, especially concerning the communication needs between employees in the work centers.

Connectivity is undoubtedly an essential element for business and education in today's globalized and digital world. The commercial aspect plays an essential role, and as a company's ability to serve customers, satisfies their needs and requirements, and likewise gives them follow-up, advice, and post-sale support, and regardless of the size of the sale, both suppliers and customers can communicate in real-time, without complications.

Today more than half of the world's population is connected to the internet. Undoubtedly, the health emergency, situated as a pandemic due to COVID-19, has driven the apparent need for efficient digital connectivity. Its effectiveness has been proven since it has been precisely this that has allowed many companies. Institutions do not stop their activities and continue the productive, educational, social, entertainment, cultural, information processes, adapting, adjusting or modifying the previous versions. The purpose is to continue despite the pandemic, mainly to avoid the total collapse of the economy in all areas.

Although not everything can be classified as perfect, as in every process that eliminates a development barrier, it generates other situations and conflicts, such as the excess of connection that has impacted the stability of many collaborators in the companies. Although it is true, in Mexico, as in many countries, there is a labor regulation that contemplates working hours, which by contract, the employee or collaborator is subject to comply with for an amount of payment or salary. For this case, in Chapter V Salary, of the Federal Labor Law of Mexico, it is possible to find the following articles:

- *Article 82.*- Salary is the employer's remuneration to pay the worker for his work.

- *Article 83.*- The salary may be set per unit of time, per unit of work, per commission, at a lump sum, or in any other way.

In the case of salary per unit of time, that nature will be precisely established. The worker and the employer may agree on the amount, as long as it is a remunerative salary and the payment for each hour of service provision, as long as the legal maximum working day is not exceeded, and labor and safety rights are not exceeded: respected. They correspond to the position in question. The income that workers receive for this modality, in no case, will be less than that corresponding to a working day.

When the salary is set per unit of work and specifying the nature of the work, the quantity and quality of the material, the state of the tool, and the tools that the employer, if applicable, provides to carry out the work shall be stated, and the time for which they will be made available to the worker, without being able to demand any amount for the natural wear and tear suffered by the tool as a result of work.

- *Article 85.*- The salary must be remunerative and never less than the minimum set under the provisions of this Law. To establish the amount of the salary, the quantity and quality of the work will be taken into consideration.

In the salary per unit of work, the remuneration paid will be that which, in an eight-hour shift, results in the minimum wage, at least for a typical job.

As it can be seen, it is clear when referring to the legal maximum daily workday of 8 hours and respect for the worker's labor rights, which in some way contravenes the “working day” that is carried out today at home.

The pandemic has given two visions of the so-called Telework, or Home office. This adjustment for the development of the activities of the collaborators of the companies in the offices, so as not to stop business activities, especially those of an administrative nature, they moved the environments from work or the office to the homes or private spaces of each of the employees, who, making use of most of their resources and infrastructure (internet, cell phone, computer equipment); gave the possibility to carry out the responsibilities of their Market Stall.

However, the working time was extended since the vision for many employers was for the worker to be at "home", where at the same time he could attend to the needs that arose in it. Moreover, on the other hand, the employee, whether due to personal responsibility or because you do not feel in your workspace where you must fulfill a specific 8-hour shift, should be attentive to any call and need from the company or its bosses; being the most immediate instrument of communication, the cell phone and the connection to social networks, resulting

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in stressful, overwhelming, and exhausting: it should be noted that although many companies before the pandemic, they abused when using the communication mechanisms with their employees Outside of working hours, this was further exacerbated by the so-called “Home Office”.

*“The demand of bosses about having permanent availability in the WhatsApp groups "at work", the sending of emails during the morning "because at that time it comes to their minds and so as not to forget, they send it", the calls at breakfast time, lunch or dinner occur daily and are tolerated due to the fear of workers of being fired as the 12.5 million who have been collateral victims of COVID-19, according to the latest report from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). In collaboration with the recruiting company OCC Mundial, the Mexican Internet Association, surveyed those working from home during the pandemic in May, and 85 percent said they felt good about teleworking. However, on the other side, 70 percent of the participants revealed that they work more than before when they went to the office. This load has impacted the employees' mental health, which, together with the confinement, increased the anxiety, insomnia, and stress crises, without the possibility of shoveling it with exercise or relaxing in the open air.” (Contreras, 2020)*

It is true that when the option of developing work at home, "home office", or "teleworking" was started, there were many errors due to adaptation, coordination to achieve performance, and distance communication. However, according to negative experiences that have been overcome, the efficiency is greater, and the attention to the work is exceeded by any communication and interaction channels. For example, in an interview conducted by Contreras (2020) with the accountant Meneses, a collaborator of a specific company in Mexico, he pointed out the following:

“... the myth persists that the home office means working only half the time and the rest resting, watching television, and going for a walk; the reality now is that nobody wants to lose their job because the situation is awful, we are willing to work the necessary time so that they do not put us on the layoffs list, but in the end, it is very abusive on their part, it is not fair because they pay the same or less, you see that about discount agreements”.

For others, the "home office" has been cheerful, both for companies and the employee, since working from home has allowed them to be more comfortable and pleasant, reducing time and expenses involved as per diem. In addition, commuting to their work centers every day and returning home, being able to cook and make their food, which for many has improved their quality of life; and for companies operating costs and expenses have been reduced.

The vision of the future development of the “Home Office” work alternative was not such a modern or inexperienced idea since, in several European countries, such a practice was already carried out before the pandemic, with intermittent programmed face-to-face actions of the “coworking” type. However, it was not located as an immediate possibility; a transition of between 15 to 20 years was intended since there was still little evidence of the advantages and disadvantages for both companies and employees, this type of performance and virtual

work environments, according to some comments issued by the executive director of Skills Agility Lab, Leticia Gasca (cited in Contreras, 2020).

Although the health emergency and the needs arising from it made the evolution time of the "home office" or work at home shortened, taking Mexican companies and their collaborators by surprise, and likewise even the Federal Labor Law, which until today does not contemplate operating regulations in this regard.

## DEVELOPMENT

### *The right to disconnect*

Being connected in many cases has not only become a necessity but has even caused certain diseases and disorders, deterioration in family and work relationships; connectivity has its benefit by "optimizing control over our relationship with the digital environment, making the most of the use of that environment as a facilitator of access to knowledge and communication" (Serrano-Puche, 2014).

Mass contact through all kinds of electronic devices facilitates communication. This same mass contact has led many people to evaluate the meaning of connectivity and the implications of being "connected". They not only refer to the type of internet service or wireless broadband that each user has but also to the action of disconnecting. People manage to disconnect from technological communication to connect with human communication.

Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness among employees regarding the negative impact on their health caused by hyper-connectivity at work and on a personal level. Indeed, the labor situation that arose and transformed from the health emergency has made connectivity a great need, dependency, instrument, and tool (Kardaras et al., 2017; Kaun, 2021).

Therefore, disconnection has become both a necessity and a right. Unplugging helps set boundaries between working from home and time spent on leisure or other personal matters. For example, Europe is one of the pioneers of teleworking; it has been considered a law for the right to disconnect for some years (Chiuffo, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to determine that: The right to disconnect is disconnecting from electronic devices (Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021; Miñarro, 2019; Molina, 2017; Moe & Madsen, 2021).

The right to disconnect has been considered a "new right" for workers, so few countries are at the forefront of regulating it. It has been recognized that France 2017 made the first demonstration on the European continent, considering this right in the labor laws in the French Labor Code; but "it was the European GDPR of 2018 that allowed the door to be

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opened for other countries to adopt legislation to protect the privacy and data protection of workers in labor relations." (Montiel, 2020).

Spain, in 2018, according to Pardo (2020), this country decided to include the new package of digital rights within Organic Law 3/2018, of December 5, on Protection of Personal Data and guarantee of digital rights, the right to disconnect seemed to be configured as a "pioneering" right. Article 88, where it is regulated, expressly states that:

1. Public workers and employees shall have the right to disconnect to guarantee, respect for their rest, leave, vacation time, and personal and family privacy outside of the legal or conventionally established working time.

It means that "the right to disconnect will be preserved, particularly, in the cases of total or partial performance of the work at the employee's home. However, it has not yet been achieved that all companies carry it out"; Latin America has begun to consider this right to convert it into a law of disconnection.

The right to disconnect from the workplace implies for the person the decision not to answer any communication from the company outside working hours. These communications can be phone calls, messages, emails, or WhatsApp). It also includes not attending meetings or gatherings outside of business hours. The worker's right of non-response must be respected at the end of their shift, during leave, or during vacation time, regardless of whether they have work-related electronic devices (corporate number, company equipment).

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On the other hand, the Technological University of Peru (UTP, 2021), in data collected from various sources, has determined that there was an increase of 70% in the level of the inhabitants of Peru, such data soaring due to the long hours of Telework and the impossibility of avoiding or refusing to attend to the urgent requirement of their work centers and the demands of leaders who assume remote work as "24/7 availability".

*"For experts, the fear of losing their job and the culture of presence makes it difficult for workers to disconnect. "It is a complicated issue because, in many cases, the worker can be conditioned by the bias of 'if I do not answer the call or do not answer the email now, I can lose my job or limit my possibilities for professional promotion', especially in a scenario of uncertainty and crisis". However, there are differences between employees, 'professional responsibility should not be confused with digital slavery'." (Fernández-Barcelona, 2021)*

Hence, the right to disconnect has arisen in Urgency Decrees N ° 127-2020 and as an obligation for both employers and employees in said country; aiming to preserve the physical, mental, and emotional health of the human team, providing spaces for rest, in order to generate a balance between their personal and work life, preserving the dignity of the employee. Such decree in Article 18 indicates that:



*“The employer and worker must respect the right to disconnect from the worker. Therefore, the worker has the right to disconnect from the computer, telecommunications, and similar means used for the provision of services during rest days, licenses, and periods of suspension of the employment relationship... the employer may not require the worker to carry out tasks or coordination of a labor nature during the time of the right to disconnect.”*

For its part in Mexico, on January 11, 2021, the approval of a reform to the Federal Labor Law was published where teleworking is added and regulated, where the new labor regulation says, in its Article 330-E (Senate of the Republic, 2021), in teleworking mode, employers will have the following special obligations:

- I. Provide, install and take care of the maintenance of the necessary equipment for teleworking, such as computer equipment, ergonomic chairs, printers, among others;
- II. Receive work on time and pay wages in the manner and on the stipulated dates;
- III. Assume the costs derived from the work through the telework modality, including, where appropriate, the payment of telecommunication services and the proportional part of electricity;
- IV. Keep a record of the inputs delivered to workers under the teleworking modality, in compliance with the provisions on safety and health at work established by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security;
- V. Implement mechanisms that preserve the security of information and data used by workers in the teleworking modality;
- SAW. Respect the right to disconnection of workers in the telecommuting modality at the end of the working day;
- VII. Register workers in the teleworking modality to the mandatory social security regime, and
- VIII. Establish the necessary training and advisory mechanisms to guarantee the adaptation, learning, and appropriate use of information technologies for workers in the telework modality, emphasizing those who change from face-to-face modality to Telework.

Unanimously, the Republic Senate approved a project to establish the right of workers to digital disconnection and thus ensure respect for their: rest time, permits, vacations, and personal and family privacy outside of working hours established. With 116 votes in favor of April 30, 2021, the plenary session supported the right of the working class to disconnect and refrain from participating in electronic communications related to their employment, such as emails and messages, calls, or other forms of communication, for hours' non-labor. (Amedirh, 2021).

Several of the pronouncements in favor by the representatives of the different political parties, members of the Senate indicated the following: Alejandra Reynoso Sánchez, senator



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for the PAN, pointed out that the right to disconnect should be a right for every worker because failure to do so can affect people's health, with mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion.

They are taking advantage of the opportunity the digital age gives everyone, but without abuse. Manuel Añorve Baños, Senator of the PRI, emphasized that it is time for the Congress of the Union to recognize this new reality. "Workers extend their working hours, including weekends and vacations, which reduces the quality of family life, and increases stress and anxiety".

For her part, Patricia Mercado from Movimiento Ciudadano commented that "the flexibility of teleworking is beneficial when it maintains or increases the quality of life of people" noting that "there must be a balance between productivity and the health of workers." In this addition to *Article 68 Bis of the Federal Labor Law*, the following is noted:

*"It establishes the right of workers to digital disconnection and thus ensures respect for their rest time, permits, vacations, and personal and family privacy outside of the established working day.*

*It provides that the regulation, as well as the modalities of the right to disconnect, address the nature of the labor relationship and privilege the reconciliation of work with personal life: "They will be subject to what is specified in collective bargaining or in what is agreed between the employer and representatives of the workers. "*

*It indicates that "the employer must draw up, in coordination with said representatives, an internal policy directed at employees, including managerial positions, which defines the modalities for disconnection"; In addition, actions to sensitize staff on the reasonable use of technological tools, which avoid the risk of fatigue or other health problems, including mechanisms to prevent and punish hostile acts that may arise when the worker exercises their right to disconnect, as well as acts that segregate staff or imply effects on the benefits to which they are entitled." (Lemus, 2021)*

It is possible to point out that teleworking, working at home or home office, is undoubtedly an adaptation of the old reality to the present, which has implied a change in paradigms, action, spaces, and environments, and that its validity could be permanent. Hence, the right to disconnect from work is more necessary than ever since it does involve not only the worker but also his own family and society in general.

Considering all of the above indicates that "the table is served". However, the laws are an essential instrument to generate changes and respect rights, but by themselves, they do not work miracles and may not be sufficient to fulfill the purpose for which they were promulgated. Because achieving that the right of digital labor disconnection is implemented and respected depends both on the internal policies of the companies, as well as on the knowledge of the workers to exercise said right, hence the need to make effective the organizational and operational measures to its implementation and guarantee the worker's

right to disconnect, and promote the achievement of the development of more committed, healthy and motivated employees, making their performance and the productivity results of the companies more efficient.

The company and employees' measures must be directed towards a reasonable use of technological tools “that avoids the risk of computer fatigue and digital obesity. It will be the different options available by the organizations that indicate whether things are being done well” (Fernández-Barcelona, 2021).

#### *The right of workers to disconnect*

Undoubtedly, the pandemic experience has conditioned making many changes in the traditional personal and work routines, and everyone has had to adapt to the "new normal", taking action so that everything continues without slowing down as far as possible. However, there was no prior preparation or skills for developing Telework or home office in Mexico. In addition, the economic crisis has subjected employees to fear of losing their jobs if they do not remain “always available”.

However, there is a classification of the type of collaborators: the efficient, the deficient, those with the highest and lowest performance, the highly responsible, and the irresponsible. The reality is that remote work becomes an ongoing cost to work, hence the emergence of techno-stress, hyperconnectivity, and digital obesity, among others, which many are suffering from employees, and affecting their personal and family life and health. It is, therefore, necessary to act in companies, to establish legal mechanisms that ensure and guarantee the effectiveness of a normative regulation for remote work and the corresponding: the right to disconnect. (Escobar and López, 2019; González, 2020)

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

There is still no certainty as to when the pandemic process will end, nor whether the experience of the companies leads them to leave teleworking permanently. Therefore, it is crucial to enact the right to disconnect. However, the lack of knowledge circumscribes the research problem to determine how the right to digital disconnection influences labor and educational competitiveness to avoid workplace harassment and violate the right to disconnect.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### *General objective*

- Know how the right to disconnect influences job and educational competitiveness

### *Specific objectives*

- Establish how to avoid workplace harassment and violate the right to disconnection.
- Determine what factors motivate personal digital disconnection and influence different aspects of emotional balance: productivity, physical and mental health, and computer fatigue, both in the workplace and in education.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

H: There is the right to disconnect that influences job and educational competitiveness

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### *Scope and limitations*

The method used in this project was an investigation at an explanatory and non-experimental level since a deliberate manipulation of the variables was not carried out; that is, there were no conditions or stimuli to which the research subjects were exposed, nor were any constructed situations to see its effects. Furthermore, it is transversal because the research showed us how the right to disconnect influenced organizations' labor and educational competitiveness, and a study was not carried out over time. Finally, it is from the field because the surveys were carried out in the habitat or workplace of the interviewees, and they were not removed from their environment to carry out the research.

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#### *Sample size and description*

A proprietary instrument was applied to 73 subjects; this instrument consisted of 39 interval questions with a Likert scale from 0 to 6 and 4 nominal variables that characterize the sample. This instrument was validated by obtaining Cronbach's alpha, where a value of 96.3% was obtained, with which there is high reliability and content validity, also presenting an estimation error of 4.1% of the mean.

On the other hand, the sample was made up of several subjects where the most significant number of them were male with 56.2% and 43.8% female; of these interviewees, the majority were students (35.6%), 16.4% were teachers, and 47.95% of the sample was made up of public and private workers.

Regarding their marital status, he tells us that of these, the vast majority are single (60.3%), a large part is married, and only 9.6% are in a common-law union or another marital status, and finally, 35.6% of those interviewed have 16 to 25 years old, 27.4% are in the range between 26 and 35 years old, 26.0 between 36 and 45 years old, and the rest are more than 46 years old.

**RESULTS**

*Univariate data analysis*

As shown in table 1, frequency distribution by gender, the most significant number of respondents corresponded to the male gender with 56.2%, while the rest corresponded to 43.8% of the female gender.

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Accumulated Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated percentage	Histogram
1 Female	32	32	43.84	43.84	
2 Male	41	73	56.16	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2 shows that most of those interviewed were students (35.6%), 16.4% were teachers, and 47.95% of the sample was made up of public and private workers.

**Table 2. Frequency Distribution by Work Activity**

Work activity _41	Frequency	Accumulated Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated percentage	Histogram
1 Private job	18	18	24.66	24.66	
2 Public employee	17	35	23.29	47.95	
3 Teacher	12	47	16.44	64.38	
4 Student	26	73	35.62	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

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**Table 3. Frequency Distribution by Marital Status**

Civil_State42	Frequency	Accumulated Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated percentage	Histogram
1 Single	44	44	60.27	60.27	
2 Married	22	66	30.14	90.41	
3 Free Union	6	72	8.22	98.63	
4 Others	1	73	1.37	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4 shows that the frequency distribution by age 35.6% of the interviewees is 16 to 25 years old, 27.4% are between 26 and 35 years old, and 26.0 between 36 and 45 years old. The rest are over 46 years old.

**Table 4. Frequency Distribution by Age**

Years_43	Frequency	Accumulated Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated percentage	Histogram
16 to 25	26	26	35.62	35.62	
26 to 35	20	46	27.4	63.01	
36 to 45	19	65	26.03	89.04	
46 or more	8	73	10.96	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

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**Table 5. Frequency distribution by the level of most common explanation: Commonalities**

Variable	Variable Code	Initial	Explanation
Facilitate the development of academic tasks31	(DesTareas31)	.925	86%
Increase learning activities32	(actiAprend32)	.935	83%
improve family relationships3	(RelaFAM3)	.890	83%
Learn educational values35	(AprValores35)	.855	81%
Improve attitudes at home8	(actituCasa8)	.889	81%
Exercise a legitimate right2	(Ejderech2)	.847	80%
Raise awareness of the need for the right to disconnect1	(ConcieDD1)	.874	79%
Increase skills (work and educational) 39	(habilidad39)	.877	79%

Source: Own elaboration.

As can be seen in Table 5, the variables that most commonly show a more significant explanation of the advantages of raising awareness of the need to disconnect digitally (ConcieDD1, 79%): through exercising a legitimate right (Ejderech2, 80%) already established in the federal labor law, which will allow the worker, teacher or students to facilitate the development of academic tasks (DesTareas31, 86%), as well as increase

learning activities (actiAprend32, 83%) with accentuation of educational values (AprValores35, 81%) and both work and educational skills (ability39, 79%), which seeks to improve family relationships (RelaFAM3, 83%) and attitudes at home (atituCasa8, 81%).

*Multivariate factor analysis*

Three initial tests were performed to determine if the study contained valid variables: Determinant of the correlation matrix, KMO, and Bartlett's sphericity. The test shows the validity of the study (Table 6). It is based on the coefficient of the determinant of the correlation matrix with a value of almost zero (3.044E-019). In addition, a correlation is observed at an average level of sample adequacy of the variables at 84.0% initial in KMO. (Batista et al, 2004).

**Table 6. KMO Tests, Bartlett Test, and Determinant**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		.840
	Approximate chi-square	2479.987
Bartlett's test of sphericity	degrees of freedom	741
	Sig.	.000
Correlation matrix	Determinant	3.044E-019

Source: own elaboration.

In addition, the Chi-square (2479.9) is at an acceptable level. Therefore, essential data were obtained when correlating the variables through which the initial hypothesis was approved. The minimum validity factor in the Bartlett sphericity test is 741, whose significance is close to 0.000, which indicates that it is significant at 95% confidence ( $\alpha < 0.05$ ).

In Table 7, the total explained variance of 68.39%, where the variables are reduced to communalities, and the maximum level of explanation of the survey for the investigation is determined; a minimum acceptable level is 50%. The rest is explained with the theory contained in the literature, and this complements the model for the application of the right to disconnect in companies and sees the impact that this has had, among others, on their productivity and competitiveness.

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**Table 7. Total Explained Variance**

Factors	Initial eigenvalues			Sums of the squared saturations of the extraction			Sum of the squared saturations of the rotation		
	Total	% of variance	% accumulated	Total	% of variance	% accumulated	Total	% of variance	% accumulated
1	17.232	44.185	44.185	16.934	43.421	43.421	6.576	16.861	16.861
2	3.007	7.710	51.895	2.721	6.976	50.397	4.362	11.185	28.047
3	2.110	5.410	57.305	1.822	4.672	55.069	4.160	10.666	38.713
4	1.769	4.536	61.841	1.434	3.676	58.745	3.417	8.762	47.475
5	1.447	3.709	65.550	1.116	2.861	61.606	2.968	7.611	55.086
6	1.391	3.565	69.115	1.042	2.673	64.279	2.030	5.205	60.292
7	1.203	3.085	72.200	.857	2.197	66.476	1.791	4.593	64.884
8	1.088	2.791	74.991	.745	1.911	68.387	1.366	3.502	68.387

Source: Own elaboration.

As shown in Table 8, for effects of the significance of the factors to be studied, a Re-Test of the factors under study was carried out, taking into account a minimum value of 0.8 to explore the significance of the individual factors. Based on tradition, the reliability value in exploratory research must be equal to or greater than 0.6; among these authors, Nunnally (1995) even establishes that a reliability value of 0.6 or 0.5 may be in the first phases of the investigation be sufficient.

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**Table 8. Exploratory Re-Test of Reliability of Unit Factors**

FACTORS	VARIABLES	CRONBACH's ALPHA
FACTOR 1 Work and Educational Skills	habilit39	tecnoEA36
	AprValores35	estCenEsc25
	gustoTrab38	DesTareas31
	salario26	actiAprend32
	equipInf37	
		0.9405
FACTOR 2 Labor Independence	Ejderech2	depLabor22
	ConcieDD1	Recobli11
		0.86545
FACTOR 3 Attitudes with Psychological Balance	actituCasa8	actitPers13
	equilibPsi16	FacilSEA9
	planProd19	
		0.896551
FACTOR 4 take advantage of free time	Conocimie28	relaSoc27
	tiempLib14	PerfTrab29
		0.820350
FACTOR 5 Work and educational break	DescJorE10	DeLabor4
	AliviarTE6	
		0.815306
FACTOR 6 Personal and Family Health	RelaFAM3	saluFísi21
		0.849586

Source: own elaboration.

Based on the above, the six (6) significant factors in terms of reliability and individual validity are described in the subsequent parts, as seen in Table 7, which refers to the Re-Test of Cronbach's alpha, the factors: 1 Skills Labor and Educational (0.9405), 2 Minimize Labor

Dependency (0.86545), 3 Attitudes with Psychological Balance (0.896551), 4 Take advantage of free time (0.820350), 5 Work and educational rest (0.815306), 6 Personal and Family Health (0.849586 ), all exploratory with Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.8 and Eigenvalues greater than one.

**Table 9. Work and Educational Skills**

FACTOR 1	CF	N	Mn	Mx	Me	Md	Mo	St. Dev	Z	CV	Sk	K	OmK2
habilidad39	.811	73	0	6	5.10	6	6	1.30	3.91	0.26	-1.85	6.62	0.00
AprValores35	.778	73	0	6	5.01	6	6	1.53	3.27	0.31	-1.80	5.77	0.00
gustoTrab38	.765	73	0	6	4.99	6	6	1.43	3.49	0.29	-1.76	5.94	0.00
salario26	.717	73	0	6	5.07	6	6	1.51	3.35	0.30	-1.86	6.14	0.00
equipInf37	.711	73	0	6	4.85	5	6	1.44	3.37	0.30	-1.25	4.14	0.00
tecnoEA36	.688	73	0	6	5.22	6	6	1.43	3.66	0.27	-1.98	6.45	0.00
estCenEsc25	.592	73	0	6	5.07	6	6	1.32	3.85	0.26	-1.64	5.59	0.00
DesTareas31	.579	73	0	6	4.92	5	6	1.39	3.53	0.28	-1.35	4.23	0.00
actiAprend32	.572	73	0	6	4.86	5	6	1.44	3.38	0.30	-1.37	4.32	0.00

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 9, which refers to the increase in work and educational skills, shows that the interviewees often agree that digital disconnection will allow them to improve their taste for work (TasteTrab38, Me = 4.99), which almost always results in an increase in their work and educational skills (ability39, Me = 5.10) which improves their salary (salary26, Me = 5.07), we also found that the subjects stated that almost always avoiding permanent connection is a Support to study in schools ( estCenEsc25, Me = 5.07), where it often leads to Increase learning activities32 (actiAprend32, Me = 4.86) through the use of Better teaching-learning technologies36 (tecnoEA36, Me = 5.22) which facilitates the development of academic tasks (DesTareas31), Me = 4.92) and the assimilation of educational values (AprValores35, Me = 5.01), these two aspects of work and education develop the Integration of a great team informático37 (equipInf37, Me = 4.85)

**Table 10. Labor Independence**

FACTOR 2	CF	N	Mn	Mx	Me	Md	Mo	St. Dev	Z	CV	Sk	K	OmK2
Ejderech2	.805	73	0	6	4.53	5	6	1.73	2.62	0.38	-0.87	2.68	0.01
ConcieDD1	.773	73	0	6	4.22	5	6	1.83	2.31	0.43	-0.74	2.55	0.03
depLabor22	.604	73	0	6	5.12	6	6	1.22	4.19	0.24	-1.70	6.28	0.00
Recobli11	.578	73	0	6	4.15	5	6	1.99	2.08	0.48	-0.75	2.31	0.01

Source: Own elaboration.

As can be seen in Table 10, labor independence, the subjects surveyed many times agreed on, among other advantages and benefits, raising awareness and recognizing the need to carry out the right to disconnect (ConcieDD1, Me = 4.22) on the part of the organizations the obligation (Recobli11, Me = 4.15) of the employer and a legitimate right to exercise



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(Ejderech2, Me = 4.53), on the part of workers, teachers, and students that almost always impacts on minimizing work dependency (depLabor22, Me = 5.12 ).

**Table 11. Attitudes with Psychological Balance**

FACTOR 3	CF	N	Mn	Mx	Me	Md	Mo	St. Dev	Z	CV	Sk	K	OmK2
actituCasa8	.770	73	0	7	5.38	6	6	1.17	4.59	0.22	-2.18	8.45	0.00
equilibPsi16	.605	73	0	7	5.36	6	6	1.25	4.28	0.23	-2.07	7.26	0.00
planProd19	.587	73	0	6	4.89	5	6	1.22	4.01	0.25	-1.27	4.91	0.00
actitPers13	.577	73	0	6	5.16	6	6	1.31	3.93	0.25	-1.64	5.32	0.00
FacilSEA9	.553	73	0	6	5.11	6	6	1.40	3.65	0.27	-1.60	4.95	0.00

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 11, attitudes with psychological balance tells us that the subjects questioned many times agree to establish a productive operational plan (planProd19, Me = 4.89) that almost always facilitates the teaching-learning system (FacilSEA9, Me = 5.11) and maintain psychological balance (equilibPsi16, Me = 5.36) to develop better personal attitudes13 (actitPers13, Me = 5.16) and at home8 (atituCasa8, Me = 5.38).

**Table 12. Take Advantage of Free Time**

FACTOR 4	CF	N	Mn	Mx	Me	Md	Mo	St. Dev	Z	CV	Sk	K	OmK2
Conocimie28	.668	73	0	6	5.19	6	6	1.28	4.07	0.25	-1.82	6.18	0.00
tiempLib14	.597	73	2	6	5.40	6	6	0.97	5.58	0.18	-1.60	4.79	0.00
relaSoc27	.571	73	0	6	5.00	6	6	1.49	3.35	0.30	-1.65	5.21	0.00
PerfTrab29	.569	73	0	6	5.11	6	6	1.37	3.73	0.27	-1.90	6.68	0.00

Source: Own elaboration.

As can be seen in table 12, Factor 4 take advantage of free time, pay attention to what was mentioned by all the students, teachers, and workers questioned, who almost always agree that the right to disconnect from work allows them to take advantage of their free time (LibTime14, Me = 5.40) in improving their social relationships (relaSoc27, Me = 5.00 and reinforcing their knowledge (Knowledge28, Me = 5.19) to improve their work (PerfTrab29, Me = 5.11).

**Table 13. Work and Educational Break**

FACTOR 5	CF	N	Mn	Mx	Me	Md	Mo	St. Dev	Z	CV	Sk	K	OmK2
DescJorE10	.741	73	0	6	4.55	5	6	1.62	2.81	0.36	-0.89	3.07	0.01
AliviarTE6	.685	73	2	6	4.62	5	6	1.30	3.56	0.28	-0.41	1.89	0.00
DeLabor4	.643	73	0	6	4.63	5	6	1.65	2.81	0.36	-0.99	3.12	0.00

Source: Own elaboration.

As shown in Table 13 of factor 5 work and educational rest, the interviewees stated that they agreed many times that the right to disconnect allows rest from the educational day (DescJorE10, Me = 4.55) and from work (DeLabor4, Me = 4.63) as well as alleviating educational work (AliviarTE6, Me = 4.62).

**Table 14. Personal and Family Health**

FACTOR 6	CF	N	Mn	Mx	Me	Md	Mo	St. Dev	Z	CV	Sk	K	OmK2
RelaFAM3	.654	73	2	6	5.32	6	6	0.93	5.71	0.18	-1.54	4.77	0.00
saluFísi21	.550	73	0	6	5.29	6	6	1.37	3.86	0.26	-2.33	8.28	0.00

Source: Own elaboration.

In table 14, factor 6; Personal and Family Health, the right to disconnect in the opinion of the interviewees almost always improves family relationships (RelaFAM3, Me = 5.32) and physical health (saluFísi21, Me = 5.29) of workers, teachers, and students.

*Confirmatory factor analysis. Model using structural equations*

Once the previous knowledge has been delimited and validated theoretically and statistically to formulate concrete hypotheses about the relationship between indicators and latent dimensions his interest is focused on testing these hypotheses. The CFA subjects these assumptions to contrast statistics that, if rejected, would advise against the reliability assessment. (Batista-Fogueta, et al, 2004). In this sense, it is necessary to adjust the model (Table 15). To do this, use Chi-Square indicators and degrees of freedom. It will be determined if the quotient of these data should be less than five ( $P < 5$ ) as the desired result to show the fit of the proposed model, called “testing the omission model” (Cea D’Ancona, 2004).

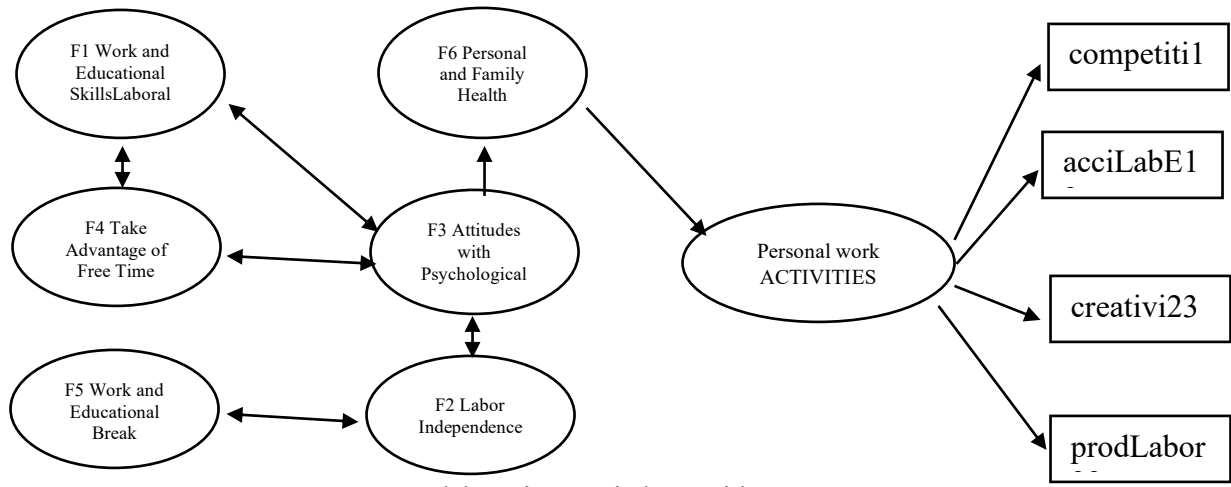
**Table 15. Model Fit Summary**

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	67	883.917	429	.000	2.060
Saturated model	496	.000	0		
Independence model	31	2247.305	465	.000	4.833

Source: own elaboration carried out with AMOS.

As can be seen in Table 15, Chi-Square (CMIN) 883.917 regarding the division of the Degrees of Freedom (DF) 429 sets a setting of 2.060, suggesting a ratio of approximately less than five as a rational principle of efficient adjustment, called “testing the default model”. These values indicate that the model is consistent and perfect goodness of fit.

**Figure 1. Confirmatory model using structural equations**



Source: own elaboration carried out with AMOS-SPSS

In Figure 1, it is observed that the latent variables F1 Work and Educational Skills, F3 Attitudes with Psychological Balance, and F4 take advantage of free time are related to F2 Work independence and F5 Work and educational rest, impacting F6 Personal and family health one of the factors more important.

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According to the model, which allows the employees to affirm that the personal work activities that the workers are carrying out are those that allow, Increased creativity (creativi23 Me = 5.37), Increased labor productivity (prodLabor33 Me = 5.11). Which allows, according to the model, to affirm that the personal work activities that the workers are carrying out are those that allow “Generate greater labor competitiveness” (competiti15, Me=4.99), Increase labor and educational actions (acciLabE12 Me=4.21), Increase creativity (creativi23 Me=5.37), as well as Increase labor productivity (prodLabor33 Me=5.11) Therefore, Figure 1 and Table 15 corroborate what is established in the Working Hypothesis. (Cea D’Ancona, 2004).

## CONCLUSIONS

The result of the investigation gave several conclusions in addition to the two that essentially respond to the general and specific objectives set: Signed agreements and the necessary measures are required for the reasonable and assertive use of the technological means of communication, which lead to avoiding workplace harassment and the violation of the right to disconnect:

- The variables that show more commonly and in general, a more excellent explanation about the benefits or advantages of individual behaviors that influence the individual execution of the right to disconnect: are those that involve raising awareness of the need to carry out and/or exercise this proper legitimate law already established in the federal labor law that will allow the worker, teacher or students to facilitate the development of academic tasks, as well as increase learning activities with emphasis on educational values and both work and educational skills, with which better family relationships and attitudes.
- The combination that represents the increase of labor and educational skills by avoiding permanent digital connection allows the company to improve salaries and integrate large work teams with computer skills.
- The main benefit and/or advantage of the recognition and awareness of organizations is respect for the obligation of the right to disconnect that will impact the labor and academic independence of workers, teachers, and students.
- Good personal attitudes manifested at home originate in a teaching-learning system that is operationally planned to maintain the psychological balance of workers, teachers, and students.
- The right to disconnect from work allows them to take advantage of their free time to improve their social relationships and reinforce their knowledge to perfect their work and increase productivity and competitiveness.
- The right to disconnect allows a rest from the educational and working day, as well as alleviating educational work.
- The right to disconnect improves family relationships and the physical health of workers, teachers, and students.

Finally, it is concluded that the right to disconnect influences competitiveness, productivity, and creativity. Regarding the hypothesis raised about how the existence of the right to disconnect influences labor and educational competitiveness, it was corroborated and verified.

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## Omnichannel Marketing Model Applied at the Shopping Centers in Medellín City

*Modelo de marketing omnicanal aplicado a centros comerciales en la ciudad de Medellín*

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### ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to form an omnichannel marketing model applied at the shopping centers in Medellín city. For this, a qualitative methodology was applied. Two (2) focus groups with shopping center customers, two (2) in-depth interviews with experts in Omnichannel, Sandiego Shopping Center case study, and a theoretical review were carried out to obtain the fundamental components of the omnichannel marketing model applied to this category. The model is proposed in a circular structure, made up of orbits that revolve around the Omni-client. The model is made up of the consumer's journey, from 5A; the levels of transparency, coherence, and fluidity based on: (+) Greater consistency = (+) Greater loyalty; and the levels of online and offline interaction, which are transversal in the entire proposal of the model.

Keywords: Omnichannel marketing; Omni-client; consumer journey; shopping centers; retail; online; offline.

JEL Code: M3, M31.



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### RESUMEN

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo principal formular un modelo de marketing omnicanal, aplicado a la categoría de centros comerciales de la ciudad de Medellín. Para ello se aplicó una metodología cualitativa, donde se realizaron dos (2) grupos focales con clientes de centros comerciales, dos (2) entrevistas a profundidad con expertos en omnicanalidad, estudio de caso del Centro Comercial Sandiego y una revisión teórica, a fin de obtener los componentes fundamentales en un modelo de marketing omnicanal, aplicado a esta categoría. El modelo propuesto se plantea en estructura circular, conformado por orbitas que giran alrededor del omniciente. El modelo está constituido por el recorrido del consumidor, desde las 5A; los niveles de transparencia, coherencia y fluidez basados en: (+) Mayor congruencia= (+) Mayor lealtad; y los niveles de interacción online y offline, que son transversales en toda la propuesta del modelo.

Palabras clave: Marketing omnicanal; omniciente; recorrido del consumidor; centros comerciales; retail; online; offline.

Código JEL: M3, M31.

## INTRODUCTION

The shopping center industry has based its business focus during the last decades on constructing physical experiences. However, due to the digital transformation and, specifically, the crisis caused by the pandemic (covid-19), the vast majority of shopping centers in Colombia and the world had to close their doors for several months. At this point, the question began to be asked: "how to reach our customers?". An industry that was always ready to receive them in person should now reach their homes digitally.

The opening of the shopping centers revealed that the digital transformation was also immersed in this sector. Consumers had changed, now with greater demands and accustomed to having solutions at a click, without the need to mobilize. This transformation primarily implies a social change, which involves the behavior of people and organizations and the relationships between them and objects (Rey, Lirola and Mato, 2017).

This study starts from the accelerated growth of digitization and digital density, represented by mobility, social networks, big data, the cloud, the Internet of things, emerging electronic commerce, and the changes in the category of shopping centers (Dheenadhayalan, 2021; Zulauf et al., 2021; Kunc et al., 2022).

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The study's main objective is to formulate an Omnichannel Marketing Model applied to the shopping centers category in Medellín city. For this, the critical question is: what components should an omnichannel marketing model have to be implemented in the shopping centers of Medellín city?

To arrive at the formulation of the model, we start by determining the fundamental variables that compose it and identify the implementation tactics in an omnichannel strategy from a marketing perspective. Next, find the minimum parameters that a shopping center must consider implementing an omnichannel marketing strategy; establish the principal moments of truth in the consumer's journey and how his journey is throughout the model.

This model will allow shopping centers to guide their marketing strategies based on their current consumers, building on contact portals and creating consistent experiences across online and offline channels.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### *The road to omnichannel*

*“The concept of customer experience is generally defined as the customer's multidimensional responses (cognitive, emotional, sensory, behavioral and relational) in the service of a company” (Siebert et al., 2020)*

Consumers today tend to use more channels and touch points with brands during their buying journey. For this reason, in each phase of the journey, whether in search, purchase, or post-purchase, customers mix channels (Weinberg, Parise and Guinan, 2007). These are when the channels become the critical contact points where the brand can interact with its consumers. (Mosquera, Olarte and Ayensa, 2017)

The combination of new sales formats, the application of new information and communications technologies (ICT), changes in the environment, and the socio-cultural conditions of people, have led to a transformation of the behavior of the individual throughout the entire consumer journey (Frasquet, Mollá and Ruiz, 2012).

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This evolution in consumer behavior is accompanied by the increasing complexity of the purchasing process (Mosquera et al., 2017). It means a mandatory challenge for companies, which invites them to seek new forms of management for their businesses and thus compete in the new commercial environment, where being single-channel is not enough.

Today, companies at the forefront apply Inbound marketing, a methodology that combines non-intrusive marketing and advertising techniques, to create valuable experiences that positively impact their consumers and users (Moriuchi, 2021; Holden, Salinas and Zhang, 2021). The main objective of this method is to attract prospects and customers through relevant content, having customer/consumer satisfaction as its core and rotating in the cycle of attraction, retention, and delight.

Companies are being forced to develop digital marketing strategies to stay current. At this point, omnichannel makes all the sense, to the extent that the simultaneous use of different communication and purchase channels for consumers is promoted (Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan, 2019).

Thanks to the internet, smaller brands and businesses no longer face the logistical constraints they faced in the past. As a result, marketing has ceased to be vertical to become horizontal, and in this new model, we speak of empowered consumers (Kotler et al., 2019). In this way, the form of vertical market, known by some authors as dominant, has evolved towards

horizontality to be free; here, consumers have the power to condition companies to develop products and/or services.

At the same time, horizontality forms a more inclusive market, where a multilateral power structure prevails that gives value to the options of buyers and consumers (Kotler et al., 2019). Therefore, it is valid to differentiate that buyers execute the transactional action. At the same time, consumers do not necessarily take part in purchasing but are directly linked to consuming of the product, experience, or service.

Now, talking about Omni-clients, also known as online and offline consumers, is a primary issue when thinking about the design of omnichannel marketing models for businesses. Kotler (2018) highlights that each consumer has the freedom to build an individual shopping experience. They can take their journey as buyers by combining different contact channels with a particular brand, and the order they want.

The combination of new sales formats responds to a channel integration strategy, which primarily seeks to reach more consumers and provide them with complete and satisfactory shopping experiences. The omnichannel strategy responds to a transformation in the purchasing behavior of consumers and, in turn, highlights an evolution in their purchasing habits and the forms of contact they seek with brands. (Kotler et al., 2019).

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Currently, it is usual to find brands that include different channels in the purchase process in their marketing strategy, the above to reach different consumer segments and have a greater breadth in their market (Acquila, 2019).

*The Omni-customer and omnichannel marketing*

*“To develop a good omnichannel marketing strategy, companies have to perceive the consumer journey with a higher level of detail.” (Kotler et al., 2019).*

Following the previous premise, today's consumer finds different possibilities of contact with brands. With this variety of possibilities, various channels offer the opportunity to receive shopping experiences.

A study carried out by the International Data Corporation (2020) shows that the amount and persistence of Omni clients exceed that of single-channel (single-channel) consumers by 30%. Therefore, it is worth highlighting the relevance of this type of marketing and the possibilities it generates for consumers and brands. In this scenario, the role of social networks cannot be ignored. Which become a valuable and necessary tool to build horizontal relationships; they remove geographic and demographic barriers, facilitate communication between companies and drive innovation in companies (Kotler, Setiawan and Kartajaya, 2010).

Understanding how people buy is a very granular task, and for this understanding, the roadmap will always be mediated by the buyer's journey. This model was previously known as AIDA, a scheme with a proposal focused on the purchase: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. With author Derek Rucker of the Kellogg School of Management, the scheme went from AIDA to becoming the 4 “A” model: Attention, Attitude, Action, and Additional Action. This change responds to the need to monitor the consumer's post-purchase behavior to evaluate retention. The 4 “A” model is an essentially personal journey since the most significant influence on the purchase decision comes from the contact points that the brand must connect with the consumer; in theory, all these factors can be controlled by the organization.

### *New buyer's journey in the age of connectivity*

Today, we find a buyer's journey known as the 5As: Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act and Advocate. However, first, let us see a brief explanation of each phase:

- Aware: this phase is the gateway to the consumer journey; there, consumers are exposed to a long list of brands, communication messages, and different media. In addition, from the memories built from previous experiences with the brands and the positive or negative comments they have received from others (Kotler et al., 2019).
- Appeal: after the consumer is aware of the existence of several brands, the different advertising messages of the same are processed, and this is how short-term memories are created, amplifying their remote memory (Kotler et al., 2019). At this point, the process of attraction occurs.
- Ask: when the consumer is curious about a brand, the asking phase takes place, where the consumer investigates the brand(s) of their interest through different channels, both online and offline. In this phase, the consumer journey goes from being individual to becoming social. Their decisions are primarily based on information that they extract from external factors, including friends' recommendations and/or comments on other customers' experiences.
- Act: when the information found by the consumer is clear and attractive to him, the purchase action occurs. It is essential to understand that the purchase is not the only action that it seeks. For example, in the shopping centers, the necessary action is the visit and the relationship with the Brand.
- Advocate: the journey does not end with the purchase; on the contrary, a new path begins here: the advocate, where the Brand's recommendation is given and, therefore,

the consumer's loyalty. This phase reflects the feeling of loyalty that consumers have towards a brand. (Kotler et al., 2019)

After having a context of each phase, the Consumer Journey Map is presented through the 5 “A”, proposed by Kotler et al. (2019) in his work Marketing 4.0 Transform your strategy to attract the digital consumer (Table 1).

**Table 1. Map of the consumer journey through the 5As**

CONSUMER JOURNEY MAP	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
<b>Consumer Behavior</b>	<b>AWARE</b>	<b>APPEAL</b>	<b>ASK</b>	<b>ACT</b>	<b>ADVOCATE</b>
	Customers are massively exposed to brands and recommendations of others.	Customers process the messages they are exposed, to creating short-term memory.	Customers seek information through media from brands, friends, and family.  Consumers process messages to which they are exposed.	Customers decide to buy and interact with the brand	Over time, customers may develop a sense of loyalty to the brand. Repurchase and recommendation at best.
<b>Possible Customer Touch Points</b>	-Learn about a Brand from others. -Inadvertently exposed to brand advertising. -Recall experience	-Become attracted to brands. -Create a consideration set of brands	Call a friend for advice, search online, phone, shop, compare prices...	Purchase online or in-store, use the product, after-sales service.	Continuity in the use of the Brand. Recommendation and communication of the positive experience with the brand.
<b>Key Customer Impression</b>	<b>I KNOW</b>	<b>I LIKE</b>	<b>I'M CONVINCED</b>	<b>I'M BUYING</b>	<b>I RECOMMEND</b>

Source: Own elaboration (Kotler et al., 2019).

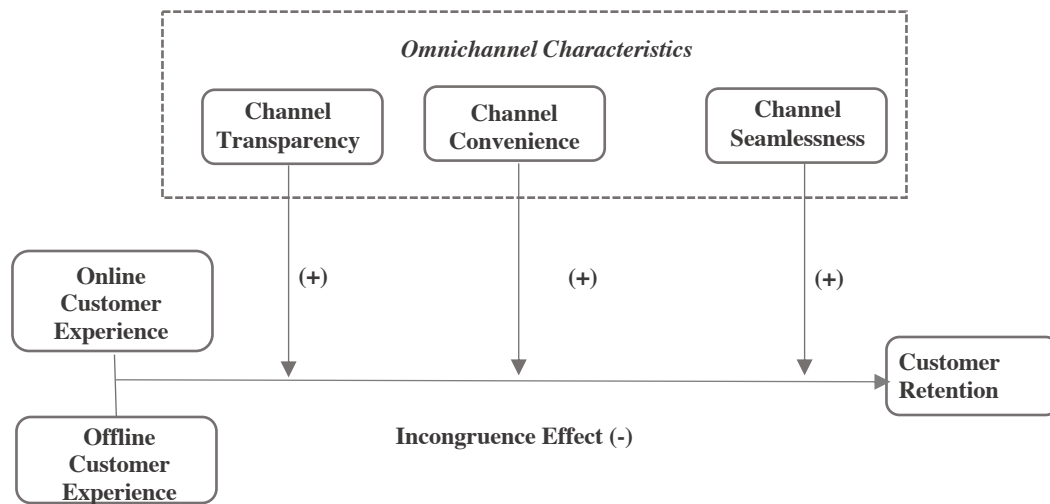
The consumer journey from the perspective of the 5 A's is a flexible model that can be adapted to different sectors. It is essential to clarify that this route is not always linear. In most cases, it takes place in the form of a spiral; for this reason, the map is a guide to the phases, but it does not represent a linear model (Kotler et al., 2019). The exercise of each brand is to understand the different types of journeys that its consumers carry out, to interact directly with its brand.

As a result of the new digital technologies, the archetype of an omnichannel consumer, known as an Omni-client, emerges. For example, who expects a brand to be able to offer its services through various channels; they also want to have consistent experiences when switching between the channels provided by the omnichannel business or brand (Gao et al., 2021). In other words, when interacting with an omnichannel business, this type of consumer expects the online experience to be consistent with the offline experience.



In an omnichannel shopping landscape, customers use online and offline channels to complete their purchase process and thus obtain the product, service, or experience they want (Gao et al., 2021). For this reason, the online customer experience and the offline customer experience are critical components within an omnichannel strategy, as both contexts are reflected in the overall Omni customer experience. The research developed by Gao et al. (2021) shows that companies must consider the variations given in the customer experience, through the different online and offline channels, to provide their consumers with a congruent shopping and relationship experience with the brand. Here is the omnichannel experience model created by the authors mentioned above (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Omnichannel Strategy Conceptual Model**



Source: Gao et al. (2021).

The main challenge marked by the presented model is managing and balancing the existing relationship between the offline and online customer experience. As a result, companies that decide to implement an omnichannel strategy will need to find a way to effectively address the potential incongruence around the experience between the two channels.

After having a context of the referenced model, we proceed to define the main elements of the said proposal:

*Incongruity effect:* The incongruity effect refers to the discrepancy between the online and offline experience. Such inconsistency occurs when the online customer experience is better or worse than the offline customer experience (Gao et al., 2021).

*Transparency*: the effect of transparency occurs when the consumer is aware of all the online and offline channels that a company offers. The transparency effect is high when customers are familiar with the omnichannel environment, effectively finding and using the company's products and/or services through its different channels (Gao et al., 2021).

*Convenience*:

*“Channel convenience describes how customers can minimize the effort and time spent on purchasing processes. A high level of channel desirability generates positive attitudes towards companies.” (Gao et al., 2021).*

*Fluidity*: Channel fluidity refers to the consumer's fluidity from one channel to another. This factor indicates how an omnichannel company has eliminated the barriers between the different channels, allowing customers to move between the online and offline channel system with a high level of fluidity (Gao et al., 2021).

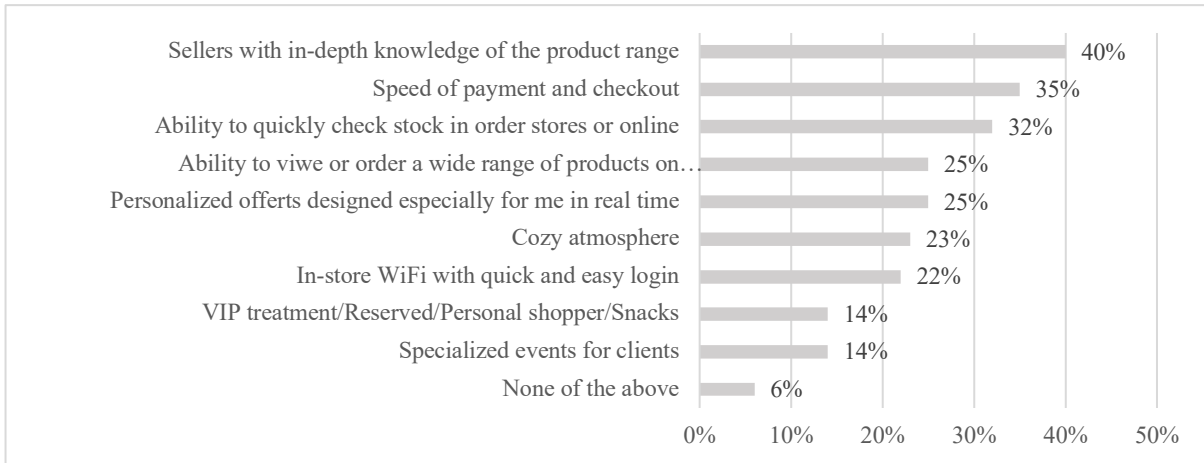
On the other hand, this disruptive irruption of the digital has led to the announcement of a new retail revolution. Although in global terms, the physical establishment is still the king of distribution, many experts have predicted an accelerated and revealing growth for the online channel (Rey et al., 2017). The balance moves between the experts who announce the fall of physical stores and the change of business model for shopping centers, as some assurance that the physical store will not disappear, and that success will be in the way it is achieved. 39  
Merge the physical universe with the digital one.

To better illustrate the above approach, we talk about consumers who, despite being in a digital age, continue to value significantly the sensory atmosphere offered by physical spaces, where kinesthetic aspects are crucial in their shopping experience. These aspects are touching and trying the product, going through the commercial space, interacting with the components that make up the space and interacting with other clients and sales advisors (Rey et al., 2017). Below are the attributes consumers value most when shopping in a physical store in the study carried out by PwC in 2016 (Figure 2).

It is how the digital transformation enhances the role of the physical store based on its omnichannel marketing strategies, which include issues of logistics, communication, price, and technology, among other aspects that cross both ecosystems.

Channel management represents a process of analysis, organization, and control. Each channel must go through this process, assuming that this management can present changes from the total separation of channels or integration (Norbert and Rygl, 2015).

**Figure 2. Attributes that online shopper's value to improve their experience**



Source: Rey-García et al. (2017).

### *Purchasing processes and channel integration*

To better understand the evolution of retail trade, an illustrative table of concepts and the implications that each one contains for channel management is presented below (Table 2).

**Table 2. Differences between a multichannel, cross channel, and omnichannel in the retail sector**

	Multichannel	Cross Channel	Omnichannel
<b>Concept</b>	Division between channels	Partial channel integration	Extended integration of all channels
<b>Degree of integration</b>	None	Allows switching between specific channels and touchpoints.	Total
<b>Channel reach</b>	Retail channels: store, website and mobile.	Retail channels: store, website, mobile, social networks, points of contacts with de client.	Retail channels: store, website, social media, customer contact points.
<b>Focus on the relationship with the clients: Brand vs. channel.</b>	Focus on the customer retail-channel	Focus on the customer retail-channel	Focus on the customer retail-channel
<b>Objectives</b>	Sales per channel, experiences per channel.	By channel or connected channels and points of contact.	All channels work together to deliver a holistic customer experience.
<b>Channels management</b>	Channel-by-channel management and point of contact with the client, aimed at optimizing the experience with each one.	By channel or connected channels. Partial interaction with the brand.	Connected channels. Synergic management of channels and contact points. Holistic experience.
<b>Customers</b>	There is no chance to activate the interaction. Use of channels in parallel.	Partial interaction. Use of channels in parallel.	They can fully activate the interaction. Use of channel simultaneously.
<b>Retailers</b>	No possibility of controlling the integration of the channels.	Partial control of the integration of all channels.	Complete control over the integration all channels.
<b>Sales Staff</b>	Does not suit selling behavior.	They adapt to sales behavior using different	They adapt to the sales behavior using different

		arguments, depending on the channel.	arguments, depending on the customer's needs and product knowledge.
<b>Data</b>	Data is not shared between channels.	Data is partially shared between channels.	Data is shared between channels.

Source: Own elaboration (Mosquera et al., 2017).

After reviewing the differences between the multichannel, cross-channel, and omnichannel concepts, it is pertinent to look at the purchasing process in an omnichannel environment. First, the Consumer Decision-Making Model is referenced, where the process is explained from a sequential mode of stages (Sanabria 2010).

This model shows that the activities carried out by consumers throughout their purchase journey are grouped into three different stages: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase.

In order to clarify each phase, a descriptive table of the phases of each stage of the journey is proposed, where a contribution is generated from the present study, adding a stage between the pre-purchase and purchase process, as well as an emphasis on the process of content. (Table 3).

**Table 3. Consumer Decision Making Model**

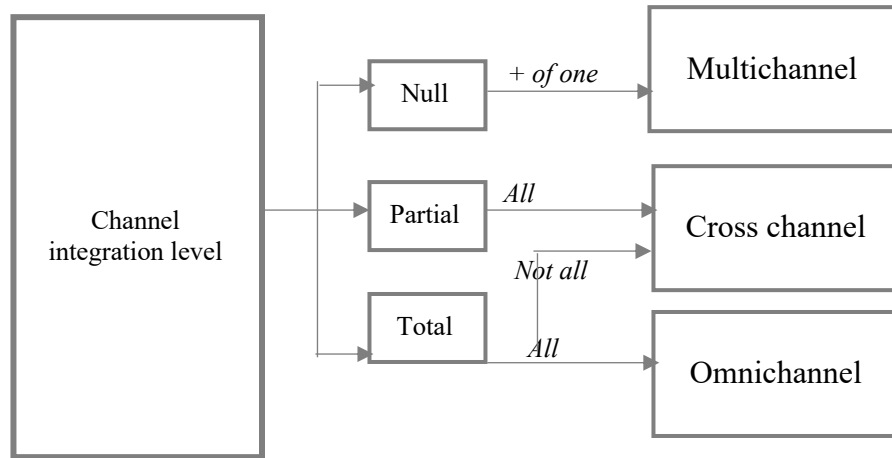
	Pre-purchase	Decision analysis	Purchase	Post-purchase
<b>Phases by stage</b>	1- Recognition of problem.	After evaluation, a more detailed analysis is given, where the information investigates the brand, previous experiences, and comments from friends and/or experiences shared by other clients influences.	Transaction for the acquisition of the product.	Consumption activities and evaluation of the product or service. The WOW (word of mouth) effect is expected.
<b>Content</b>		Inbound content for each phase.		Loyalty program.

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Source: Own elaboration based on Sanabria (2010).

It is how the purchase decision process has benefited from the integration of channels, which gives consumers the freedom to compare various products, prices, and experiences simultaneously, allowing them to make more conscious decisions. In other words, if brands manage to integrate their channels fully, they will be able to interact with their customers, thus providing a relevant omnichannel experience. Below is a diagram that shows the level of channel integration (Figure 3)

**Figure 3. Channel integration level**



Source: Adapted from Norbert and Rygl (2015).

The overview of the presented scheme shows that in an omnichannel model the channels coexist and connect. The user then has the possibility of mixing channels to interact with the brand, and the brand provides a unique and integrated experience in its entirety. Consequently, the barriers that may exist from one channel to another are eliminated, and the customer is left with the freedom to choose the contact or purchase portal they want. The client will be able to access a contact portal, such as a WhatsApp line with the brand; start the purchase process from there, and then finish it in the Marketplace or the physical store.

Kotler et al. (2019) present three steps for the construction of an omnichannel marketing strategy or model:

Step 1: Locating the channels and possible points of contact that the brand has throughout the consumer journey.

Step 2: Identify the most critical channels and touchpoints along the consumer journey.

Step 3: Improvement and integration of channels and most critical contact points.

### *Category of shopping centers and omnichannel processes*

Many experts say that the shopping centers of the future will be authentic micro-cities, and from that vision, each business in the category should be located for the construction of alternative proposals that seduce the community; from infrastructure changes that make it easier for its customers to have a better shopping and stay experience within the facilities, to

sensory experiences and alternatives that make them fall in love; in addition to implementing omnichannel strategies that allow them to be in tune with changes in consumer behavior.

During the year 2020, it became clear that consumers are not only looking for functional and emotional satisfaction in brands but also spiritual satisfaction. As a result, searches are now much more human, and when choosing a product, service, or experience, the human factor is the key (Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan, 2021).

New technologies, social networks, and digital marketing, in general, are revolutionizing the way we reach our audiences. It is the first time in history that five generations have come together with different attitudes, preferences, and behaviors (Kotler et al., 2021). This generation gap represents a new scenario for brands and a challenge in communication.

Shopping centers should guide their communication strategies from TRUST IN THE FACTOR that Philip Kotler planets in his vision of Marketing 4.0 (Kotler et al., 2019):

- Family
- Friends
- Fans
- Followers

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was developed with a qualitative methodology, which allowed an approach in the process of inquiry in the investigation, facilitating the researcher's interaction with his informants.

The study was of an interpretive type under a line of grounded theory (Taylor and Bogdan, 1987) to obtain the necessary components to approach the omnichannel marketing model applied to shopping centers in the city of Medellín. In this way, the researcher developed the necessary concepts for the model; from their understanding of the phenomenon in question, based on the information provided by their informants and interpreting it through a process of constant comparison with the theory that supports the topic in question (Taylor and Bogdan, 1987).

In-depth interviews and focus groups were applied in the study to identify the main variables that make up an omnichannel marketing model. The focus groups allowed us to understand the consumer's vision from their purchase journey, and find the top moments of truth presented along the route (Quintana, 2006). The in-depth interviews, applied to experts, were instruments designed to qualitatively explore the content of the omnichannel experience; understanding the variables that make up an omnichannel strategy, as well as its

implementation tactics and the minimum required parameters that a shopping center that is interested in implementing a model of this type must consider (Taylor and Bogdan, 1987). In addition, a theoretical review and a case study of the Sandiego Shopping Center were carried out, which allowed us to deepen the theory and compare this information with the real experiences of a business in the category.

*Method*

For the study, the development of two (2) focus groups with clients of shopping centers in the city of Medellín was proposed; in order to explore from a qualitative approach, the content of the omnichannel experience that the participants have, to find their points of view, opinions and selection criteria when choosing a communication channel with a shopping center. In addition to their experience along the touchpoints that interfere with the consumer's journey. The following is the technical sheet of the proposed population for the focus groups (Table 4)

**Table 4. Technical sheet focus groups**

Focus groups	Age range	Geographic area	Socioeconomic level	Gender	Omnichannel experience
Focus group A (8 people)	18-35 years	Medellín	3, -4	F-M	Yes
Focus group B (8 people)	36-55 años		4, 5	F-M	

Source: Own elaboration.

For the study, it was necessary for the population participating in the focus groups to have had a shopping experience and/or omnichannel contact with a brand belonging to the offer of shopping centers in Medellín. In this sense, the informants' selection was carefully to filter the population adequately. There was a population of 16 informants, 8 for each focus group. The design of open questions was proposed that allowed knowing broad points of view and opinions of the consumers interviewed. The defined socioeconomic strata corresponded to the most representative population groups for the economy of the shopping center sector, in the case of strata 3, 3+, 4-, 4, and 5 (Mall and Retail, 2019).

On the other hand, two in-depth interviews were planned with experts from the shopping center sector and the omnichannel theme. An expert from ACECOLOMBIA (Colombian Association of Shopping Centers) and an expert in Omnichannel Marketing was interviewed. The following is the technical file of the informants proposed for the interview (Table 5).

**Table 5. Expert interviews**

Experts	Position	Organization	Experience
Expert 1	Rethink Marketing CEO	Rethink Marketing- Spain	Omnichannel marketing, shopping centers, technology, Retail
Expert 2	ACECOLOMBIA CEO	Colombian Association of shopping centers. ACECOLOMBIA.	Shopping centers.

Source: Own elaboration.

The interviews with experts allowed us to focus the analysis of the approach to the omnichannel marketing model from an objective perspective and focused on the current context. Their vision made it possible to identify the critical components in structuring the model, and the fundamental parameters in the implementation process for the shopping center sector. On the other hand, the experts' profiles mix the experience from the shopping center sector and the experience of omnichannel marketing itself, which substantially nourishes the research.

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In order to carry out the research, five stages were presented to arrive at the formulation of the omnichannel marketing model (Castro et al., 2018):

*Stage 1: Marketing theories that make up the development of an omnichannel marketing model.*

For the elaboration of the model, a review of the specialized literature on marketing schemes and models was carried out, which are directly related to the theories that underlie and make up the omnichannel ecosystem.

*Stage 2: Analysis and identification of general variables for the omnichannel marketing model.*

After reviewing the specialized literature, a format was built to analyze and identify general variables for the model. The format consisted of the following fields: theory, author, and variables that make up the theory.

*Stage 3: Definition of the variables indicated for the omnichannel marketing model.*

Starting from the format built for the analysis and identification of general variables for the model, the guides for the focus groups and the questionnaires that directed the interviews to experts were built. The questions for both cases were related to the previously identified variables.



### *Stage 4: Design of the omnichannel marketing model.*

The approach to the omnichannel marketing model was built based on the results of the focus groups, the interviews with experts, the theoretical review reflected in the referential framework, and the case study of the Sandiego Shopping Center; the above from a triangulation of variables.

Therefore, the model presented in the study is made up of factors that start from three perspectives: 1) The consumer's gaze (focus groups), 2) The panorama of the shopping center category (interview with an expert in the category in Colombia and case study of the Sandiego Shopping Center) and omnichannel for this sector (interview with an expert in omnichannel) and 3) The theoretical review on the topic of omnichannel marketing.

### *Stage 5: Sandiego Shopping Center Case Study.*

After carrying out the theoretical review of the topic of omnichannel marketing, the case of the Sandiego Shopping Center was reviewed in detail, based on the importance of knowing the general panorama of the category and taking as a reference the first shopping center in Colombia and which has been a leader in the category.

### *Sandiego Shopping Center Case*

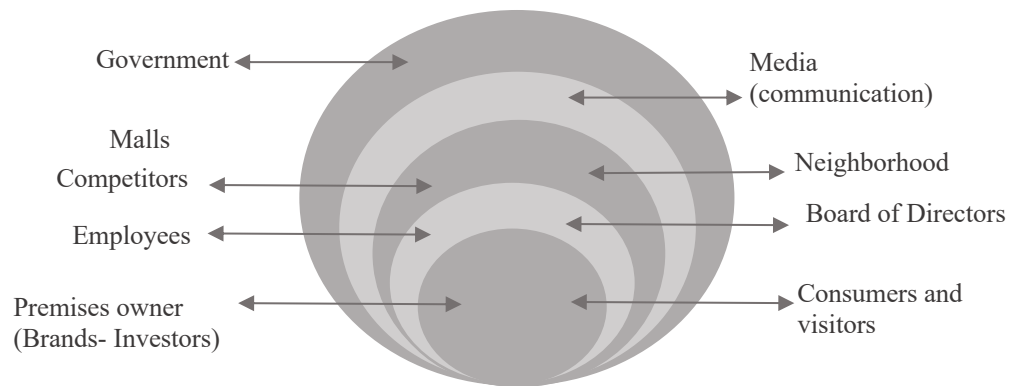
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Sandiego is a shopping center with 49 years of experience in the market. This shopping center operates under the co-ownership modality, which implies a non-profit entity with a large group of owners.

From a communication perspective, the company bases part of its strategies on its track record in the market, mainly defining the brand's DNA. Sandiego is much more than a shopping center. Years of history have made it a benchmark for the city and a meeting point for many citizens.

Over the years, the shopping center has been recognized for the city events that have achieved large numbers, such as the 40 Horas Sandiego (discount promotional event), Bonsai Exhibition, Cheerleaders, and Salsa Festival, among others. In addition, its communication strategies for many years have focused on attracting the masses to the mall; For this reason, its strategy of building city events becomes relevant. Below is the Map of the main Stakeholders of the Sandiego Shopping Center (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Stakeholders Map Sandiego Shopping Center**

Source: Own elaboration based on ethnographic studies developed by Sandiego Shopping Center.

The map above shows the four most representative visitor/consumer profiles for the Sandiego Shopping Center. In this profiling, there is a balance that responds to the theory of the most valuable digital subcultures in the current economy, the JMI: Young people, Women and Netizens (Weinberg, Parise and Guinan, 2007; Kotler et al., 2019)

*Young people:* the first to adopt new technologies, they are generally the trendsetters. This public represents a challenge for the shopping center, understanding that its commercial mix, entertainment, and technology are not comprehensive for this market.

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*Women:* quintessential holistic buyers and information gatherers. A large part of the purchasing decisions of Antioquian households is in their hands. In Sandiego, there is a strong female audience, especially the profile that the organization describes as "The dedicated mom."

*Netizens:* They are known as "social connectors" thanks to their impressive level of connection, dialogue, and communication with the community. This public represents the current economy based on their influence as evangelizers of brands and content. Internet users define themselves as brand prosumers, and constantly contribute their content to the digital ecosystem.

## FINDINGS

In the present study, the triangulation of variables extracted from the methodological instruments defined in the research is carried out: theoretical analysis/case study Sandiego Shopping Center, interviews with experts, and focus groups. Next, we proceed with the triangulation to then present the model resulting from the said analysis:

- The theoretical review allowed us to understand the implementation tactics of an omnichannel marketing model, starting with the steps that indicate the location of the channels and points of contact throughout the consumer's journey. They were followed by identifying of the most critical channels and touchpoints and, finally, the improvement and integration of those critical channels and touchpoints. In addition to this, both the theory and the experts interviewed in the study agree on the importance of synchronizing the work teams that work in each channel, collaboratively merging the teams, from the fulfillment of objectives and management of their budgets. Therefore, the common objective will be to offer the best possible omnichannel experience, maximizing sales and satisfying the consumers.
- The theory points out the 5As of the new consumer journey, defined by Kotler et al. (2019) as the main variables of an omnichannel model. In addition to the integration of the different online and offline contact channels and the detailed reading of the stages of the consumer's journey, to fully understand the omnichannel shopping experience.
- In theory, Gao et al. (2021) proposed an omnichannel strategy model. They point out three fundamental levels within their model: transparency, fluidity, and convenience, components that are executed and evaluated throughout the entire omnichannel consumer experience. Likewise, the Expert 1 indicates that the connection of the offline world with the online ecosystem is essential to developing omnichannel models, providing the consumer with experiences without borders from both ecosystems.
- Both experts, Expert 1 and Expert 2, indicate that developing a loyalty strategy, where the "reward" is given, in an omnichannel model, is essential. It should be noted that the theory highlights the reward systems within the apology phase described in the new consumer journey, where the reward becomes the axis that drives the recommendation by the consumer.
- The theory analyzes of each stage of the consumer's journey as an essential factor in constructing a coherent omnichannel model. In addition, from the perspective of Expert 1 and Expert 2, we talk about the identification and subsequent analysis of each of the moments of truth that occur throughout the customer experience.
- Expert 1 indicates that the use of technology requires the approach of a coherent strategy, that a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system is integrated that allows shopping centers to analyze data intelligently. In order to build strategies aimed at the specific segments that the shopping center wishes to attract. The theory states that CRM is a critical factor in the construction of loyalty strategies and, in general, in the development of omnichannel models aimed at attracting new audiences to the shopping

center, retaining those who already have and supporting those who already have an advanced level of loyalty.

- The experts interviewed presented opposite positions regarding a shopping center as a Marketplace. Those who defend the idea do so mainly by arguing the importance of the shopping center having a direct impact on the sales of its businesses beyond the generation of physical traffic. In contrast, while the opponent to this idea highlights the high level of complexity that it would have for a shopping center to get involved in the sales processes of its stores, in addition to distorting the central axis of the business model of a shopping center.
- On the other hand, there is the theory where absolute and radical positions are not given. However, some theorists affirm the importance of connecting the online world with the offline world and, in the case of shopping malls, being able to carry traffic from one ecosystem to another. Other (on/off, off/on). In other words, showrooming experiences (purchase on the web per visit to the store) and webrooming (purchase in the store per visit to the web).
- Theory and experts agree that the consumer journey is not linear. Therefore, each consumer can organize their journey from a different perspective; For this reason, the brand must build coherent strategies and models that integrate transparency, convenience, and fluidity in each phase of its structure.
- The focus groups point out the importance of navigating freely from each point of contact that shopping centers present, both physically and digitally. In some cases, they were giving prevalence to physical experiences and, in other situations, to the unlimited possibilities offered by the digital ecosystem.
- In both focus groups, conflicting positions regarding online purchases are reflected. Some defend the face-to-face shopping experience at the mall, and some people place more excellent value on the ease of online shopping.

Finally, most participants agree on how rewarding it is to access the purchase from any channel, be it online or offline.

- The Expert 1 points out the following factors as minimum parameters required for a shopping center to implement an omnichannel marketing model or strategy: clear value proposition, technology with strategy, strategy to expand retail sales beyond physical borders, the opening of channels that allow converting a lead into a sale, reward plan and incentives that boost online sales directly from shopping center platforms, instead of independent e-commerce of each retailer. The focus of the channels towards the same

direction. Personalization strategies, implementing a CRM system with strategic vision and intelligent data reading. In the words of Expert 1: “the basis is the ability to store data and use it to encourage behavior”.

- The Expert 2 points out that the shopping center is a physical channel, part of the omnichannel consumer experience. To that extent, he places omnichannel to hold the same conversation online and offline, where the shopping center has a presence on both roads, without getting involved with the retailer's sale. From the theory, there are no specific omnichannel models for shopping centers. However, a generic model applicable to different types of business is presented, where the purchase or transaction does not appear as a critical element.

In the words of Expert 2

*“Instant gratification schemes are phenomenal because you leave with an initial experience free of dissatisfaction. Face-to-face purchases, not online give this” (Expert 2, 2021).*

Unfortunately, this statement is somewhat contradicted by both focus groups, who report feeling instant gratification in both ecosystems: online and offline, even if the product is not in their hands at the transaction, as is the case with online purchases.

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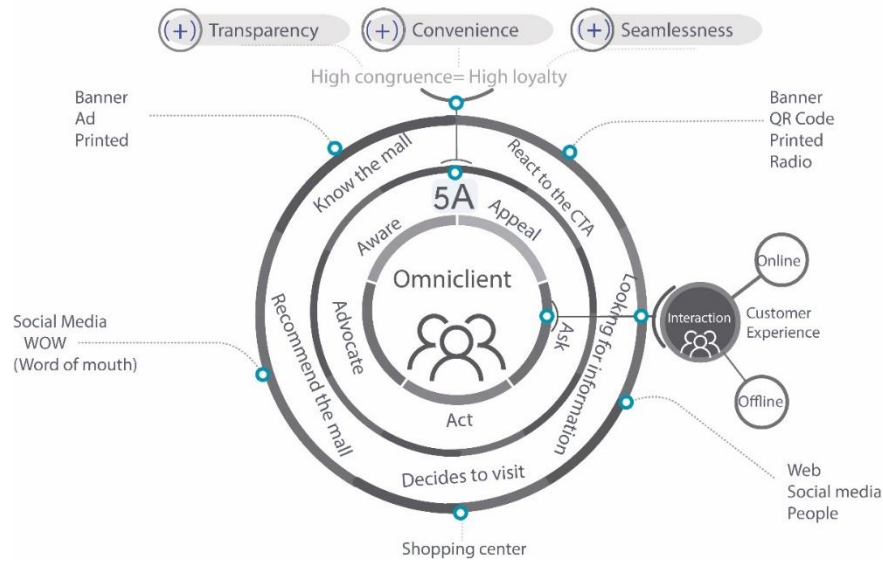
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- "The shopping center is an oasis of security- This is valued more due to the marches" Words of Expert 2. This expert approach is equated with one of the most representative conclusions of both focus groups: the security generated by shopping centers, not only for purchases but also for bank procedures, health procedures, entertainment for the family, and meetings of friends, among other associated activities.
- The map of stakeholders studied in the case of the Sandiego Shopping Center reflects the most lucrative and influential audiences in the digital age. The JIM: Young people, Internet users, and Women.

On the other hand, the arrival of large competitors in shopping centers poses a challenge for the Sandiego Shopping Center. The challenge begins in the way in which the shopping center manages to think from a broader perspective and in coherence with market trends, listening to new audiences, taking into account what they are looking for in fashion, technology, entertainment, experiences and leisure, the new audiences that belong to the millennial and centennial population; in addition to taking advantage of the opportunities that the city of Medellín brings in terms of infrastructure, public transportation and housing development around the shopping center (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. The omnichannel marketing model applied to the category of shopping centers in Medellín**

Omnichannel Marketing Model Applied at the shopping centers.



Source: Own elaboration based on the triangulation of variables of the present study.

The presented model has a circular structure with orbits around it, where the center is the Omni-client, who travels from the 5A, starting from any point and freely building his journey as a consumer. Each phase of the 5A fulfills an objective and, in turn, is made up of different channels, both online and offline. 51

The model has the interaction of online and offline channels as its transversal axis, where the aim is for the Omni-client to remain in the circuit. The model has the primary levels that direct it at the top: transparency, convenience, and fluidity. Likewise, to the extent that the three levels mentioned achieve a positive factor (+), the congruence will be more significant. Consequently, the Omni-customer will have greater loyalty toward the shopping center. While a harmful level in the (-) levels will result in no brand loyalty.

The main challenge in applying the model is to ensure that consumers remain in the circuit, trace their routes, and identify where the online and offline traffic comes from. It is an opportunity for future study, the monitoring of Omni-clients throughout the model, and the identification of friction points between the different channels.

### CONCLUSIONS

- One of the fundamental variables within an omnichannel marketing model is based on the new consumer journey, known as the 5A Journey: Attention, Attraction, Inquiry, Action and, Apology.
- In the model proposed by Gao et al. (2021), the structure of an omnichannel strategy model is presented based on the following factors: transparency, convenience, and fluidity. These elements allow measuring the traceability of the consistency and effectiveness of the integration of online and offline channels, throughout the omnichannel consumer experience.
- The level of transparency of the channel facilitates the control of the purchasing behavior of customers. In addition, this level promotes the satisfaction of the autonomy needs of customers in their purchasing processes. On the other hand, convenience allows customers to minimize the effort and time spent in the purchasing process. Finally, the fluidity effect makes it easier for consumers to move between online and offline channels, reducing effort in switching channels and making their experience more satisfying.
- It is noteworthy that the channel's level of transparency also facilitates the communication process of customers with a brand or business, which can essentially satisfy the autonomy needs presented by consumers. The previous contributes to mitigating the negative effect of inconsistency that can occur in the experience of an omnichannel consumer.
- The Omni-client is the center of the model, and its online and offline interaction may take place in a spiral fashion from the 5A route.
- Integrating online and offline channels deploys different implementation tactics of an omnichannel marketing model. The tactics may vary depending on the business and types of consumers. However, the fundamental elements identified in the study are: simulation of the possible purchase paths of consumers (the most popular paths in the customer segments that the brand has), from the perspective of the 5As; evaluation of the moments of truth given in the pre-purchase phases, analysis of the purchase decision, purchase and post-purchase. Finally, implementation of the model from the factors of transparency, convenience, and fluidity.



- Omnichannel marketing models applied to shopping centers were not found, which means an area of an interesting opportunity in terms of research and applicability in the category. For this reason, the minimum parameters required for said model arise from interviews with experts and focus groups. Which are:
  - Identification of the stakeholders of the shopping center
  - Development of online and offline channels, from an omnichannel perspective
  - Integration of channels under a scheme of transparency, coherence and fluidity
  - Identification of the most popular purchase paths of customers
  - Pilot testing of the channels, based on the most popular purchase paths in their customer segments
  - Identification of the critical points presented in the circuit of the omnichannel strategy
  - Development of a CRM system
  - Socialization of the omnichannel strategy with all the company's teams

A flawless omnichannel marketing strategy lowers channel transition barriers and enables customers to reach their initial goal with less effort; It is there where the moments of truth become necessary from the channel strategy developed by the brand.

- The moments of truth around the omnichannel consumer experience are constantly changing; however, each moment of truth moves from the 5A's of the new consumer journey: Attention, Attraction, Inquiry, Action, and Apology. Therefore, they were transversally locating the online and offline routes for each journey phase.
- The development of an omnichannel marketing strategy implies the integration of the most frequented channels, starting from the detailed analysis of each phase of the consumer journey. It is essential to understand that there may be different combinations of channels. We speak of multiple consumer journeys; therefore, the shopping center that decides to implement said strategy or model must identify the most popular routes within its audiences, understanding that these routes may vary over time. One of the experts agrees with this idea, highlighting the location of the main channels and contact points as one of the first steps when implementing an omnichannel marketing model.
- The consumer's journey throughout an omnichannel strategy is not linear. On the contrary, it is known more in the form of a spiral. The said route is constituted from the 5A, presenting a flexible structure from each phase. The connection of online and offline channels is the basis of said journey. Therefore, the challenge for brands is to permanently identify the possible crossings of channels that make their customer profiles and thus define the most popular purchase journeys within the business.



- The greater control of behavior the consumer has, the greater freedom he will have in his purchasing processes. The customer wants to move between online and offline channels all the time, to meet their purchase or communication objective with the brand.
- Consumers want to combine online and offline channels with brands. Their greatest expectation is to have satisfying experiences in the different channels they decide to use to buy or get in touch with brands. However, satisfaction is not valued only for the purchase. Access to channels in a fluid and transparent manner is also part of the expected satisfaction.

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## Is Organizational Resilience a Competitive Advantage?

*¿Es la resiliencia organizacional una ventaja competitiva?*

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### ABSTRACT

The research aims to investigate and expose what organizational resilience is and to determine whether it is a source of competitive advantage that drives the efforts of leaders and other stakeholders towards competitiveness. A documentary review was carried out for this work. In addition, qualitative research methodological strategies and case study data collection tools were applied. The main findings of this work are that organizations that cultivate organizational resilience have a more significant learning opportunity to navigate through crises, overcome them and transform.

Keywords: Organizational resilience; company performance; resilience and competitive advantage.

Jel code: L25.



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## RESUMEN

La investigación tiene como objetivo investigar y exponer qué es la resiliencia organizacional y determinar si es una fuente de ventaja competitiva que impulsa los esfuerzos de los líderes y demás *stakeholders* hacia la competitividad. Para este trabajo se realizó una revisión documental. Además, se aplicaron estrategias metodológicas de investigación cualitativa y herramientas de recolección de datos de estudio de caso. Los principales hallazgos de este trabajo son que las organizaciones que cultivan la resiliencia organizacional tienen una oportunidad de aprendizaje más significativa para navegar a través de las crisis, superarlas y transformarse.

Palabras clave: Resiliencia organizacional, desempeño de la compañía, resiliencia y ventaja competitiva.

Código Jel: L25

## INTRODUCTION

The economic environment is uncertainly and complexly increasing. Organizations and individuals are usually exposed to contingencies that combine unusual and unexpected events with ordinary events, i.e., disruptions that disrupt all organizational processes and affect stability and growth. The case of the H1N1 epidemic in 2009 and the 2008-2009 financial crisis affected Mexico with an economic recession and the loss of 50% of the currency's value against the dollar.

Global disruptive events affect the stability of organizations; although it seems that smaller ones are the most affected, multinational ones are also suffering the ravages of disruptions. For example, in the United States, in 2009, the General Motors Corporation applied to the New York courts to invoke Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act (EFE, 2019). In 2011 American Airlines also invoked that law. In Mexico, in 2010, union problems, rising fuel costs, and the flu contingency in 2009 led to the bankruptcy of Mexicana de Aviación (Gámez, 2019).

Today, the current and unexpected COVID-19 pandemic has affected the whole world, transforming social dynamics and how organizations operate; this represents an uncertain future and increased risk.

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However, Mexican leaders of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), accustomed to complex situations, have kept their organizations alive. However, at this time, with the pandemic, this stratum of organizations has experienced a loss of economic units; of the 4.9 million micro, small and medium-sized enterprises registered by Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI).

In the results of the 2019 economic censuses. Only 3.85 million companies survived September 2020 (INEGI, 2021; Téllez, 2020). It means the disappearance of 1,010,857 establishments (20.81% of the total), of which 24.92% correspond to private non-financial services, 18.98% to commerce, and 15% to the manufacturing sector.

On the other hand, INEGI (2020) mentions that from May 2019 to September 2020, small and medium-sized enterprises were the most affected; in percentage terms, 21.17% disappeared, and only 20.8% of micro-enterprises. An important fact raised by the Business Demography Study (INEGI, 2020) is the 20.8% of missing economic units, 19.1% used computer equipment, and 10% received financing. Theoretically, we can assume that any organization entering the virtual environment and using information technology and funding in their favor would improve their conditions and competitiveness.

Regardless of size, throughout their life cycle, all organizations face a rapidly changing environment that forces them to engage in change processes, which allows for increased efficiency, value creation, and permanence (Jones, 2008, pp. 22-23). For Daft (2011), change means flexibility and openness to innovation to survive.

In this scenario, leaders have contributed to guiding strategies to respond to competitive challenges. On the other hand, today, in the economic sphere (Meza, 2021; Durán, 2021), academic and political environment, Moreover organizational resilience is often used as a competitive strategy in business. The SME Competitiveness Outlook 2020: COVID-19: The Great Lockdown and its Impact on Small Business study note that small businesses that survive the crisis will face new normality that will be resilient, digital, inclusive, and sustainable (International Trade Centre, 2020).

The research aims to investigate and expose what organizational resilience is and to elucidate whether it is a source of competitive advantage that drives the efforts of leaders and members of the organization towards competitiveness. The questions guiding the study are: What is organizational resilience? Is Organizational Resilience a Competitive Advantage? Moreover, how is Organizational Resilience built? Finally, it is discussed whether resilience forges a competitive advantage and whether its application has generated positive results for those who implement it.

The first part presents the theoretical perspective. Then conceptual generalities of organizational resilience and its controversies, organizational change, and role in fostering corporate competitiveness are presented. In the second section, the research methodology is briefly mentioned. The third part presents the discussion and some cases of organizations that have managed to survive the current context and how organizational resilience triggers organizational change and transformations in business models. Finally, some reflections are presented.

### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE AND CHANGE**

Organizations face an environment dominated by new technologies and unsuspected threats; since the end of 2019, information technology has revolutionized the world in all its areas; these challenges demand new answers. The growing competitive pressures and the rapid adoption and use of information technologies (IT) as a competitive strategy, which in theory provides certainty, require organizational transformations to coordinate the efforts of employees under new working modalities, such as the home office; mainly to serve current clients and attract new ones, in a hybrid context: physical (offline) -virtual (online), as well as to manage the relationship with its sources of supply, with competitors and with the

government, among others. These changes finally disrupt the initial organizational design and move organizations toward new strategies and business models to face the contingencies of the environment to be more competitive.

The main forces for change in a complex, changing, and volatile environment are divided into macro-environmental and micro-environmental details. The former are global forces: economic, political, demographic, social, cultural, ethical, physical/natural, and science and technology; they are forces that bring organizational opportunities but also threats. In contrast, the details of the microenvironment are competitive forces close to the organization.

They are within its marketing system and our suppliers, competitors, marketing intermediaries, customers, and other audiences interested in the production organization and the internal forces. Both types of parties at a given time can affect the organization's ability to serve its markets (Lamb, Hair and Mc Daniel, 2011; Kotler and Armstrong, 2013; Jones, 2008), both offline and online. In this scenario, organizational resilience plays a fundamental role in the competitiveness of organizations. Deloitte notes that resilient organizations have the potential to forge flexible cultures that foster agile strategies and maximize the use of technology (Deloitte, 2021).

#### *Organizational resilience*

Risks and challenges are present in all areas of daily life. Significant challenges were created for organizational life; uncertainty and disruptive events became daily. Chen, Xie and Liu (2021) mention that these events, due to their probability of occurrence and impact, can be of two types: black swan or gray rhinos; the first describes a theatrical event with a low probability of occurrence and significant socio-economic impact, an example of these being the attacks of September 11, 2001, while the second, are high probability crisis and high impact potentials: according to Kelman (2021) are a “metaphor of overlooking how big and obvious is coming”, such as climate change and the COVID19 pandemic in 2020-2021, the latter says the author, there were predictions that something like this would happen and that it was only a matter of time.

However, some organizations survive and grow in adverse conditions, and others do not, so if all economic entities live under the same conditions, what explains why there are winners and losers? Some answers to these questions can be found in the organizational literature. These answers show that the critical factor for the success of some and the failure of others is organizational resilience, i. e., the ability to respond and adapt to change. These considerations derive from empirical inquiry findings from case studies.

In this process of organizational adaptation, individuals personally or collectively face adversities. Based on their skills, knowledge, own experiences, and disposition, they deal with risks; each person can act positively (although they may not) in adversity to achieve



personal balance and contribute to organizational balance. The individual capacity to respond to risks and challenges is called resilience by psychology. In contrast, organizations' capacity to survive challenging situations and extraordinary risks, organizational psychology is called organizational resilience. Organizational resilience also depends on capacities, including cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and relational (Hussein and Olivera, 2021).

All organizations face crises, and adverse events, each of its nature responds in a particular way to the environment. The fact is that some considered resilient organizations are getting stronger because they see the crisis as an opportunity to survive, while others, less resilient, are fading, as is the case with the million Mexican MSMEs that disappeared in 2021 (INEGI, 2021), due to the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Resilience also exists among large companies.

However, in 2020, five multinational organizations went bankrupt; Best Buy closed its stores in Mexico, Sin delantal left the country, Cinemex liquidated more than 140 cinemas, and Aeromexico and Interjet declared technical bankruptcy (NEUBOX, 2021). Others were only affected by decrease revenues without ending up (INEGI, 2020).

The literature review shows that the study of resilience has been applied in different disciplines: Physics, Psychology, Engineering, Ecology, Environmental Science, Organizational Science, Business, and Management.

According to some authors (Fundación Factor Humá.prg, 2010; Cossío, Ortega and Padrón, 2017; Meneghel, Salanova and Martínez, 2013), the initial study of resilience was conducted in physics and engineering to refer to the ability of materials to re-establish their shape after being subjected to external deforming pressures. Meneghel, Salanova and Martínez (2013), mention that the term also reaches psychology because of the interest in knowing the etiology and the development of psychopathology in children at risk.

García and Forero (2018) comment that it was in the 1970s that this research was carried out, which revealed the ability of some infants to recover from adverse events. In sociology and economics, resilience indicates the capacity of communities and economic systems to recover from any type of adversity and catastrophic event (Cossío, Ortega and Padrón, 2017). According to Holling (1973), in the ecological literature, resilience explains the processes of self-maintenance of ecosystems in the face of damage and changes caused or natural (Rogel and Uriquizo, 2019),.

Resilience is not a novel concept in the environment, Bégin and Chabaud (2010) declared that "L'idée de résilience n'est pas nouvelle. Traditional Chinese medicine refers to the ability to live systems to regenerate after a severe injury". In the social sciences, resilience has seen various transformations; in the 1980s, it was thought that "the individual is born

resilient and emphasizes human capacity" (Cossío, Ortega and Padrón, 2017). In the 1990s, it was considered that resilience is learned and results from individuals' interaction with their environment. In these years, the study of organizational stability gained popularity among academics, and research focused on analyzing post-disaster resilience (Chen, Xie and Liu, 2021).

Today, in the 21st century, it is said that resilience is built (Cossío, Ortega and Padrón, 2017). From the above, one might think that stability exists as long as a real threat prevails that coerces the individual and the organization. However, this is relative because all organizations have human capital with resilience. In the different disciplines through which resilience has transited, psychology is one of the fields of study. It has found fertile ground for its development, moving from an analysis of individual resilience to an organizational (or collective ones).

The latter is linked to the field of management because of the need to find formulas that explain and help solve the consequences of the continuous and recent disruptions faced by individuals, both individually and organizationally. Currently, in 2021, research, such as that of Hussein & Olivera (2021), is directing the gaze to investigate the impact of Information Technology on organizational resilience and analyze the role of Big Data (analytics and data visualization) in the digital age, to find new ways to serve customers, improve production efficiency or implement new business models.

The documentary review focused on studying of Resilience from the individual to the collective seeks to answer one of the research questions: what is organizational resilience? To provide a channel for the exposition of the meaning of resilience, we begin with the proposal of the American Psychological Association (APA), which addresses the level of the individual: "Resilience is the process of adapting well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threat, or significant sources of tension, such as family or personal relationship problems, serious health problems or situations. Job or financial stressors. It means "rebounding" from a difficult experience as if you were a ball or a spring" (American Psychological Association, 2011) and coming out well and in better shape.

In terms of organization, some definitions are as follows: according to Meneghel, Salanova and Martínez (2013), organizational resilience is "the capacity of organizations to absorb changes and disruptions, both internal and external, without affecting their profitability and that they even develop a capacity such that, through rapid adaptation processes, they can reap extra benefits from unforeseen and adverse circumstances".

Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000), suggest that resilience is "...a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity". Hussein & Olivera (2021, p. 229), citing Duchek (2020), on the other hand, mention that organizational

resilience is a “phenomenon (social), multifaceted, ...,” it is “an organization’s ability to anticipate potential threats, to cope effectively with adverse events, and to adapt to changing conditions.”

Sanchis and Poler (2014) take organizational resilience and business resilience as synonyms and mention that they refer to the company's flexibility to transform, adapt, and the readiness to recover in an agile and efficient way. However, the authors do not mention that the disposition comes from the organization members since it is through their collaboration that the organizations are built and transformed into places of social interaction where members can contribute to creating a competitive advantage and organizational learning (González and Córdova, 2020).

If resilience is built and learned, it can be said that it is a regular and frequent sociocultural process in everyday life – mediated by symbolic elements – that results from individual and collective interaction. In a context where adversities are faced, learning occurs and results in transformation. In this research, organizational resilience is a dynamic corporate process that challenges individual and collective resistance and directs participants towards positive and innovative adaptation to recover from adverse and unexpected situations in changing and uncertain contexts. The dynamic nature of the resilience process is conceived, in terms of Hussein and Olivera (2021), of organizational-environment interaction.

Resilience considers individuals both individually and as part of a collective group and members of an organization, a sector, and a nation; this implies considering resilience from different levels of analysis. Organizations and individuals have always faced various risks and extraordinary challenges, which is why resilience has been present in human beings throughout their evolution.

In the 21st century, understanding and explaining the processes by which some organizations withstand challenges and competitive uncertainty is imperative. Organizational analysis translates and appropriates the concept of resilience to investigate and explain the capacity of organizations (their leaders and members) to respond to and recover from the contingencies and challenges that overwhelm humanity and affect its survival. The use of this notion in this field, according to Salgado (2012), is relatively new. “It is used as a way of designating the resilience of organizations to an unexpected event... as a trigger for forecasting actions... (and) as part of a strategic process.”

Despite the myriad definitions of organizational resilience in the literature, Meneghel, Salanova and Martínez (2013) and Chen, Xie and Liu (2021), among others, agree that organizational resilience does not have a solid theoretical foundation to understand it and to explain how organizations, individuals and groups manage to cope with adversities and environmental stress, adapt and achieve favorable results. It is said that there is still no

consensus among academics on what organizational resilience means (Sawalha, 2015) and that most research interprets resilience from four perspectives: 1. Capacity; 2. Process; 3. Function and 4. Result.

Chen and others consider organizational resilience from two approaches: dynamic and static. The first considers the perspective of capacity and process, a dynamic and progressive process exhibited by firms in response to crises or adverse situations. Static explores organizational resilience from a results and functional perspective; the first is the ability of organizations to remain adaptive positive in the face of crisis, while functional considers organizational resilience as the ability to adapt to dynamic and complex environments.

The incipient theoretical development of this concept has led different authors to propose ways of analyzing and measuring resilience capacity. Duchek (2020), for example, offers to study the construction of organizational resilience from a model that considers three successive stages: 1. Anticipation; 2. Confrontation, and 3. Adaptation; each presents challenges and obstacles.

The first is characterized by observing and analyzing the environment for signs of potential problems and treating them behaviorally with the support of risk management leaders. Next, organizations must act and prepare for potential risks; the critical factor is resources at this stage. During the coping stage, members of the organization must assume and accept that they are during a crisis.

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At the same time, crisis management teams and their leaders must develop and implement solutions; at this stage, the critical factor is human capital-social resources. The third stage comes after the crisis; once the significant disruption has been resolved at a manageable level, the organization must focus on reflection and learning. Behaviorally, this is the time when risk management leaders implement change initiatives, not only to prevent future crises but also to apply lessons learned and build organizational resilience capacity.

This resilience analysis model requires cognitive actions at each stage to generate and select alternatives and measures and implement the best ones to respond effectively to the crisis. Resilient organizations can only emerge when cognition and behavior are amalgamated. The importance that organizational resilience has acquired in the world has attracted the attention of various international organizations to intervene in its dissemination and implementation through general rules that guide actions and subsequent evaluation of their compliance to grant the corresponding international certifications.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO, 2017) created the norm ISO 22316:2017, Security and Resilience. Organizational Resilience, principles, and attributes

define the “Organizational resilience is the ability of an organization to absorb and adapt in a changing environment to enable it to deliver its objectives and survive and prosper.”

It states that resilient organizations can anticipate and respond to threats and opportunities arising from sudden and gradual changes, both within and outside the organization. This proposal may be helpful for organizations that decide to incorporate ISO 22316:2017 practices into their organizational dynamics. Still, the problem with its implementation is that resilience is a dynamic and continuous process. It may not be possible to regulate and standardize it as cultural components are constructed. That is a process of making sense among the organization members to interpret and resolve threatening events and engage in an organizational learning process for change.

The importance of organizational resilience as a process is also linked to other standards, such as the British Standard BS 25999 published in 2007, which seeks to direct the continuity of the organization in the event of disruptions, which Sanchis and Poler (2014) terms are unexpected disruptions that disrupt the organization or its supply chain. This standard was replaced by ISO 22301; in 2012, and more recently by ISO 22301, Business Continuity Version 2019.

Organizations respond differently to each traumatic event. While adversities are relatively different for each economic entity, unique catastrophic situations that affect the whole world, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, are not ruled out. However, their scale and impact vary in each organization and context. Meeting the challenges requires building a resilient culture and a robust shared value structure that leads to a resilient organization. However, what is a resilient organization? According to Bégin and Chabaud (2010), a resilient organization is characterized by three aspects: 1. Pragmatism to face reality without showing excessive optimism; 2. A shared value system gives meaning to difficulties and challenges, and 3. The ingenuity to innovate, to propose new solutions in the face of unusual events.

They also point out, based on Hamel and Välikangas (2003), that a resilient organization faces four main challenges: Cognitive, be aware of the changes that will affect the organization; Strategic, to imagine new strategic options in the face of a declining strategy; Political, to reallocate resources to new activities and products; and Ideological, to teach a proactive and focused attitude to the constant search for opportunities. They mention that the resilient organization must take a proactive approach, learn from crises to face future challenges, and identify and correct its strengths and weaknesses. Being resilient requires the organization’s capacity to absorb so as not to collapse in the face of shock, the ability to renew to invent a new future, and the power to take ownership of learning processes.

From the above, it can be said that, in terms of competitiveness, if organizational resilience is improved and strategic and operational elements are combined, the organization will be

able to manage risk more effectively. Organizational strength does not stem from risk avoidance but rather from frequent and controlled exposure to strengthen and learn, leading to organizational change.

*Organizational change*

Because the organizational environment is highly changing, organizations in general, regardless of their origin, nature, objectives, and size, in an attempt to adapt – gradually or vertiginously – to the requirements of the environment; economic, technological and social, forge the idea of change among their workers. Ideally, change should be planned, but it is also the case that it is imperative and immediate.

To reduce the fear among members of the organization about the disruption of the status quo, it is theoretically suggested that a culture of change should be instituted where norms and values are shared to respond and adapt to changing situations and, above all, to innovate in ways of working, to generate knowledge, to appropriate new technologies and to help develop new strategies and forms of work. Interaction with all Stakeholders will undoubtedly help strengthen their resilience to the benefit of both the worker and the social system.

Planned organizational change is a process that allows an organization to transform itself, leaving behind its current state, and acquire a new one to be competitive (Jones, 2008). According to Jones (2008, pp. 270-271), change can occur at different levels of the organization:

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- In organizational functions, prioritizing the essential tasks that generate the most outstanding value to stakeholders may change the structure or introduce new technology.
- Through the transfer and appropriation of new technology and know-how (patents), technological capabilities enable the company to create and develop new products and thus capture new markets or improve its production processes. In addition, the quality of its products establishes a competitive advantage.
- Through innovative ways, human capital motivates and organizes it (without neglecting control) to contribute its knowledge and skills to create value for clients and other stakeholders.
- In organizational capacities, a theoretical assumption is that an organization can take advantage of technology by engaging its employees and harnessing their helpful resources, redesigning the organizational structure, and fostering the institution of norms and values that shape a renewed corporate culture.

These levels are interdependent; the alteration affects the others; however, the critical element of change is the human factor. The main challenge will be to reduce resistance to change at the individual and group levels; at the personal level, according to Jones (2008, pp.

276-278), it manifests itself in absenteeism and rotation, little cooperation, persistence in maintaining obsolete habits or behavioral styles, among other. So, the leader must implement strategies to reduce uncertainty and insecurity. At the group level, the leader's challenge is to influence the strength of informal working group rules and foster cohesion and a sense of belonging at (one level) an intensity that facilitates change.

According to the literature, organizational change is a challenging for the leader and its members; changing organizational inertia is not easy, but it is essential to respond quickly and flexibly to market demands. Fostering creativity among workers and steering the organization toward an innovative culture is competitive. Creativity and innovation have been rationalized and accepted worldwide, especially in the production sector, since the competitive environment forces companies to create innovative and quality products, reduce development time and costs, and always create more excellent value for customers.

Today, innovation is said to be something that both organizations and individuals must practice. The culture of innovation is fundamental to facing the changing world in which we are immersed and fostering organizational change. Organizational resilience and organizational change merge into a collective process of constructing meanings and identities. It involves symbolic elements for the survival and adaptation of the organization to the changing environment. According to Shein (1997), change requires leadership activities and shared experiences (people-to-people contact), bearing in mind that the process of change requires organizational resilience on the part of the leader and the ability and will of the members to face adversity and make possible the organizational transformation.

## **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

The qualitative research methodology was used to meet the objectives of the research. A literature review was carried out using different sources of information: specialized texts, scientific articles, statistical reports (from INEGI), websites, and reports from national and international organizations that provide information on current topics and companies around the world, such as Deloitte, Forbes, and journals such as *El Financiero*, among others. The international research results carried out by Deloitte in 2020 were also analyzed.

Methodological strategies of case studies were considered in the assignment, which offers the advantage of an in-depth analysis of the case analyzed. However, there are limitations to generalizing the results (Yin, 2003). Participant observation, in-depth interviews with the owner/CEO of a Mexican company, and qualitative speech analysis were carried out. It describes the actor's experiences based on his perception, words, and particular forms of language. The principle of data triangulation was applied so that several sources of



information and methods were available to collect data and enrich the research (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2006).

## DISCUSSION AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Organizational resilience promotes processes of change within the organization and strengthens the social system's capacity – and of each member of the organization – to respond to adversity and make the organization resilient. Organizational resilience and organizational change are concepts in which learning, and innovation play a crucial role in helping the organization move from one current state to another in better conditions.

Resilience and organizational change are linked to helping organizations reinvent their strategies and business models aspire to a resilient culture, more excellent greater value for stakeholders, and continuously improve and be competitive.

The theory of organizational change discussed in this paper, among others, provides a conceptual framework to explain organizational resilience. This theory assumes that organizations do not remain static and are continually pressured by internal and external forces that condition them to change. Transformations can be planned or presented suddenly and unexpectedly; the former does not immediately change the essence of the organization or the nature of the strategy. Instead, they are gradual, incremental modifications responding to an evolutionary change (Jones, 2008) in which its members are involved to a greater or lesser extent to give the organization the flexibility it needs to innovate.

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In contrast, a drastic and sudden change resulting from unexpected events in the environment, which creates uncertainty among the members of the organization, implies or requires a high level of audacity on the part of the leader or agent of change, to radically alter the way the processes are carried out.

These may be changes in production activity unrelated to previous activities, attention to new markets, disruptive technological change, and Among others, that is to say, a total reengineering of processes in the organization, in terms of Hamer and Champy (quoted by Jones, 2008, p. 283), is the “fundamental reformulation and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements ... in cost, quality, service, and speed.”

An organization does not know if it is resilient, until a threatening event puts it to the test. Being resilient means responding quickly to uncertainty by detonating forecasting and planning processes or changing spontaneously with dramatic and risky changes for the permanence of the organization. In responding to uncertainty, resilience emerges as a long-term sustainable competitive advantage that gives some superiority over the competition. It



constitutes a competitive advantage because it resides in each member of the organization, and competition cannot duplicate it, whereas overall, it results in a distinctive feature that makes the organization different from its competitors.

Today, environmental threats constrain all participants more than ever in the organizational sphere, so it is essential to forge organizational resilience as a strategic weapon for competitiveness. Organizational resilience is a social construct that requires the allocation of meaning by members of the organization and their willingness to take risks to help the organization achieve its objectives. A resilient organization is built on a network of meaningful relationships between members of the organization, processes of identification and construction of meaning, and recognition of their ability to transform reality (Schvarstein and Leopold, 2005).

Resilience resides in people; therefore, organizational resilience must consider three levels of analysis: the individual level, the collective or group level, and finally, the organizational level. Individual resilience is fostered by facing challenges in everyday life and, of course, within the organization in the face of the ups and downs of daily work, today mainly due to the challenges arising from the introduction of new technologies -ICTs-, new forms of work – home office-, new forms of organization – virtual organization-, among others, decision-making and motivation.

Group resilience finds fertile ground in social interaction, collaboration, and teamwork; it is a significant capacity that supports the team's recovery from adverse and demanding situations. On the other hand, organizational resilience resides in the social system and derives from behaviors, perspectives, and social interaction to respond to environmental adversities and dynamically have the capacity to reinvent oneself.

In the current context, the approach to organizational resilience leads us to present empirical evidence. Two examples are addressed; 1. The case of a medium-sized Mexican company that underwent a drastic transformation of its activities at its inception and during its life cycle; and 2. The Organizational Resilience Study by Deloitte<sup>1</sup> (Deloitte, 2021) to 2,260 senior public and private sector executives (CXOs) across multiple industries in 21 countries to examine how leaders and their organizations dealt with the new normal as they make tough decisions, explore new ways of operating, and confront fundamental changes in their strategies.

According to the literature review, it can be stated that the principal agent of change and promoter of organizational resilience is the leader. The administrative theory places him as a kind of hero who guides the organization's destiny. Today, this character plays a fundamental

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<sup>1</sup>Building the Resilient Organization. 2021 Deloitte Global Resilience Report.

role in forging organizational resilience aimed at the recovery of organizations and society worldwide.

Deloitte's study (Deloitte, 2020) entitled "The heart of resilient leadership. Responding to COVID-19", acknowledges that resilient leadership distinguishes successful CEOs from those who do not have five fundamental qualities:

1. Empathy with workers, customers, and ecosystems. Care about the financial performance of the company.
2. Prioritize the mission of the company and have the ability to stabilize it to face crises and find opportunities amidst constraints.
3. Rapid decision-making and decisive actions despite incomplete information.
4. Transparency about the current reality including what they do not know, and the ability to design a future that inspires others to persevere.
5. Long-term focus, glimpse new business models and future innovations.

The resilient leader engages in a dynamic process of disruptive events in three situations: a) when the organization faces the current problematic situation and manages its continuity; b) when it recovers, learns, and emerges strengthened; and c) when it thrives on preparing and shaping the new organizational dynamic.

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In the following cases, the leaders are the ones who promote organizational resilience. In a medium-sized Mexican company, the owner is the one in charge, and in the Deloitte research, the managers or CXOs of public and private companies in different countries oversee it. Organizational changes resulting from building organizational resilience are summarized to learn how organizations and their members are coping with adversities and how they have overcome them. The continuity and growth of the Mexican organization and the testimonies of leaders surveyed by Deloitte regarding the actions taken to adapt, resist and recover quickly allow us to assume that organizational resilience is a critical factor in building competitive advantage.

#### *Empirical evidence*

The Mexican company is a medium-sized entity. It has 68 employees and is part of the automotive sector in auto parts. Although, the company's age and size are variables that are categorized as situational or contingency, it shows a greater formalization of behavior and the consolidation of a bureaucratic structure. The owner of the company, who holds the position of CEO, was interviewed to learn about the company and the organizational change it has undergone during its career and to identify whether there is organizational resilience to face adversity and whether this is its source of competitive advantage.

*Company history:* The Company was founded in 1964, dedicated to producing keys for typewriters of the Olympia brand. It was in operation until 1985 under the command of its founders, two Mexicans of German origin who had extensive experience in the design and manufacture of plastic parts. The relevance of the business was based on the possibility of supplying one of the leading machines manufacturers in Mexico; this technological development was effective from the end of the 19th century to the 20th century. It was beneficial for office work and writers as well.

However, this boom waned despite the efforts of its manufacturers to innovate and develop mechanical machines, electromechanical and electronic. Technological advancement in other industrial areas and the creation of personal computers and word processors soon replaced them. In the 1980s, the use of computers increased dramatically, making typewriters only valid for some niche markets, such as some government departments and secretarial schools.

These events and the desire of the German founders to return to their homeland with their families led them to sell the company (Cordera, 2012). The transfer of ownership to a Mexican businessman took place in 1985; since then, the change process has been a constant of unexpected challenges for the owner. The change defined the stages of the company's development: the first one, which corresponds to the foundation from 1964 to 1985, the second one to the formation, which began in 1985 and ended in 1999; and the third one, the strengthening phase, dates back to the year 2000 and continues to the present day.

*Challenges of the 1st. Stage – foundation:* The Company started operations in 1964, targeting its products mainly German customers. By 1985, the German owners sold the company to a Mexican engineer whose last name is Cordera. The transaction was successful for both parties, and payment was made with the resources obtained from the factory's work (Cordera, 2012). The main challenge was to continue with the dynamic that the company was already doing.

*Second Stage: process reengineering.* In March 1985<sup>2</sup>, Cordera's management started operations, mainly by German clients – through highly profitable contracts inherited from the previous management – who, after three years, refused to enter into a commercial relationship with the company. However, to have it for 24 years: 21 with the Germans and three with the Mexicans. The challenge of losing customers and the problem of having poorly trained staff from the interior of the Republic were among the first challenges the company faced; other difficult moments were the devaluations, mainly because the inputs used in the company were quoted in dollars.

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<sup>2</sup> To show the trajectory of the company, the year 1985 is considered as the starting date, this data was provided by the managing director. However, the official information provided by the staff of the Administrative Management indicates that the beginning date is 1984.

The first evidence of resilience in facing the challenges was the change in the social system. Qualified staff was hired to manufacture of plastic parts and renew the client portfolio. Cordera (2012) mentions that “there challenging difficult years because we had to look for new businesses” (ibid.).

The general manager states that the loss of clients is due to the “classical knowledge that foreigners have regarding the schools their children go to as it gives them a certain confidence which is difficult to obtain when you are not in that environment”.

A social fact can be explained in cultural terms: groups have ties based on identity and belonging. Qualities that give meaning to action.

These events led the owner and the workers to show evidence of organizational resilience by engaging in the process of revolutionary change (Jones, 2008); a radical change in production by entering a production sector utterly different from the original one, the implication of acquiring new technology, new knowledge, hiring highly qualified employees, searching for new markets; more demanding customers, a change that affected all levels of the organization, to achieve survival goals.

Cordera stated (2012), “at first it was to survive, and then we realized that the best way to have some security was by exporting. We looked for many ways to sell to exporters, and the one that convinced us the most was the automotive industry. That is why we are so dedicated to serving this industry. It has a significant advantage: they are highly demanding, and so that eliminates 95% of the competitors who make other kinds of plastic products, so we are left with a very select group of competitors that make us have a certain level to be able to go to this market, and since we use a dollar value it has been very beneficial for our survival ”.

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Despite the company's problems since the year, it began operations, its economic value has increased with the reinvestment. The second phase was completed at the end of 1999 and early 2000. Its achievements have led it to a new phase, the strengthening one, which has allowed it to open a subsidiary in the state of Querétaro.

*The challenges of the 3rd stage: a new beginning.* Since 2000, the company has been directing its commercial strategy towards the automotive industry, which required it to exhibit a certification issued by a recognized certification body. Organizational resilience is evident at this stage when facing the demands of the clients. In this case, the resilience triggers forecasting and planning processes to change their old quality system to the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System because it did not meet all the requirements.

This process took about six years; in 2006, the company obtained the quality certification to enter fully into the auto parts industry, now has more than 60% of its sales in that sector. The director's commitment upon certification is focused on continuously improving the company:

*“Once we decided... to have the system certified... we want and... we wanted it to work (,) our main goal was to make the system work in such a way that we would get benefits and not just a cover letter for automotive projects, and it takes a bit of work to change the culture and make people do what they have to do, but somehow the elements of the system have made us have a better company, nowadays we are with the registration along with the internal audits and audits by the certifying body that guarantees the fulfillment of the requirements and for me one of the most important things that we have today: our commitment to being continuously improving, so that we are always a better company” (Cordera, 2012).*

Facing challenges and adapting to a changing environment is evidence that the company is a resilient organization. The foray into the automotive sector began with a German company dedicated to auto parts; the commitment to it was translated into confidence to consider it as a supplier, and the relationship with the company became a presentation card for other companies in the sector, who know (that) . . . company does not (quickly) give projects to new suppliers” (Cordera, 2012) and know the standards and demands imposed by the company. The enrollment into the automotive industry forced the company to acquire state-of-the-art technology to meet the demand of its primary customer.

Not everything has been hunky-dory for the company because despite meeting quality standards and having world-class clients, contextual conditions have affected its stability and led it to reformulate its markets. Especially the devaluations forced it to look for other types of customers; in 1998, it could supply MABE with knobs for the stoves due to a supply problem. Today it is one of its main customers in the household appliance industry.

In 2008-2009, along with the decline in automotive demand, the company was again exposed to severe risks, which were resolved by diversifying its risk into various markets. As a result of this strategic planning, it now has 60% of its sales in the auto parts industry, 30% in household appliances and the rest in cosmetics and other products.

The CEO points out that one of his strategies for directing his efforts is set out in the Business Plan, which is reviewed annually and covers a medium-term period. It also assesses their strengths and weaknesses. One of the achievements of using the business plan is the entry into the cosmetics industry, which represents the company “. . . Fortunately . . . a fairly stable volume because many things' women will stop buying but cosmetics.” There is one sector in which the company aspires to enter: the medical products market.

The company has strengthened and close relationships with its main customers, which has allowed it to grow. Since 2012, it has had its headquarters in Mexico City (formerly known as Federal District) with 68 employees and 70 in a subsidiary in Queretaro.

The Mexican organization, which produces auto parts, is a resilient entity. Although it has faced various challenges and organizational changes, it has emerged stronger from these events. At first, it made a revolutionary change by voluntarily placing itself in a highly demanding production chain. Through continuous learning and controlled exposure to new challenges, it has managed to build organizational resilience as a competitive advantage.

*Deloitte Resilience Study:* An organization does not know if it is resilient until a threatening event puts it to the test. Under this premise and intending to show how resilience represents a competitive advantage for some organizations, the following are the most relevant results of the Global Study of Resilience in an Era of Disruption, conducted by Deloitte in 2020 (Deloitte, 2021).

The study aimed was to find out how organizational leaders perceive the factors or traits that originate resilient organizations and how their companies are coping with the new normal, the challenges faced by new ways of operating, and the changes in their strategies. The study reports the perceptions of 2,260 leaders (CXO) surveyed, and top-level executives, C-suite executives<sup>3</sup>. These executives were interviewed. The informants are in 21 countries and work in the public and private sectors.

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The results of the study reveal that organizations that overcome unexpected challenges are resilient; they have five key attributes or traits:

- a) They are prepared: (successful) leaders are involved in planning for short- and long-term eventualities. More than 85% of managers whose organizations carefully balance their approach to short- and long-term priorities felt they had taken another (pivoted) momentum to adapt to the events of 2020. However, just under half of the organizations that did not take stock felt the same way.
- b) They are adaptable: Leaders recognize the value of having versatile employees – especially after a year like 2020. The most critical feature executives require of the workforce for the future of organizations is flexibility/adaptability. Flexible employees who are willing to fill any position within the work and adaptable to the organization's strategies are required.

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<sup>3</sup> C-suites include the following executive positions: chief executive officer (CEO), chief financial officer (CFO), chief executive operating officer (CEO), chief operating officer (COO), and chief information officer (CIO). They work together to ensure that companies stand firm to deliver on their plans and policies.

- c) Collaborative: Leaders emphasized the importance of collaboration within their organizations; this accelerated decision-making, decreased risk, and led to innovation. Promoting organizational collaboration was one of the main strategic actions that executives took before and during 2020.
- d) Reliable: Executives understand the challenge of building trust. More than a third of respondents were not sure that their organizations had done an excellent good job building trust between leaders and employees. Successful companies focus their strategy on improving communication and transparency with key stakeholders and exercising empathetic leadership.
- e) Accountability: Most executives acknowledge that the corporate world has a great responsibility beyond the bottom line. Eighty-seven percent of respondents mentioned that they had balanced the needs of their stakeholders, so their organizations could quickly adapt and turn around and respond to disruptive events.

These five attributes of resilient organizations enable them to recover from unexpected challenges by promoting agile and adaptive cultures and implementing and effectively using advanced technology. Deloitte mentions that the five attributes are not immutable, nor do they occur spontaneously. Therefore, they depend on the desire, effort, investment, and action of the organization members to cultivate and maintain them. These are elements of a resilient culture built through social interaction, which requires the assignment of meaning.

The study results suggest that organizations may deliberately build and adopt these attributes to build a resilient mindset and culture that will position them better and overcome adversity. Moreover, while this is possible, the survey results show the importance of how organizations prepare for contingencies. Most of the firms that participated in the study had already made investments in labor and technology, skills that enhanced resilience to outperform competition before and during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Deloitte Resilience Report (2021) found that organizations best prepared to deal with disruptions such as increased competition and technology turmoil in Industry 4. 0, in addition to the pandemic, undertook the following critical strategic actions:

- a. a. Implementation of processes that made it easier for the organization to place workers in different roles depending on the need or interests of the workers.
- b. Establishment of training or job rotation programs to enable workers to be retrained.
- c. Increased use of advanced technology to facilitate the creation of new business models and take advantage of market opportunities.
- d. Diversify revenue streams through the development of new products and services.
- e. Provide employees with flexible work options to support work-life balance.
- f. Invest in new technologies and systems that support remote working.
- g. Diversify the supply chain through multiple suppliers/partners.



Resilience means thinking ahead and doing what is needed to respond to and recover from a crisis. The leaders of the organizations that managed to overcome the catastrophic events of 2020 rely on the resilience of their organizations, and their own, as they bear the responsibility to motivate their members towards a resilient culture.

Other findings of the study reveal the concern of managers surveyed about the events of 2020. For example, 60% believe that large-scale disruptions are likely to occur. They say the most serious is the climate crisis of similar or greater magnitude compared to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disruptive events/social issues which managers anticipate will be most critical for business in the next decade are Climate Change (47%) and Environmental Sustainability. Health care and disease prevention (42%). Education gap; skills and training (39%). Income inequality and wealth distribution (37%). Inequality, racism, sexism (31%). Problems in supply chains (30%). Resource scarcity; oil, gas, water (26%). Food insecurity; hunger (19 percent). Immigration and displaced populations (18 percent) and Sexual problems (8 percent) (Deloitte, 2021, p. 20).

## CONCLUSIONS

Resilience, although inherent in the human being and is formed when the individual faces adversities, today, in the economic sphere, is a new and critical issue because the leaders of the organizations around the world hope to face the future more dramatically contingencies than those currently being experienced. Unfortunately, few leaders knew how resilient their organizations were until the time when they had to respond to the adversities of the pandemic.

The theoretical review provided the opportunity to answer the initial research question: What is organizational resilience? Organizational resilience is a dynamic organizational process that challenges individual and collective resilience and directs participants towards positive and innovative adaptation to recover from adverse and unexpected situations in changing and uncertain contexts.

With the particularities in the trajectory of the case of the Mexican company and the facts discovered by Deloitte in companies that faced adversity in 2020, the question is answered: Is organizational resilience a source of competitive advantage for the organization? As can be seen, the Mexican organization presented is resilient, and through resilience, it has managed to resist and overcome the uncertainty of challenges on its path. The loss of the market and the threat of losing its investment, far from shocking the leader and the company, led them to promote radical organizational changes; the company renewed itself by inventing



a new future, learned from these experiences, and appropriated the accumulated knowledge to grow and consolidate – to be competitive – in a productive sector dominated by large global companies.

An answer to the question “How is organizational resilience built?” In the case of the Mexican company and the resilience study conducted by Deloitte, resilience is built through social interaction and the sense that the participants attribute to it, the desire and willingness to take risks to forge a resilient culture. Resilient companies need to cultivate five attributes and prepare to build resilience, as the Deloitte companies did. It managed to overcome the global health crisis and improve its strategic position in the market.

Definitely, and according to new lines of research that will incorporate the vision of other organization members, resilience is a source of competitive advantage that enables the achievement of positive results by the organizations that cultivate and implement it. In conclusion, a resilient company results from the decisions of a resilient leader in a resilient organizational cultural environment.

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## Empowerment through Femvertising: Reality or Myth?

*Empoderamiento a través de la publicidad feminista ¿realidad o mito?*

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### ABSTRACT

This article studied female empowerment and stereotypes through femvertising. Empowerment and stereotypes were characterized by the roles generated by the sexual division of labor, developing a qualitative analysis through the perception of young Mexican women. The challenges of this advertising strategy were identified as the role of messages and content. The results suggested the construction of new stereotypes without modifying the patriarchal structure.

Keywords: femvertising; empowerment; stereotypes; women; communication.

Jel code: M37



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### RESUMEN

En este artículo se estudió el empoderamiento y los estereotipos femeninos a través de la publicidad feminista. Se caracterizó el empoderamiento y los estereotipos con base en los roles que se generan de la división sexual de trabajo, desarrollando un análisis cualitativo sobre la percepción de mujeres mexicanas jóvenes. Se identificaron los retos de esta estrategia publicitaria, así como el papel que tienen los mensajes y contenidos. Los resultados sugieren la construcción de nuevos estereotipos sin que con ello se modifique la estructura patriarcal que la propia estrategia cuestiona.

Palabras clave: femvertising; empoderamiento; estereotipos; mujeres; comunicación.

Código JEL: M37.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, feminist movements worldwide have caught the attention of diverse spaces that have transcended academic and political discussions and accompanied several actresses who have openly defended the cause. As a result, feminism has been incorporated into their public speeches, which have simultaneously echoed among young women, who have become visible, and organized through support networks and collectives.

In this context of acceptance of feminism and social demands for the need to make women visible, a new advertising strategy called femvertising arises.<sup>1</sup> It seeks to break with the traditional representation of women in advertising content and demystify the stereotypes and traditional roles in which they were represented, accompanied by an emancipatory discourse. In addition to discarding negative representations of women and breaking stereotypes, this strategy incorporates a positive message regarding them. It also promotes advertising with social responsibility that questions the status quo of gender and female empowerment (Menéndez, 2019).

Femvertising has undoubtedly translated into better results for companies (Abitbol and Sternadori, 2016; Kapoor and Munjal, 2019), and this is the result of the claims of the urgent need to break with sexist advertising content. Nevertheless, it would be biased not to recognize how the market's interest in benefiting from social movements that, on many occasions, has been documented, makes one suspicious of the true intentions of advertising proposals (Gómez, 2016). For Jalakas (2017), femvertising reflects a banal concept wholly detached from women's empowerment philosophical and political objective. For Menéndez (2020), it can be called feminiwashing of a brand to gaining women's trust and adopt a politically correct stance before society, so that this advertising strategy, far from empowering women, contravenes the political agenda that pursues the genesis of feminism.

However, for Codeluppi (2007), advertising cannot be qualified as good or bad since it can only become destructive if misused or intended to deceive through it. Nevertheless, given the social role it plays in communication, it is possible to recognize that advertising messages are capable of constructing or modifying the perceived reality (Caro, 2014).

Thus, this research sought to recognize the perception that young women have of femvertising and its role in empowering and perpetuating or modifying female stereotypes

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<sup>1</sup> The neologism femvertising is the sum of the words *Female* + *Advertising*, which translates as feminine or feminist advertising.



## Empowerment through femvertising: reality or myth?

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through advertising. Therefore, a qualitative study was carried out to investigate the meaning that the messages and the image used in advertisements represent for them.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Defining Femvertising*

This type of advertising strives to offer an emancipatory discourse and show its social responsibility (Menéndez, 2019) by positioning itself against sexist content and gender stereotypes, which, through campaigns in favor of women's causes, seeks to promote equality, genuine appreciation, and empowerment of girls and women. The challenge of femvertising lies in demonstrating a commitment to social change above commercial interests. This concept had its antecedents in 2014. SheKnows Media created it, defining it as "advertising that uses pro-female talent and messages and content that seeks to empower women and girls."

For Becker-Herby (2016), this advertising stands on five pillars: 1) the intersectional use of women by including in its advertising content women of different races, weights, body shapes, and ages, who are depicted in natural settings and contexts; 2) Messages in favor of women seeking inspiration and empowerment by generating feelings of affirmation, self-confidence, and motivation; 3) Challenging traditional gender stereotypes by showing women in a variety of spaces and activities not associated with their gender; 4) Downplaying sexuality by reducing cleavage, make-up, sexual poses; and 5) Portraying women authentically, keeping congruence between the image, the message, and the advertised product.

Some critics of femvertising point out that it is not a movement in favor of feminist causes but arises under the logic of advertising agencies that appropriate some feminist elements resulting from contemporary social tensions, where advertising can rarely be considered genuine (Lazar, 2006), and the brands themselves dismiss it as a philanthropic social movement (Becker-Herby, 2016). For Zeisler (2016), this strategy reflects the risk of heeding the call of market feminism<sup>2</sup>. Where young women's enthusiasm to adopt this modern label, ends up depoliticizing feminism.

The positions in favor of femvertising focus on the authenticity of the brands. In contrast, consumer behavior is interested in the products they question and the motives and intentions of the brands. In the case of femvertising, moral authenticity is intended to be communicated

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<sup>2</sup> Zeisler (2016) uses the term *marketplace feminism* as a synonym for *commodity feminism*, but the theoretical premises of formulation are the same.

by the way women are shown in advertising and the feelings of realism that these signals provoke (Becker-Herby, 2016).

Indeed, it is complicated to answer the rhetorical question about the existence of feminist advertising, given the theoretical contradictions of both premises. However, it is possible to recognize that this advertising strategy seeks brands to transform historical advertising content to break stereotypes derived from the sexual division of labor, for instance, objectification, hypersexualization, and the standard of feminine beauty, by using messages close to women's realities, which project a new individual and collective reality for women.

#### *Femvertising as a tool for female empowerment*

Women's empowerment has been used for different demagogic and cultural purposes. As a result, advertising agencies have included this concept in their business strategies. For Martínez (2017), empowerment processes should lead women to train self-esteem and assertiveness so that they can live with personal autonomy. However, this process should not only be carried out in the individual dimension of their lives but generated simultaneously with the context in which they interact, so their social dynamics should also be included. Hence the importance of recognizing the plurality of roles and spaces in which women of the 21st century are inserted so that advertising has been forced to modify its status quo and redirect both its contents and its messages. All of this is in order to contribute to the empowerment of women. It is precisely from this new vision that femvertising emerges as a strategy for advertising that replaces lewd and sexist archetypes with messages that empower women (López and García, 2019).

Femvertising seeks to show women a reality that counteracts patriarchal paradigms. It is the spokesperson of empowerment through egalitarian content (Ojeda, 2016). It promotes a feminist message, and it breaks with the stereotypical representation of women (Pérez and Almanzor, 2017). From both of them, women's identity and social perception are modified, but, above all, the one they have of themselves.

#### *Roles and stereotypes in femvertising*

Since the seventies, gender roles in advertisements had a marked tendency toward women as sexual or decorative objects, like mothers or responsible for the care of the house or children, dependent on men, weak and unintelligent (Bigné and Cruz, 2000; Chacón, 2008; Osuna, 2011). However, they did not leave aside other traditional roles. The four categories of stereotyped roles for women in that decade were linked to 1) women's place is in the house, 2) women do not make important decisions, 3) women are dependent on men and need their protection, and finally 4) men perceive women as sexual objects.

By the 1980s, an almost invisible trend of independence and equality began for both men and women. Nonetheless, advertising continued to privilege men in professional roles and

scenarios outside the house. On the other hand, women were advertised with domestic products. However, in the 1990s, the change in the use of stereotyped roles in advertising increased to the point of visualizing inverted roles where men were found with traditionally feminine roles, and there was a precise balance between the roles they represented and the products shown in advertising (Bigné and Cruz, 2000). This path toward the search for authentic and equal representation has been slow but progressive. Moreover, it has caused women to be more critical in their opinion about the representation of the roles that appear in advertisements, in which they strongly point out discrimination and raise their voices against the brands that promote it.

However, due to women's demands through different channels for the reality to be communicated, brands promote the femvertising advertising strategy that breaks with the stereotyped cognitive structures. The standards of physical beauty and the traditional roles observed for decades now show new models of empowered women, leaders, active, independent, and professional women (Moral, 2000). The first brands that deployed their femvertising strategy were those that sold products oriented to the female market. They showed natural women. They bet on diversity with different physical complexions and of different races or skin tones. Lately, other companies - with products more oriented to the male market- have joined the strategy, considering the evidence that defending women can have a positive impact on the growth of the company, the purchase intention, and on-brand loyalty (Abitbol and Sternadori, 2019; Davidson, 2015; Iqbal, 2015). As a result, more and more advertising messages aligned to the femvertising strategy are observed. The common denominator is women in public spaces, who are diverse, and with the power to make decisions.

## METHODOLOGY

This study sought to recognize young women's perceptions of femvertising and its role in empowerment and the perpetuation or modification of female stereotypes through femvertising, so the most appropriate approach for this purpose was a qualitative one (McCracken, 1988). Furthermore, to seek answers to the research questions, focus groups were chosen as they provided significant flexibility in the design and allowed participants to clarify their ideas and opinions (Stewart et al., 2006; Wimmer and Dominick, 2010). Therefore, this is exploratory research, which is conducted through focus groups.

### *Participants*

Mexican women between 18 and 24 years old. They belong to socioeconomic levels C, C- and C+ that are identified as the country's middle class. They represent approximately 40% of the population (AMAI, 2022), who are characterized by having more excellent stability, capacity to establish vocational and social commitments, but, above all, are more susceptible

to social change and the development of positive actions on behalf of themselves and their environments (WHO, 1986). Therefore, they are close to femvertising as the profile to which this strategy is directed.

#### *Selection of the research corpus*

The selection of the research corpus was based on the similarities between the brand and its cause-fit, the visual and auditory framing, and the message. As a result, three advertising campaigns from 2020 and 2021 for consumer products aimed at young women were chosen. Its language is Spanish for Mexico. They can be played both from the official pages of the brands and through YouTube. The first one was the campaign "Let us be clear" of the brand Sprite (a soda), in which the protagonist shows different activities she performs during the day and the way she takes on the challenges she faces. The slogan she presents is "Small actions, big achievements."<sup>3</sup> The second advertisement was "From invisible to invincible" of the brand Secret (a deodorant).

It shows different women performing leadership activities historically associated with men. The slogan it communicates is "Change to Secret and do not sweat, move forward."<sup>4</sup> Finally, the third one analyzed was "We are all influencers" from the Natura brand (cosmetics). It shows a diversity of women in different aspects, including skin color, physical structure, and age, who try to inspire other women. The slogan used is "We are all influencers."<sup>5</sup> The three ads show characteristics that classify them as femvertising advertising.

#### *Procedure*

Two focus groups were conducted, in which 6 and 8 women participated, respectively. These groups were made up of participants who previously knew each other to generate greater trust to motivate discussion and present their ideas on the subject (Krueger and Casey, 2000). The sessions were held in the evening, using the ZOOM tool due to the restrictions on face-to-face work due to the health contingency. Each session lasted approximately 120 minutes and was led by a female moderator of the same sex as the participants, as previous work documents that this decision leads to an open and honest conversation (Morgan, 1997). Each session was recorded and transcribed verbatim. At the beginning of each group's discussion, the moderator welcomed the participants and explained the purpose of the research. Then, the three advertisements with femvertising content were shown. After showing the ads, questions were asked regarding their opinions about each one.

#### *Data analysis*

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<sup>3</sup> Sprite brand campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZqPe9ZNx5E>

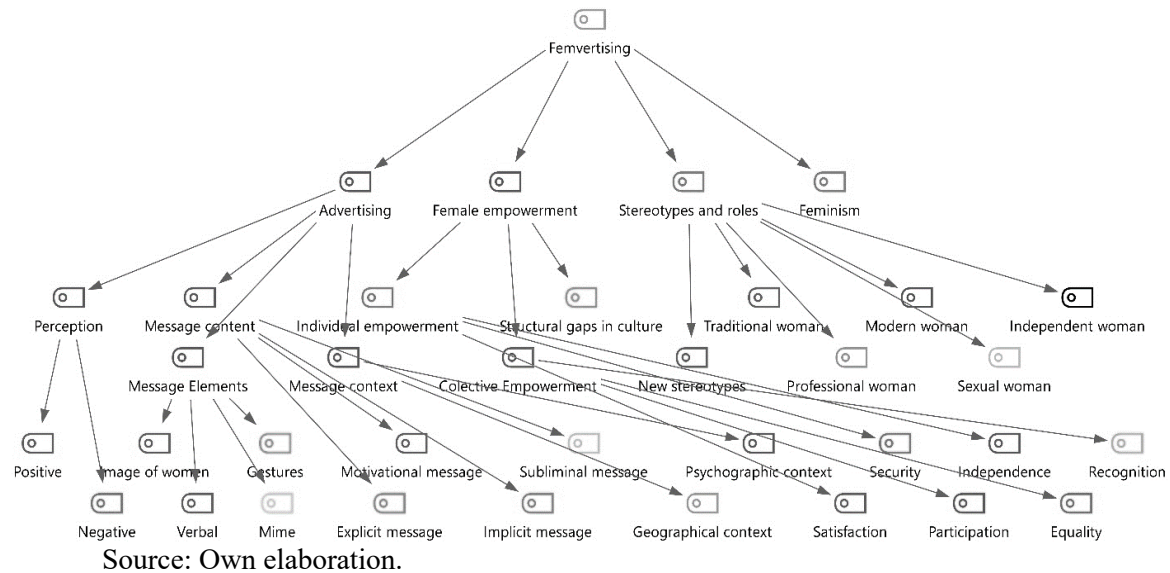
<sup>4</sup> Secret brand campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBatKz1CskM>

<sup>5</sup> Natura brand campaign: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrT-z0IrYa4&list=PLlLel0J\\_R8hMC8YLVxxlLgZ6kL45PLv6X&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrT-z0IrYa4&list=PLlLel0J_R8hMC8YLVxxlLgZ6kL45PLv6X&index=2)

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In order to reduce difficulties and systematize the results, MAXQDA software was used to analyze of the qualitative data. The transcripts of the discussions were coded following the grounded theory methodology described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). They were first coded from the established theoretical dimensions (femvertising, advertising, stereotypes, roles, and empowerment). Then, they were recorded to identify new conceptual themes (structural gaps in culture and feminism). Finally, the topics were reduced by combining identified theoretical concepts (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Codes of the dimensions for the qualitative analysis.**



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the analysis of the results, the codes were grouped by category, as shown in Table 1; in this stage, the frequency in which they appear in the participants' speeches is shown, where the perception of advertising was present in both groups, as were stereotypes and roles, while individual empowerment has a more significant presence in the speeches than the collective dimension. Figure 2 shows the frequency of the analysis codes represented by the intensity and size of the words.

**Table 1. Frequency by categories of analysis in speeches**

Code	Focus 2	Focus 1	Total
Femvertising	0	0	0
Femvertising\Feminism	7	1	8
Femvertising\Advertising	0	0	0
Femvertising\Advertising\Message context	16	18	34
Femvertising\Advertising\Message content	26	17	43
Femvertising\Advertising\Message Elements	39	7	46
Femvertising\Advertising\Perception	52	50	102
Femvertising\Stereotypes and roles	36	27	63
Femvertising\Female empowerment	107	117	224
Total	283	237	520

Source: Own elaboration.

**Figure 2. Word cloud with the frequency of codes and categories of analysis.**



Source: Own elaboration.

Concerning the frequency of the categories by codes, the interrelated presence of the codes and the meaning of the discourses in the participants were sought. Table 2 shows that the perception of the femvertising message is associated with the psychographic context. At the same time, the structural gaps for empowerment are identified with greater intensity in the verbal elements, the image of women, and the context in which the advertisements are presented.



Table 2. Interrelation matrix of the codes with the highest frequency in the speeches.

<b>Code System</b>	<b>Structural Gaps in Culture</b>	<b>Social Equality</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Personal achievement</b>	<b>Decision Capacity</b>	<b>Feeling of Accomplishment</b>	<b>Opinion about herself</b>	<b>New Stereotypes</b>	<b>Psychographic Context</b>	<b>Image of Women</b>	<b>Elementos verbales</b>	<b>Negative Perception</b>	<b>Positive Perception</b>
<b>Decision Capacity</b>	1	3	5	4	0	6	6	5	1	2	0	1	5
<b>Psychographic Context</b>	8	0	2	2	1	1	2	3	0	5	6	10	10
<b>Image of Women</b>	8	3	3	3	2	2	3	8	5	0	2	2	4
<b>Structural Gaps in culture</b>	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	2	8	8	13	6	6
<b>Feeling of Accomplishment</b>	0	1	9	9	6	0	8	1	1	2	0	1	8
<b>Opinion about herself</b>	1	1	4	5	6	8	0	1	2	3	0	1	7
<b>Leadership</b>	0	2	0	5	5	9	4	1	2	3	0	0	7
<b>New Stereotypes</b>	2	3	1	1	5	1	1	0	3	8	0	2	6
<b>Personal achievement</b>	0	1	5	0	4	9	5	1	2	3	0	1	5
<b>Negative Perception</b>	6	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	10	2	8	0	5
<b>Social Equality</b>	3	0	2	1	3	1	1	3	0	3	1	1	3
<b>Positive Perception</b>	6	3	7	5	5	8	7	6	10	4	7	5	0

Source: Own elaboration.

From this point on, the interpretative analysis of the participants' discourses began to recognize the perception that young women have of femvertising and its role in empowerment and the feminine stereotypes constructed through advertising.

In this sense, for Becker-Herby (2016), femvertising arises at the moment when experts notice the demands of women who are part of the new generations for a change in the representation of the female image. A situation that was found to be present in the discourses of young women who were part of the object of study of the present research:

*Well, I think that compared to ads from previous decades... because I have seen the typical ads of the housewife from the 50's and the husband reading the newspaper or watching TV, I think they have changed a lot... but there are people, for example, women of a previous generation or older, who already see it as usual. The reality in which we are living is not like that... maybe that's why they call us the crystal generation, right? Because we are offended by everything, but it is just not right... previous generations take it for granted (Participant 1, 2021).*

When discussing the perception of the femvertising message of the three advertisements that were part of the research corpus, the women who participated in the focus groups pointed out that both the messages and the image of women showed a new reality. For Becker-Herby (2016), this advertising leaves aside the traditional beauty standards and represents women in real scenarios. However, the participants do not recognize that this advertising breaks with those standards since they state that the image of women in the advertisements is far from their daily lives:

*They always show us messages of women who are already entirely successful, and I feel that there is also a lack of women working in a place that is not there yet, women who are studying... I think that in some cases there is also a lack of inclusion in the sense of image because, for example, in Secret, I think they were all if I am not mistaken, white women with more or less the same complexion... with the same standards of beauty (Participant 2, 2021).*

However, all participants recognized themselves in the messages of the second ad (Secret), which uses dissonant phrases with negative messages about stereotypes arising from the sexual division of labor between men and women, and then presents women breaking them:

*The one that caught my attention the most was the second video (Secret) because I feel that it emphasizes all these stereotypes that women have, such as you cook or you are there because she got involved with someone or things like that... but they turn it around and change that perspective, like the keyboard... (Participant 3, 2021).*

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For Menéndez (2019), the role of femvertising focuses on designing campaigns in favor of women's causes, in which equality and appreciation of their reality are promoted, and they contribute to the empowerment of girls and women. The perception of empowerment within the content of this advertising strategy was analyzed. The participants recognized that it is present in different ways. First, through the images and then through the messages shown in the advertisements:

*The use of these phrases "she is on her days" and "she sure slept with someone" is like to remove the labels that women have...besides, I think they could also be used to motivate women to get out of where they are pigeonholed (Participant 4, 2021).*

In these reflections, it is possible to identify that young women recognize an emancipating discourse in advertising content, which could be considered campaigns in favor of women's causes in which they seek to promote equality and the reality of their stories. As Menéndez (2019) mentions, it is positioned against sexist content. However, the latent risk described by Gill and Orgad (2017), where this empowerment is based on the inner work and the confidence generated regarding the image of the body and the capabilities of women, is present. It loses sight of the political concept of empowerment:

*I feel that when they want to empower women, they begin to pigeonhole them in certain new stereotypes that it is convenient for companies to have... Then, more than anything, society itself shows the type of women we should be and does not reflect the type of women who are*



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*in everyday life and only these (the first ones) are shown in advertising... So, I feel there is a great need to include this reality in this type of ad (Participant 5, 2021).*

At this point, it is also essential to recognize that although indeed, brands do not have an advertising vocation that promotes structural social changes and the true intentions of companies can be discussed, young women recognize the efforts of these companies to change the image implicit in male subordination relations as identified by Pérez and Almanzor (2017):

*I see that they have a relationship with corporate social responsibility...mmm since they seek to empower women, and the situations they give are for you to identify. Because, I think the situations are obvious, and at least one of us in each one of them identifies ourselves and it seeks to raise awareness among women and also to see a new way for them to empower themselves. Because there are many women who still feel that they are less than men, and these situations help them realize that it is not normal. Well, it is not correct (Participant 1, 2021)*

Regarding the dimensions of empowerment analyzed within femvertising (Martínez, 2017), it is possible to observe the presence of both individual and collective dimensions in the discourses of young women. In the individual dimension, security, independence, and satisfaction are identified:

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*I feel that the second video (Secret) transmits like independence and... also like self-confidence and leadership. In the first one (Sprite) I feel like it even conveys rebelliousness... and in the last one (Natura), I feel it conveys... I don't know... I feel it's like security and freedom... (Participant 6, 2021).*

Meanwhile, as part of the collective dimension of empowerment in femvertising, participation, equality, and recognition can be identified through their narratives:

*I want to focus on the third one (Natura) because I saw that the women in this video supported each other... and it reflects something of what the feminist movement is... which seeks for women to be united in the face of many things (Participant 7, 2021).*

It is possible to recognize what Yániz (2007) calls submission a lifestyle in some femvertising advertising content. This one considers inevitable that an attitude without subjugation is promoted in empowerment:

*The one I noticed the most was the woman who was tattooed in the second ad (Secret)... she totally caught my attention because I don't know, now I think about her...mmm she transmitted to me that she is a woman who is like ungovernable, you know? Like she is very determined, like she knows what she wants, she knows which people she wants in her life and which ones she does not (Participant 8, 2021).*

Another dimension was identified about the empowerment messages in femvertising, which was denominated as structural gaps. These gaps recover the narratives of the participants in

which it is recognized how cultural, social, and economic aspects mark a difference between men and women and how this is reflected in the advertising content:

*For me, the phrase that struck me is the one about "sure it is in her days" because it always seems that our emotions and those of all women are always subject to our menstrual cycle or our gender when this is not the case (Participant 1, 2021).*

Regarding stereotypes and the roles associated with them, young women recognize that there are still people who look down on women with discriminatory comments, in which they generalize attitudes or actions that are deficient or unattainable for them.

*I feel that at some point we have all been made to feel lesser or they say to us: all women don't know how to drive. You go with a name in the car and someone stops and they say "surely she is a woman" or "they should just stay home and cook" (Participant 3, 2021).*

Indeed, these comments have been normalized in some generations. However, these seem to be totally out of the current context for young women. Nevertheless, in Mexico, they are cognitive structures associated with the culture and macho society that prevails in different parts of the country (Uresti et al., 2017), where activities are assigned based on biological sex and stereotypes imaginaries are built.

While it is true that the participants do not identify modifications in beauty standards, they do perceive new stereotypes based on the roles that somehow reflect women with different physical characteristics, self-confident, ungovernable, with leadership, empowered, fresh, but who are also mothers:

*The third video (Natura) transmitted to me a context of women with very different realities and very different styles, but each one of them, even though they had very different styles. I could see that they felt good where they were. The same in the second video (Secrets), women working in places where historically women have been told that we are not made for that (Participant 1, 2021).*

Stereotypes of women shown in advertising continue to be kept in the social expectations of what is considered correct or is a trend. So, for example, now presenting women naturally is an excellent nice thing, without brands taking the risk of showing intersectional women that reflect their race, economic position, and the contexts of the reality they interact with.

In this sense, it is possible to question femvertising, since the authenticity of brands and advertising agencies arouse suspicion in consumers when they perceive a lack of honesty (Menéndez, 2020). The participants recognized that, in this type of advertising, some messages present a false discourse, which, in seeking empowerment, presents situations far from reality and with prefabricated messages that are not very credible:

*The first one is like fake (Sprite)... I feel it is like fake and saying the stereotypes of what it should be, how to be a woman like that... where now, ugly is beautiful. For me, I understood*

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*that brands do it to pretend they support the cause or just because it is trending and use it to their advantage to promote products (Participant 9, 2021).*

As Menéndez (2020) points out, another aspect that should be taken into account when studying femvertising is the increase in "awareness of the use of gender stereotypes" (p. 254) since the new generations express that they do not feel comfortable with the representation of themselves in advertising. A situation that arises from feminist claims and that, in turn, converts them into consumers, which impacts on the advertising strategies of the brands. In this case, the participants recognize in the advertisements the primary intention of selling the product and even point out that the brands seek to build new stereotypes, taking for granted the lack of capacity of women to make their own decisions since they are shown in activities in public spaces, omitting the possibility of choosing the activities of private life, such as home and care.

*I feel that women who choose to stay at home being home makers, taking care of the house and taking care of the children cannot also be pushed aside (Participant 10, 2021).*

Finally, these results lead us to reflect on the true intentions of femvertising and its empowering discourse and its role in modifying of stereotypes, which encourage consumption and move away from the political objectives pursued by feminism.

## CONCLUSIONS

Not only does Femvertising seek to break with gender stereotypes and traditional beauty standards, as well as with the imaginary related to extraordinary women making superhuman efforts in order to access emancipation, but also it seeks to empower women through narratives by incorporating the intersectionality of women in advertising content with messages that turn out to be inspiring and inclusive that generate confidence and improve self-esteem, challenging traditional gender stereotypes and downplaying the hypersexualization of the female image, in a way that shows the congruence of the ad with the product and the brand (Becker-Herby, 2016).

The results of the empirical work allowed recognition that the advertising contents that were part of the research corpus are identified as femvertising advertising, and even when a negative perception was present due to the use of stereotypical phrases and traditional beauty standards about women, there was also a positive response from the participants towards the openness of the brands to not objectify women and include inspiring messages that contribute to their empowerment processes.

It is essential to point out that although women favor these new contents and advertising messages, they are skeptical about the fundamental objective pursued by the brands in joining

the contemporary social demands without seeking to modify the patriarchal structures that are part of the demands of feminism. However, the intention is to encourage consumption through an unclear strategy that does not reflect a real sense of corporate social responsibility.

Finally, within the fieldwork narratives, it is recognized that young women are concerned that brands are more concerned with breaking traditional stereotypes and configuring new roles for women's participation and development than with their capacity to make individual decisions. In other words, cultural prejudices are maintained, in which it is assumed that women can be influenced and manipulated and that their capacity to exercise their productive and reproductive rights is minimized.

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## FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

*Business Analysis and Financial Ratios*

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Business analysis began its development by supporting its activity in indexes, quotients or financial ratios, also known as ratios. Financial ratios are ways of comparing and investigating the relationships that exist between the different elements of the financial information of organizations. (Ross, Westerfield and Jaffe. 2018).

Financial analysts have used financial ratios since the 19th century to carry out the evaluation, to know the situation, as well as the financial and economic evolution of companies, initially they were used to measure credit liquidity, later under the direction of Alexander Wall, financial of the Federal Reserve Board in the United States, the financial ratios were used as a management technique, (Gremillet, 1989).

Towards the end of the 19th century and until the 1930s, the ability of financial ratios to predict possible business failure was analyzed. Subsequently, the focus was on determining long-term solvency and the possible prediction of bankruptcy, with the traditional approach that used financial ratios as a measure of credit liquidity taking a backseat.

The empirical studies of the financial ratios applied to the prediction of bankruptcies were given at the end of the sixties in the classic works with a predictive approach carried out by Beaver (1966) and Altman (1968).

In the hypothesis used by Beaver, the solvency of companies is linked to a group of independent financial ratios that can be controlled; This hypothesis, according to Bizquerra (1989), represents the beginning of univariate statistical analysis and later the development of multivariate analysis.

The theory of solvency in principle was based on the methodology of financial ratios. Subsequently, given certain weaknesses in the financial ratios in their simple interpretation,



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solvency theory began to be enriched with multivariable statistical methods which, together with the development of statistical software (SPSS, SAS, BMPD, LISREL, SPAD, etc.), they provided more powerful and reliable instruments. (Ibarra, 2006)

Univariate analysis is the most elementary approach, and it has the drawback that, despite having a relatively large set of financial indicators, in principle these are basically examined in isolation and later an opinion is issued based on the knowledge and experience financial analyst.

Multivariate analysis is the approach that aims to decipher the links and relationships that exist between the different indicators, in such a way that the evaluation of the financial performance of the companies is carried out in a joint and structured manner, providing an integrating vision and of the different factors that condition life and business dynamics.

Multivariate analysis is part of statistics and data analysis that studies, analyzes, represents, and interprets the data resulting from observing more than one variable on a sample of individuals. (González, Ruiz and Nieto, 2020).

Among the main classifications used in multivariate models are those that divide them into a) descriptive or exploratory methods (no prior hypothesis is established); and b) explanatory or confirmatory methods (they are based on a theoretical framework to support and empirically validate a hypothesis).

Another classification is the one that divides the methods into: a) reductive methods (factorial analysis, main components, canonical correlation, cluster analysis, correspondence analysis); and b) dependency methods (variance analysis, covariance analysis, multiple regression, discriminant analysis, logit conditional probability analysis and probit conditional probability analysis). (Ibarra, 2006)

Economic and financial indicators are useful tools that benefit organizations by facilitating timely and appropriate decision-making in relation to their corporate and financial strategies.

Next, the evolution of some economic and financial indicators of the Mexican environment is described and shown to facilitate decision-making related to personal and business strategies in an integral manner.

1. National Consumer Price Index (INPC, Spanish)
2. The Price and Quotation Index of the Mexican Stock Exchange (IPC, Spanish)
3. Exchange rate
4. Equilibrium interbank interest rate (TIIE, Spanish)
5. CETES rate of return
6. Investment units (UDIS, Spanish)

## 1. NATIONAL CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (INPC)

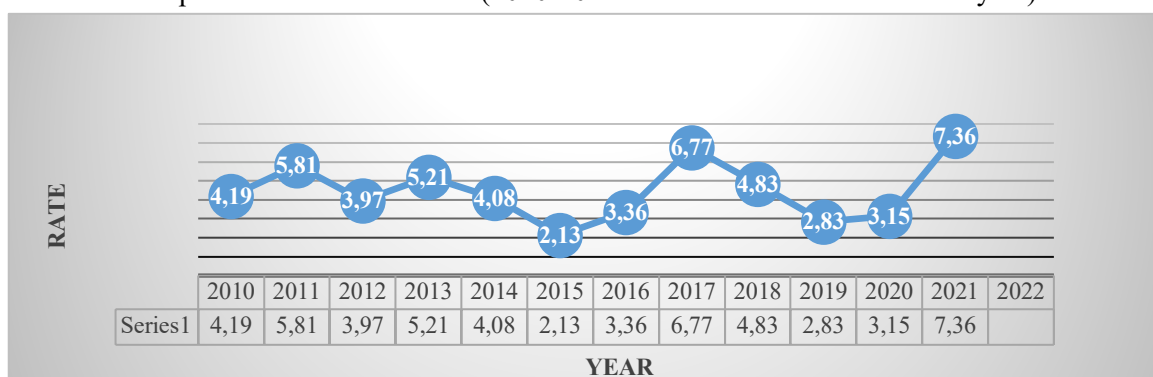
Born in 1995 and reflecting changes in consumer prices, measures the general increase in prices in the country. It is calculated fortnightly by the Bank of Mexico and INEGI (2021). INPC is published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on the 10th and 25th of each month. The reference period is the second half of December 2010.

Table 1. Accumulated inflation in the year (Base: 2nd. Fortnight of December 2010 = 100 with data provided by *Banco de México*)

Periodo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enero	1.48	0.77	0.98	0.79	0.90	-0.09	0.38	1.70	0.53	0.09	0.48	0.86	0.59
Febrero	2.15	1.42	1.47	1.46	1.15	0.09	0.82	2.29	0.91	0.06	0.90	1.50	1.43
Marzo	2.52	1.84	1.55	1.99	1.43	0.51	0.97	2.92	1.24	0.44	0.85	2.34	2.43
Abril	1.98	0.72	0.69	1.81	1.24	0.25	0.65	3.04	0.90	0.50	-0.17	2.67	2.98
Mayo	0.60	-0.70	-0.65	0.95	0.91	-0.26	0.20	2.92	0.73	0.21	0.22	2.88	
Junio	0.49	-0.41	-0.41	1.12	1.09	-0.09	0.31	3.18	1.12	0.27	0.76	3.43	
Julio	0.56	-0.04	0.32	1.14	1.42	0.06	0.57	3.57	1.66	0.65	1.43	4.04	
Agosto	0.91	0.30	0.92	1.31	1.73	0.27	0.86	4.08	2.26	0.63	1.82	4.24	
Septiembre	1.27	0.73	1.12	1.61	2.18	0.27	1.47	4.41	2.69	0.89	2.06	4.88	
Octubre	2.35	2.33	2.12	2.77	2.74	1.16	2.09	5.06	3.22	1.44	2.68	5.76	
Noviembre	3.89	4.87	3.86	4.57	3.57	1.71	2.89	6.15	4.10	2.26	2.76	6.97	
Diciembre	4.19	5.81	3.97	5.21	4.08	2.13	3.36	6.77	4.83	2.83	3.15	7.36	

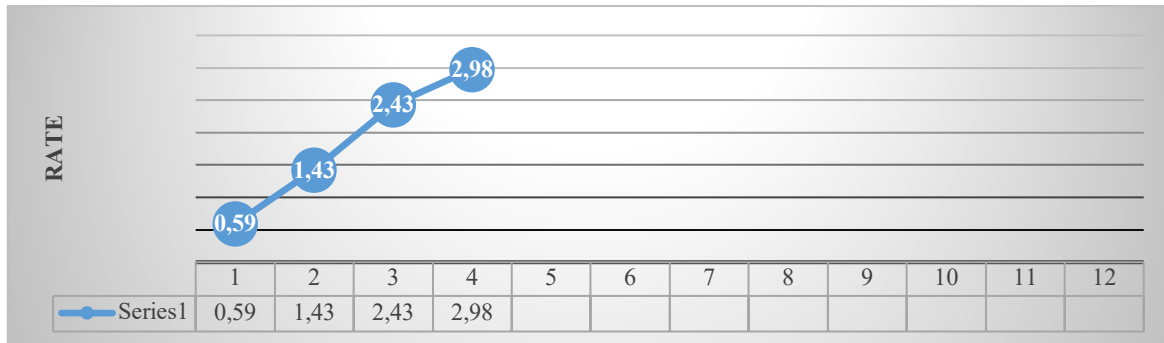
Source: Own elaboration (INEGI, 2022). Route: Indicadores económicos de coyuntura > Índices de precios > Índice nacional de precios al consumidor. Base segunda quincena de julio de 2018=100 > Mensual > Índice > Índice general

Graph 1. Inflation in Mexico (2010-2021 accumulated at the end of the year)



Source: Own elaboration (INEGI, 2022). Route: Indicadores económicos de coyuntura > Índices de precios > Índice nacional de precios al consumidor. Base segunda quincena de julio de 2018=100 > Mensual > Índice > Índice general

Graph 2. Inflation in Mexico (accumulated January-April 2022)



Source: Own elaboration (INEGI, 2022). Route: Indicadores económicos de coyuntura > Índices de precios > Índice nacional de precios al consumidor. Base segunda quincena de julio de 2018=100 > Mensual > Índice > Índice general

## 2. THE PRICE AND QUOTATION INDEX OF THE MEXICAN STOCK EXCHANGE (IPC)

Represents the change in the values traded on the Mexican Stock Exchange concerning the previous day to determine the percentage of rising or fall of the most representative shares of the companies listed therein.

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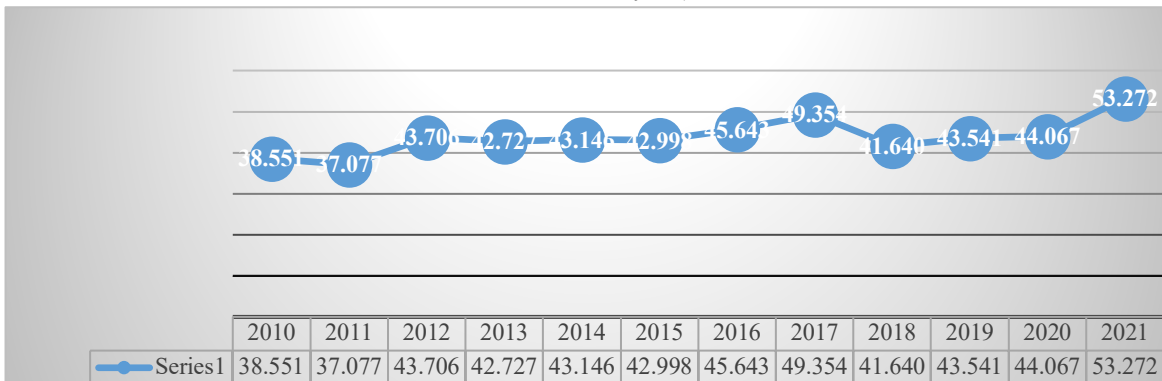
Table 2. The Price and Quotation Index of the Mexican Stock Exchange (Base: October 1978, 0.78=100)

Periodo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Enero</b>	30,392	36,982	37,422	45,278	40,879	40,951	43,631	47,001	50,456	43,988	44,862	42,986	51,331
<b>Febrero</b>	31,635	37,020	37,816	44,121	38,783	44,190	43,715	46,857	47,438	42,824	41,324	44,593	53,401
<b>Marzo</b>	33,266	37,441	39,521	44,077	40,462	43,725	45,881	48,542	46,125	43,281	34,554	47,246	56,537
<b>Abril</b>	32,687	36,963	39,461	42,263	40,712	44,582	45,785	49,261	48,354	44,597	36,470	48,010	51,418
<b>Mayo</b>	32,039	35,833	37,872	41,588	41,363	44,704	45,459	48,788	44,663	42,749	36,122	50,886	
<b>Junio</b>	31,157	36,558	40,199	40,623	42,737	45,054	45,966	49,857	47,663	43,161	37,716	50,290	
<b>Julio</b>	32,309	35,999	40,704	40,838	43,818	44,753	46,661	51,012	49,698	40,863	37,020	50,868	
<b>Agosto</b>	31,680	35,721	39,422	39,492	45,628	43,722	47,541	51,210	49,548	42,623	36,841	53,305	
<b>Sep.</b>	33,330	33,503	40,867	40,185	44,986	42,633	47,246	50,346	49,504	43,011	37,459	51,386	
<b>Oct.</b>	35,568	36,160	41,620	41,039	45,028	44,543	48,009	48,626	43,943	43,337	36,988	51,310	
<b>Nov.</b>	36,817	36,829	41,834	42,499	44,190	43,419	45,286	47,092	41,733	42,820	41,779	49,699	
<b>Dic.</b>	38,551	37,077	43,706	42,727	43,146	42,998	45,643	49,354	41,640	43,541	44,067	53,272	

Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=7&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF57&locale=es>

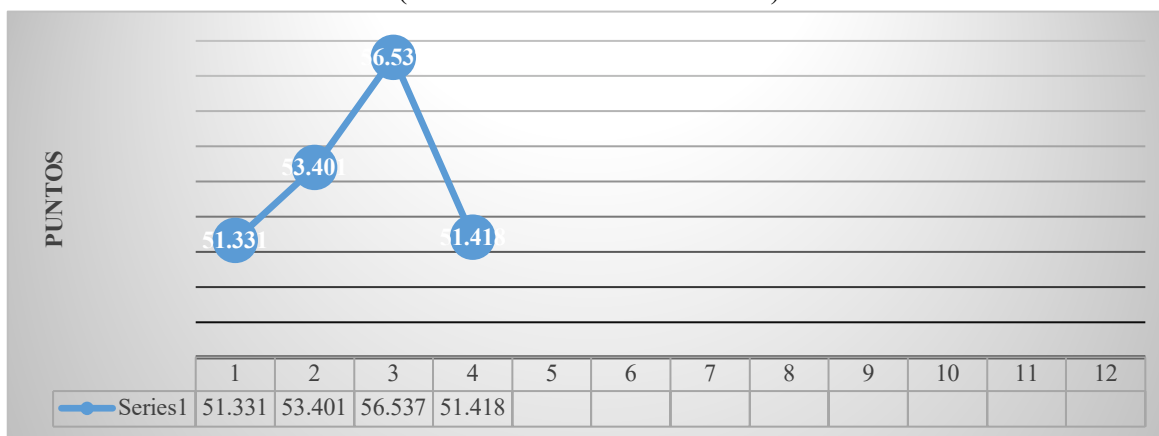
Graph 3. The Price and Quotation Index of the Mexican Stock Exchange, 2010 - 2021 (Score at the end of each year)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=7&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF57&locale=es>

Graph 4. The Price and Quotation Index of the Mexican Stock Exchange, January-April 2022 (Score at the end of each month)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=7&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF57&locale=es>

**3. EXCHANGE RATE**

It is the value of the Mexican peso with respect to the dollar calculated with the daily average of the five most important banks in the country, which reflects the spot price (cash), negotiated between banks. It is highly related to Inflation, the interest rate, and the Mexican Stock Exchange.

Table 3. Exchange rate (National currency per US dollar, parity at the end of each period)

Periodo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enero	12.81	12.02	12.95	12.71	13.37	14.69	18.45	21.02	18.62	19.04	18.91	20.22	20.74
Febrero	12.96	12.17	12.87	12.87	13.30	14.92	18.17	19.83	18.65	19.26	19.78	20.94	20.65
Marzo	12.61	11.97	12.80	12.36	13.08	15.15	17.40	18.81	18.33	19.38	23.48	20.44	19.99
Abril	12.24	11.59	13.20	12.16	13.14	15.22	19.40	19.11	18.86	19.01	23.93	20.18	20.57
Mayo	12.68	11.63	13.91	12.63	12.87	15.36	18.45	18.51	19.75	19.64	22.18	19.92	
Junio	12.72	11.84	13.66	13.19	13.03	15.57	18.91	17.90	20.06	19.21	23.09	19.91	
Julio	12.83	11.65	13.28	12.73	13.06	16.21	18.86	17.69	18.55	19.99	22.20	19.85	
Agosto	12.73	12.41	13.27	13.25	13.08	16.89	18.58	17.88	19.07	20.07	21.89	20.06	
Septiembre	12.86	13.42	12.92	13.01	13.45	17.01	19.50	18.13	18.90	19.68	22.14	20.56	
Octubre	12.45	13.20	13.09	12.89	13.42	16.45	18.84	19.15	19.80	19.16	21.25	20.53	
Noviembre	12.33	14.03	13.04	13.09	13.72	16.55	20.55	18.58	20.41	19.61	20.14	21.45	
Diciembre	12.40	13.99	13.01	13.08	14.72	17.21	20.73	19.79	19.68	18.87	19.91	20.47	

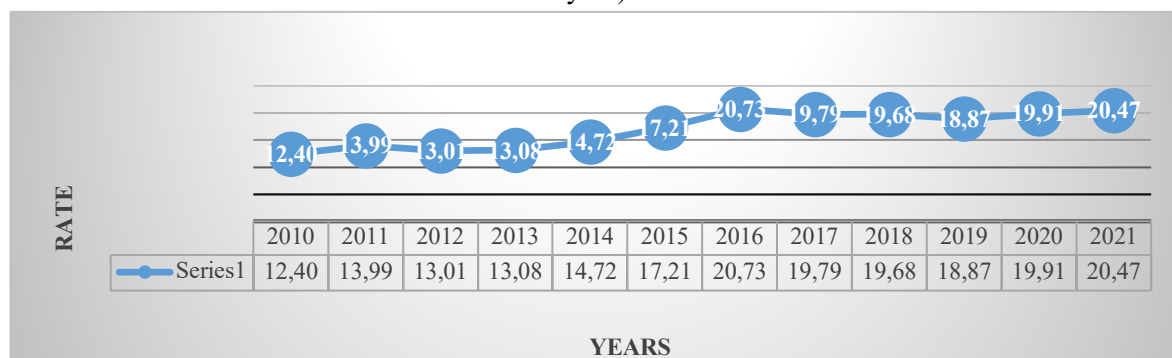
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NOTE: Exchange rate FIX by The Banco de México, used for settle obligations denominated in foreign currency. Quote at the end

Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=6&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF102&locale=es>

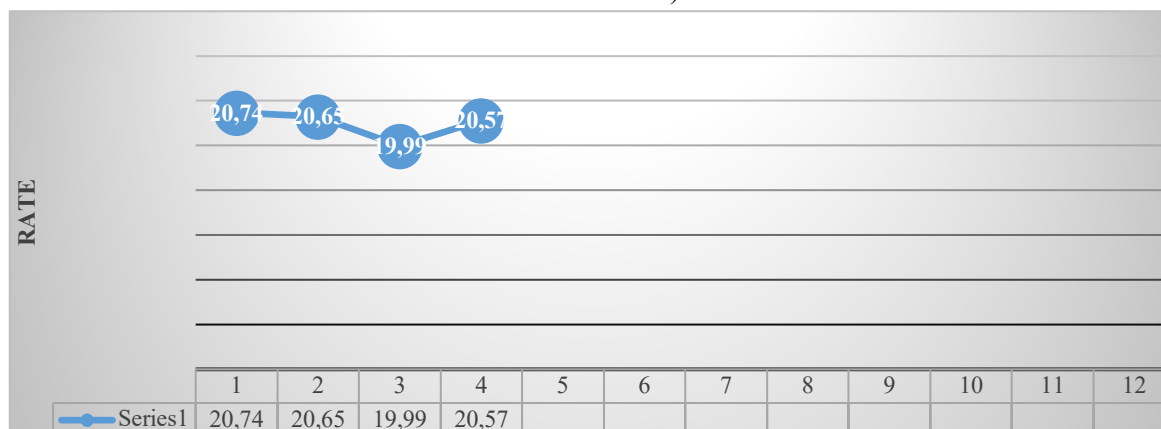
Graph 5. Exchange rate (National currency per US dollar, 2010-2021, FIX parity at the end of each year)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=6&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF102&locale=es>

Graph 6. Exchange rate (National currency per US dollar, January-April 2022, FIX parity at the end of each month)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=6&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF102&locale=es>

#### 4. EQUILIBRIUM INTERBANK INTEREST RATE (TIE).

On March 23, 1995, the Bank of Mexico, to establish an interbank interest rate that better reflects market conditions, released the Interbank Equilibrium Interest Rate through the Official Gazette of the Federation.

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Table 4. Equilibrium interbank interest rate (28-day quote)

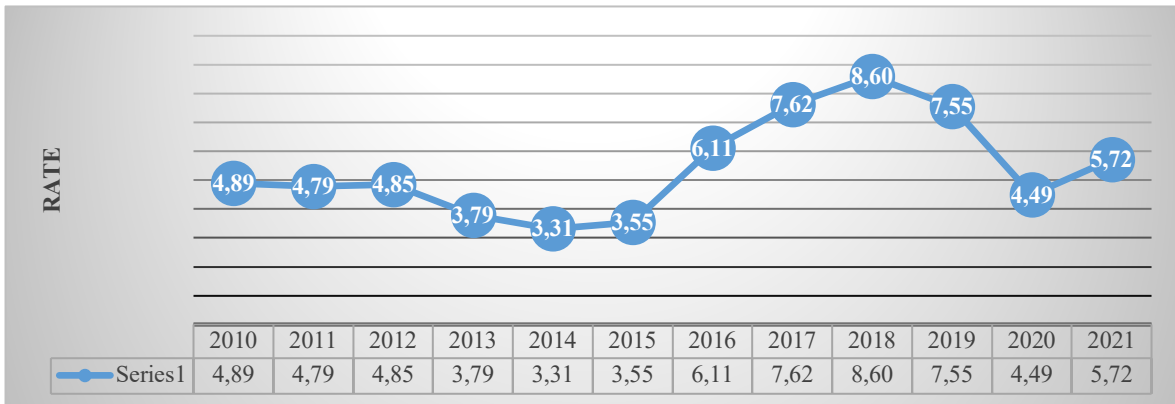
Periodo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enero	4.91	4.86	4.79	4.84	3.78	3.29	3.56	6.15	7.66	8.59	7.50	4.47	5.73
Febrero	4.92	4.84	4.78	4.80	3.79	3.29	4.05	6.61	7.83	8.54	7.29	4.36	6.23
Marzo	4.92	4.84	4.77	4.35	3.81	3.30	4.07	6.68	7.85	8.51	6.74	4.28	6.73
Abril	4.94	4.85	4.75	4.33	3.80	3.30	4.07	6.89	7.85	8.50	6.25	4.28	6.75
Mayo	4.94	4.85	4.76	4.30	3.79	3.30	4.10	7.15	7.86	8.51	5.74	4.29	
Junio	4.94	4.85	4.77	4.31	3.31	3.30	4.11	7.36	8.10	8.49	5.28	4.32	
Julio	4.92	4.82	4.78	4.32	3.31	3.31	4.59	7.38	8.11	8.47	5.19	4.52	
Agosto	4.90	4.81	4.79	4.30	3.30	3.33	4.60	7.38	8.10	8.26	4.76	4.65	
Septiembre	4.90	4.78	4.81	4.03	3.29	3.33	4.67	7.38	8.12	8.04	4.55	4.75	
Octubre	4.87	4.79	4.83	3.78	3.28	3.30	5.11	7.38	8.15	7.97	4.51	4.98	
Noviembre	4.87	4.80	4.85	3.80	3.31	3.32	5.57	7.39	8.34	7.78	4.48	5.13	
Diciembre	4.89	4.79	4.85	3.79	3.31	3.55	6.11	7.62	8.60	7.55	4.49	5.72	

Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=18&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF101&locale=es>

## Business Analysis and Financial Ratios

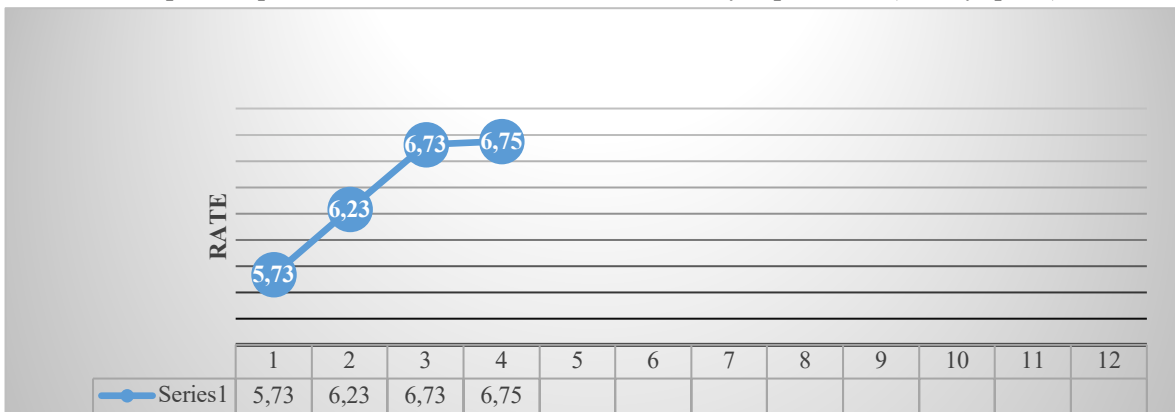
Graph 7. Equilibrium interbank interest rate, 2010- 2021 (at the end of each year)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=18&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF101&locale=es>

Graph 8. Equilibrium interbank interest rate, January-April 2022 (28-day quote)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=18&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF101&locale=es>

## 5. CETES RATE OF RETURN

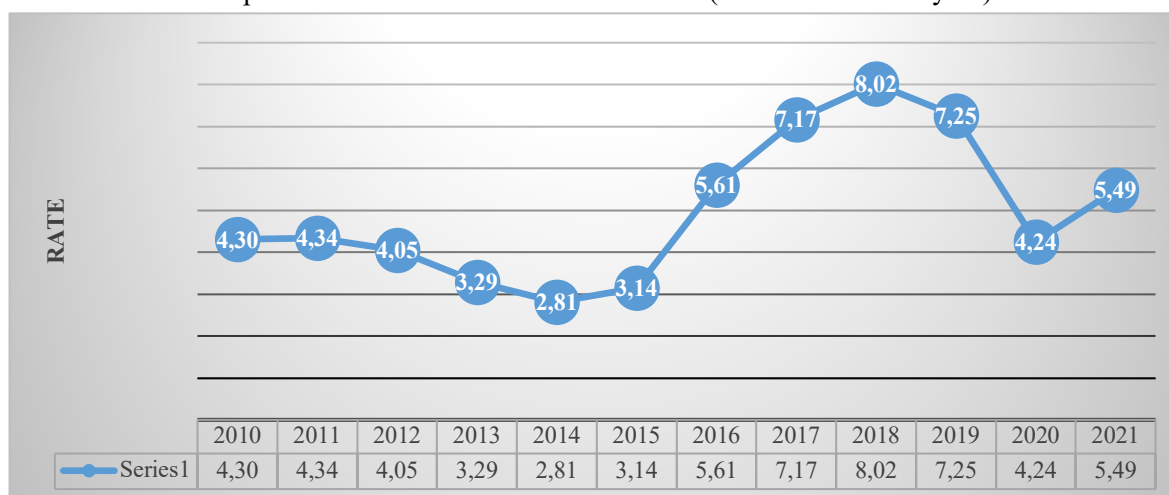
Table 5. CETES rate of return (28-day)

Periodo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enero	4.49	4.14	4.27	4.15	3.14	2.67	3.08	5.83	7.25	7.95	7.04	4.22	5.50
Febrero	4.49	4.04	4.32	4.19	3.16	2.81	3.36	6.06	7.40	7.93	6.91	4.02	5.94
Marzo	4.45	4.27	4.24	3.98	3.17	3.04	3.80	6.32	7.47	8.02	6.59	4.08	6.52
Abril	4.44	4.28	4.29	3.82	3.23	2.97	3.74	6.50	7.46	7.78	5.84	4.06	6.68
Mayo	4.52	4.31	4.39	3.72	3.28	2.98	3.81	6.56	7.51	8.07	5.38	4.07	
Junio	4.59	4.37	4.34	3.78	3.02	2.96	3.81	6.82	7.64	8.18	4.85	4.03	
Julio	4.60	4.14	4.15	3.85	2.83	2.99	4.21	6.99	7.73	8.15	4.63	4.35	
Agosto	4.52	4.05	4.13	3.84	2.77	3.04	4.24	6.94	7.73	7.87	4.50	4.49	
Septiembre	4.43	4.23	4.17	3.64	2.83	3.10	4.28	6.99	7.69	7.61	4.25	4.69	
Octubre	4.03	4.36	4.21	3.39	2.90	3.02	4.69	7.03	7.69	7.62	4.22	4.93	
Noviembre	3.97	4.35	4.23	3.39	2.85	3.02	5.15	7.02	7.83	7.46	4.28	5.05	
Diciembre	4.30	4.34	4.05	3.29	2.81	3.14	5.61	7.17	8.02	7.25	4.24	5.49	

Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=22&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF107&locale=es>

Graph 9. CETES rate of return 2010- 2021 (at the end of each year)

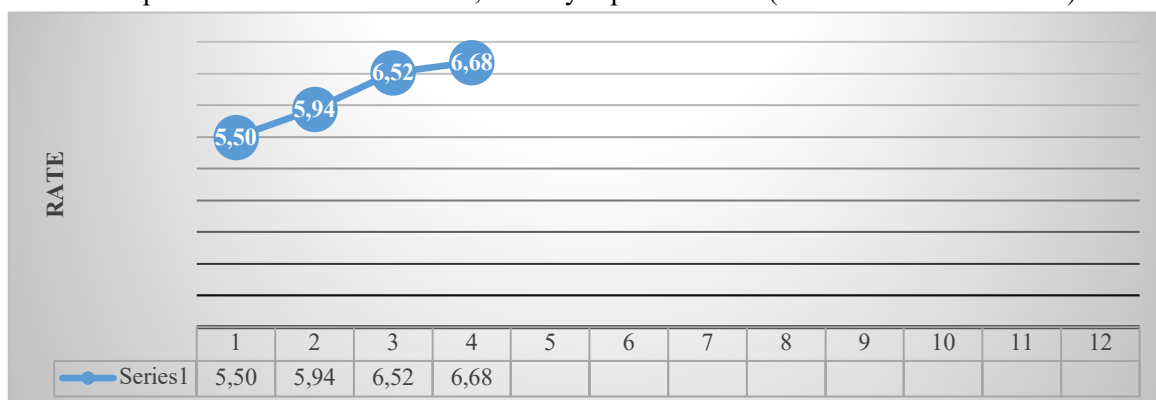


Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=22&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF107&locale=es>



Graph 10. CETES rate of return, January-April del 2022 (at the end of each month)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?sector=22&accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CF107&locale=es>

## 6. INVESTMENT UNITS (UDIS)

The UDI is a unit of account of constant real value to denominate credit titles. It does not apply to checks, commercial contracts, or other acts of commerce.

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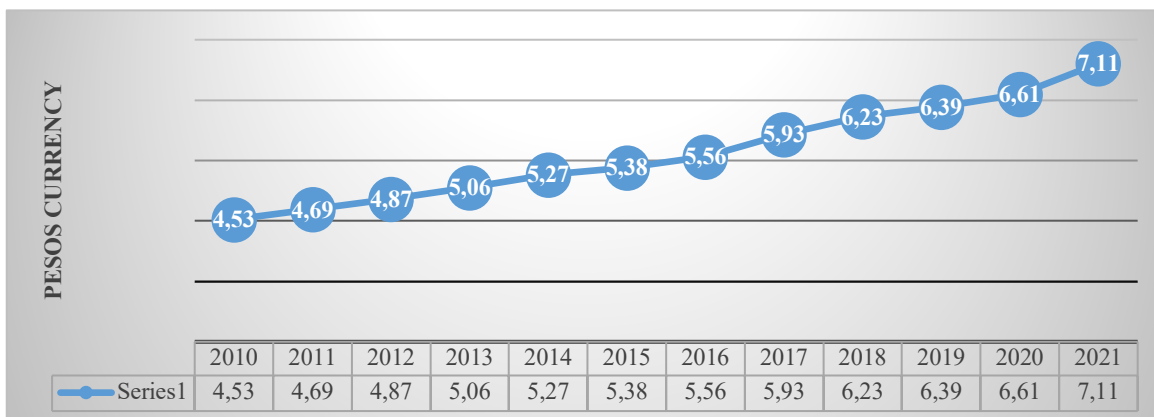
Table 6. Investment units (value concerning pesos)

Periodo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enero	4.37	4.56	4.73	4.89	5.10	5.29	5.41	5.62	5.97	6.25	6.44	6.64	7.12
Febrero	4.41	4.57	4.75	4.92	5.13	5.29	5.43	5.69	6.00	6.25	6.46	6.70	7.18
Marzo	4.44	4.59	4.75	4.94	5.15	5.30	5.44	5.71	6.02	6.26	6.49	6.75	7.24
Abril	4.46	4.59	4.75	4.97	5.15	5.32	5.45	5.75	6.03	6.28	6.43	6.79	7.31
Mayo	4.43	4.58	4.71	4.96	5.13	5.29	5.42	5.75	6.01	6.27	6.42	6.81	
Junio	4.41	4.55	4.74	4.95	5.13	5.28	5.42	5.75	6.01	6.26	6.44	6.83	
Julio	4.42	4.57	4.77	4.95	5.14	5.28	5.42	5.76	6.04	6.27	6.49	6.87	
Agosto	4.43	4.58	4.78	4.95	5.16	5.29	5.44	5.79	6.07	6.29	6.52	6.90	
Septiembre	4.44	4.59	4.80	4.97	5.18	5.31	5.45	5.82	6.11	6.29	6.55	6.92	
Octubre	4.47	4.61	4.83	4.99	5.20	5.33	5.49	5.84	6.13	6.31	6.57	6.97	
Noviembre	4.50	4.64	4.85	5.02	5.23	5.36	5.53	5.89	6.17	6.35	6.60	7.04	
Diciembre	4.53	4.69	4.87	5.06	5.27	5.38	5.56	5.93	6.23	6.39	6.61	7.11	

Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CP150&locale=es>

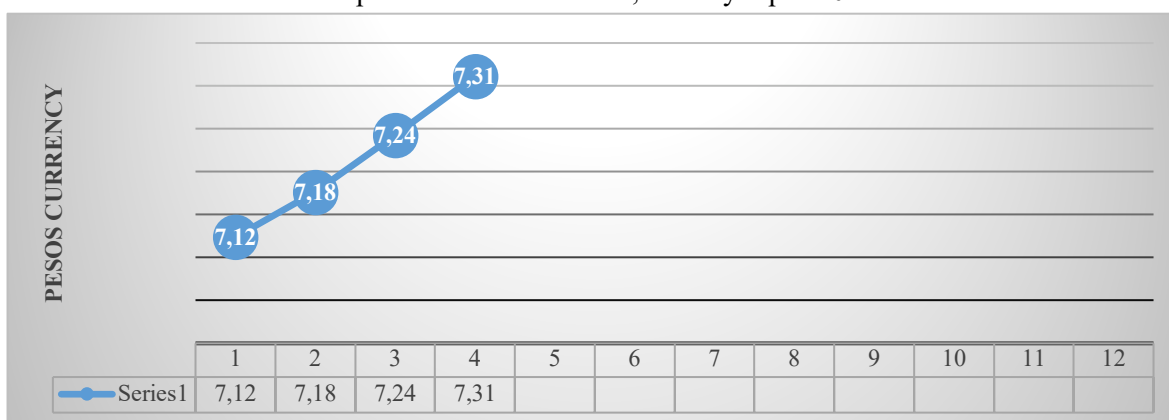
Graph 11. Investment units 2010-2021 (At the end of the year)



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CP150&locale=es>

Graph 12. Investment units, January-April 2022



Source: Own elaboration (BANXICO, 2022).

<https://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CP150&locale=es>

On April 1, 1995, the Decree establishing the obligations corresponding to the UDIS was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation. Since April 4, 1995, the Bank of Mexico publishes in the Official Gazette of the Federation the value in the national currency of the Investment Unit, for each day.

The financial ratios over time with the purpose of facilitating their application in the various sections of the organizations have been classified to measure liquidity, asset management, profitability, the market, etc.

The survival, growth and obtaining profits in organizations requires the use and interpretation of financial and economic indicators that allow deciphering the external and internal

environments of organizations. At the beginning of the 20th century, the use of financial ratios became clear and, with the intention of facilitating their application, they have been standardized and classified with the intention of measuring liquidity, asset management, profitability, the market, etc. However, taking into consideration the many differences that exist in organizations, the current use of these ratios cannot or should not be standardized, since each company or entity has characteristics that identify it, being able to mention, among others, the sector to which it belongs, the productive activity or services that it develops, etc. Although the usefulness of financial ratios is recognized, finally, according to the study carried out by Alberto Ibarra Mares (2006), we can mention that the potential of this tool is only in an initial phase of conceptual and empirical development.

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