

## Behaviors chosen or forced to choose: Norms and values assumed by executives

### *Conductas elegidas o forzadas a elegir: normas y valores asumidos por los*

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**Abstract:** this research describes some of the values and norms that business executives use to choose their behaviors in work, social and family environments. Using qualitative methodology, data collection was conducted with the support of the projective technique called "life history". The coding and analysis of the applied technique allowed reporting norms and values used by executives. Fifty-three executives from companies from different sectors participated in this research. The analyses show that the executives follow and adapt their behaviors to norms and values that demonstrate their memberships with the groups. These guidelines have positive and negative effects for themselves, their family, their co-workers and their friends. Among the first, it stands out that executives seek to demonstrate and demand the profitable use of time, achieve their development and growth of the organization, and achieve leadership positions. Frames of reference for their behaviors with non-positive or ambiguous effects are also observed. It is shown that executives present as norms and values being willing to sacrifice their family time for the company's objectives, tolerating conditions of mistreatment, and staying on the sidelines or getting involved as little as possible with the people with whom they work. In this study we describe some NV followed by the executives to demonstrate their membership to the group. This demanding nature makes them rationalize and transfer the responsibility for the consequences of their behaviors abroad.

**Keywords:** norms, values, decision making, organizational behavior, group membership, group behavior, rationalization, psychological tests.

**Resumen:** Esta investigación describe algunos de los valores y las normas que los ejecutivos de empresas utilizan para elegir sus conductas en los entornos laborales, sociales y familiares. Usando metodología cualitativa, la recolección de datos se realizó con el apoyo de la técnica proyectiva denominada "historia de vida". La codificación y análisis de la técnica aplicada permitió el reporte de normas y valores que se encuentran en uso por los ejecutivos. En esta investigación participaron cincuenta y tres ejecutivos de empresas de distintos sectores. Los análisis muestran que los ejecutivos siguen y alinean sus conductas a normas y valores que demuestran sus membresías con los grupos. Estos lineamientos tienen efectos positivos y, en otros, negativos para sí mismos, su familia, sus compañeros de trabajo y sus amigos. Entre los primeros, los ejecutivos buscan demostrar y exigir el uso rentable del tiempo, lograr el desarrollo y crecimiento organizacional y alcanzar posiciones de liderazgo. También se observan marcos de referencia para sus conductas con efectos no positivos o ambiguos. Entre estos se muestra que los ejecutivos presentan como normas y valores el estar dispuestos a sacrificar su tiempo familiar por los objetivos de la empresa, tolerar condiciones de maltrato y maltratar, y mantenerse al margen o involucrarse lo menos posible con las personas con las que trabajan. Lo descrito en el estudio podría permitir proponer que los ejecutivos siguen las normas y valores (NV) que perciben como propias y determinantes para demostrar su membresía. Este carácter de exigencia hace que racionalicen y transfieran al exterior la responsabilidad de las consecuencias a sus conductas.

**Palabras clave:** normas, valores, toma de decisiones, comportamiento organizacional, membresía a grupos, comportamiento grupal, racionalización, test psicológico.

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## Introduction

Addressing the issue of norms and values of business executives is always a dynamic and controversial task. Research in this regard seeks to uncover a part of these issues, increasing their complexity (Ibarra-Colado *et al.*, 2006; Molthan-Hill, 2014; Zeytinoglu *et al.*, 2012). Rather than pursuing this theoretical complexity that could be paralyzing, this study focuses on the empirical exploration of the norms and values that executives express in their discourses or in their actions in the contexts of work, family, and social groups.

Norms and values often play a utilitarian role; however, adaptation to certain contexts reduces this role, i.e., although individuals usually choose behaviors that give them benefits and avoid harm or risk, group membership could make them act contrary to their interests because of what is required (Welsh *et al.*, 2015; White *et al.*, 2009). Even the expression of norms and values chosen could be different or contrary, depending on each context or group in which they are (Reynoso, 2018). Bicchieri (2010) shows that norms are followed after a conscious analysis of the context, thus determining the evaluation and choice of behaviors to be expressed. These choices of norms and values do not necessarily imply individual or selfish ends, but are signs of conformity to what is demanded by the environment (Bicchieri and Chavez, 2010). Schuh *et al.* (2021) describes that identifying with the organization directly influences the intention to perform behaviors. They further suggest that norms may even engage in unethical practices in favor of the organization if the group supports them (Schuh *et al.*, 2021).

The norms and values that exist in any group are guided by their regularity and the power they have to limit behaviors in the group. These repetitions allow defining and transforming the norms and values that distinguish and classify the members of a group (Barreto and Ellemers, 2000). As for members of the “executives” group, they adopt norms and values specific to the context of business organizations. The expression of their membership is independent of their location (a manager acts as a manager in the office or in the operation). Even when they are not in the same

context, they make the decision to act according to the norms and values of the group in which they are classified (Bicchieri and Chavez, 2010).

From another perspective, the behaviors accepted or rejected by norms and values depend on each group. They do not necessarily follow broad social parameters (Bruhn, 2009), hence, some behaviors will be accepted in some contexts, even if they are socially rejected in others (Earle *et al.*, 2010). An example of the latter is the extreme case of legitimized corruption circles, where the person offering the money and the person receiving it assume that what they are doing is standard practice for doing business and benefits them in the short term, but at the same time they know that it is a socially censored and punishable practice from the point of view of broader norms and values (Hauk and Saez-Marti, 2002).

This research explores and describes the norms and values common to a group of executives. These are analyzed through behavioral accounts following a qualitative methodology. The method followed made it possible to structure the analysis of the texts, from which the norms and values disseminated among the executives are described. These respond to the search for individual conformity with the group in order to reach achievements in their work, family and friendship contexts. The analysis shows that the executives follow norms and values, although these have positive and negative effects.

## Chosen behaviors or forced to choose

Individuals who are members of a group have internalized their roles and adjust their decision making to their membership (Pozzi *et al.*, 2014). From this perspective, group membership shapes behaviors, giving people unique (specific) meanings and validity for the group in which they belong (Barsade and Gibson, 2007). Individuals who wish to belong must adopt the dynamics of group interactions and lose part of their “individual feature” to show conformity to the conditions of the environment (Reynoso, 2021). Thus, in their decision making, they adapt and accommodate the frames of reference of their behaviors to demonstrate their belonging to the group (Hardy

and Clegg, 2006). Cialdini *et al.* (2021) show that empowered executives in organizations can set the NVs for other executives. Depending on their level of influence, executives can promote conditioning behaviors that show their memberships (Cialdini *et al.*, 2021).

Group membership could involve regulating behaviors and even, in some cases, following or obeying them by coercing them (Bicchieri and Chavez, 2010). Adherence to these group norms and values helps individuals to identify with and demonstrate their memberships (Verhezen, 2010). The experience of belonging to various groups increases the set of norms and values to which decisions made to express certain behaviors are accommodated (Gillespie and Cornish, 2010). The success of interactions will be related to the number of positive effects that these norms and values give them and those around them (Bicchieri, 2002; Bicchieri and Chavez, 2010). If the individual fails to recognize norms and values, he or she may no longer belong or may be excluded (Barreto and Ellemers, 2000).

Other research shows that executives rationalize their behaviors, even when these are unethical (Lian *et al.*, 2020a; Liu *et al.*, 2020b). According to Lian *et al.* (2020), unethical leadership could be explained by the interpretation of the consequences or outcomes of these behaviors. Even if they exceed social morality, they could be accepted if they are positive for the group. Some of these rationalized behaviors in the organizational context are explored under the definition of unethical pro-organizational behaviors (Lian *et al.*, 2020; Umphress *et al.*, 2010).

Tang *et al.* (2020) state that executives' behaviors in the organizational context generate paradoxical responses in them. They may feel guilty on a personal level for performing a behavior, but proud on a group level because of the effect or representativeness it has for others (Tang *et al.*, 2020). In addition, Hsieh *et al.* (2020) say that group membership in organizations plays moderating roles in performing behaviors. Also, the research explains that membership in some contexts is expressed by explicit engagement with valid NVs in the group (Hsieh *et al.*, 2020).

## Group norms

In the strict sense, the word norm designates the rules and guidelines that guide the behavior of individuals in a specific context. They originate in social interaction, are relatively stable and play articulating and modulating roles (Reynoso, 2021). Individuals assimilate them to choose, initiate, adjust or restrict their behaviors. In organizations, formal norms are usually defined in documents such as the labor contract or the functions manual, and the informal norms are constructed in the interrelations with other members (Weber, 2014).

Most of the norms that originate in organizational groups are implicit, and are accepted due to their use, frequency, custom and the endorsement given by members (Reynoso, 2018). These norms also express a cognitive component that involves decision making. These decisions may agree with what is desired by the individual or adjust to the environment. Usually the adjustment will prevail, because it guarantees membership and acting without considering them could imply exclusion (Copeland and Potwarka, 2016).

Individuals who join an organization must adapt to this context the norms they built in other referential spaces such as family, friends and education (Ashforth and Kreiner, 2002). All these norms are linked to decision making that regulate their behavior and are modified or expanded according to the groups to which they belong and the demands of the social environment (Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Copeland and Potwarka, 2016; Reynoso, 2018).

## Values in groups

Values are higher-order personal qualities that motivate certain behaviors and discourage others (Albanese *et al.*, 2016). These are abstract mandates or beliefs that guide the individual (Castro Solano and Nader, 2006). Most of these are acquired vicariously in the socialization process with a group (Wood and Bandura, 1989).

The values that regulate the behaviors of individuals in a group could be in conflict or in agreement with the values it has adopted in

other groups (Daniel *et al.*, 2015). Unlike norms, not having the same values as the group does not necessarily imply social punishment; some researchers show that in many cases the values expressed verbally by an individual may contrast with his or her actions in the environment (Gelbrich *et al.*, 2016).

Groups differentiate the values they promote and their hierarchy to guide their behaviors. These values can have an individualistic, collectivist or mixed orientation. Finally, values fulfill their role of filter and hierarchy in the decisions made to choose the expression of a behavior among other possible ones (Albanese *et al.*, 2016; Daniel *et al.*, 2015).

The main components of identity are the set of norms and values that allow describing, characterizing the behavior of its members and differentiating the members of the group (Maldonado and Oliva, 2010). Individuals who want to be part of the group should assume these characteristics, mix them and exercise them in their behaviors to show their membership and identification (Ellemers *et al.*, 2013).

It is important to say that the values and norms that form group identity are contextually dependent and specific to the historical moment, hence they can change due to environmental pressures and paradigm shifts (Ellemers *et al.*, 2013). In addition to these factors, individuals have a strong impact on the conduction of these changes. Individuals make decisions about the guidelines that indicate the relevance and capacity of norms and values to set behaviors that are valid for the group (Melucci and Massolo, 1995).

The identity constructed with the set of norms and values of the different groups to which they belong has a complex and fragmented feature, which is complex because individuals must respond differently in each space, sometimes even in a contradictory way (for example: an aggressive manager could be a spouse on the receiving end of aggression). On the other hand, it is fragmented because each space to which the individual adapts brings to it a small component that is expressed in other contexts, i.e., the individual who is a member of a family expresses part of his/her family norms and values at work or in

his/her friendship groups, and vice versa (Wood and Bandura, 1989).

## Method

The chosen research method is qualitative phenomenological (Miles *et al.*, 1994). The object of study is in the field of what is shared at the intersubjective level by executives (Gillespie and Cornish, 2010; Reynoso, 2021). In addition, some of the NV are not recognized by the executives. Therefore, a projective technique was chosen for their research, which allowed both a group analysis and an indirect access to these NVs.

The instrument and technique chosen for the research came from the field of psychology. The projective technique called "life history" (Portuondo, 1979) was used. This technique consists of asking the study collaborator to freely write part of his or her personal history. The participants wrote their stories on an average of two sheets of paper. This projective technique allows the indirect description of the values and norms with which the executives of organizations interact at work, with their families and with their friends. With this objective in mind, participants were asked to focus their stories about their work and professional life. In these stories they expressed their experiences in professional development and established interpersonal relationships.

The collaborators in the study belonged to different organizations, all of them members, in contact with the structure of values and norms of the Peruvian executives group. Fifty-three executives enrolled in an MBA program participated in the study and gave their consent for using this material for the research.

## Data processing

The documents were processed using the qualitative text analysis software Atlas Ti, in which the participants' answers were coded in two phases of constant coding. In the first phase of the analysis, the expressions in the texts were coded to differentiate the norms and values according to the environment in which they are expressed: family, social and organizational, which were

coded. The second analysis of the coded texts made it possible to identify information on common norms and values expressed in the organizational context. In this way, information was gathered on the norms and values that guide the behaviors of the group of Peruvian executives participating in the study.

## Results

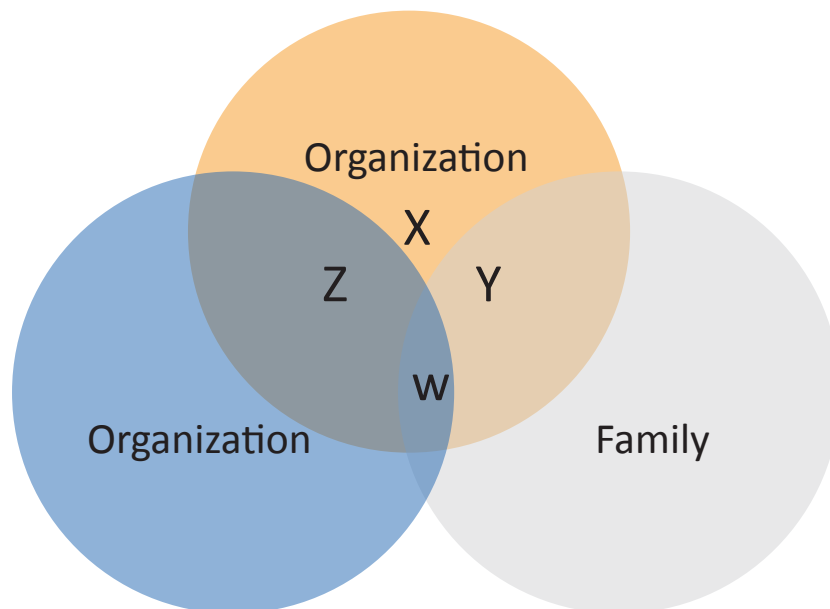
The analysis of the texts showed the existence of norms and values that underlie the behaviors of the group of executives. There are some norms and values in the analyzed texts that are common among the research collaborators, representing the unconscious framework expressed from their decision making. In the analyzed texts, the executives describe that their behaviors do fit the

context. In addition, they state that their decision making varies by the perception of their position in the group they are in. The groups described are family, friends and organizational groups. The common norms and values among these groups support behaviors aimed at generating positive outcomes, but in addition, they have others aimed at achieving negative outcomes. In other words, they make decisions about behaviors that are openly chosen, even if these have negative results.

Figure 1 shows a diagram of the contextual fields analyzed in the texts and the interaction between them. It represents the existence of norms and values that are used only in one context and others that can be expressed in more than one. The circles in the graph represent these groups and the society that contains them is represented by a box.

**Figure 1**  
Validity of executive NVs

### Society



The groups to which executives belong in organizations are represented. These have an impact on the NVs they have with their family, friends and the organization. The context of the organization validates the NVs represented in the X, Y, W and Z fields.

The data for the analysis were collected by applying the projective technique "life stories".

In the first analysis of these texts, 355 quotations referring to decision making for behaviors and their norms and values were coded. A second analysis of the quotations allowed the norms and values (NV) expressed in the contexts of the organization, the family group and in the friendship group. Table 1 shows the number of quotations in each of the fields.

**Table 1***Number of quotations in each field*

Fields	Field description	% of quotes
X Field: Organization	NV for exclusive use in the organization	44.8 %
y Field: Organization - Family	NV of use in the organization and group families	25.1 %
Z Field: Organization-Friends	NV of use in the organization and friends	5.6 %
W Field: Organization-Family-Friends	NV of use in the organization and the family	24.5 %

The results of the second analysis show that the greatest number of quotes refer to NVs that regulate executive behaviors in the organization (44.8 %). In second place are those referring to NVs shown both in the organization and in the family group (25.1 %). In third place (24.5 %), are the NVs expressed in all three fields. In last place, only 5.6 % of the quotes refer to NVs that guide the behavior of individuals in the organization and in friends. The following paragraphs will present the NV collected from the analysis of the sample texts, with at least three cases of repetition in the documents examined with their example quotations.

### Differentiated organizational norms and values

The norms and values (NV) that are in the "X" field of Figure 1 guide the behaviors chosen to be expressed in the organization. These differ from those in other fields in the way that they do not make reference to or justify their behaviors in family or friendship and work contexts at the same time. Some of these expressed NV have a positive or constructive orientation and others are negative or harmful to the individual, their bosses, peers and subordinates.

One of the first behavioral guidelines is related to the effort they must show in their daily work. Executives must demonstrate to others the profitable use of their time in the company; manage their tasks in order, solve problems of their functions, manage their time for the fulfillment of all their tasks and assume the challenges, and make others aware of all this.

In my workplace I always strived to be the best or one of the best, which led me to be promoted

to other positions and therefore to obtain the recognition of my bosses and at the same time be proud of myself.

Secondly, executives strive for organizational development and growth in order to achieve a better position in the organization in recognition of their efforts.

(...) I started the position a year ago and this promotion was also a recognition of my performance and the support I provided to the Financial Management.

Thirdly, they show that they should take advantage of their professional experiences in previous positions within the organization or before it to develop or enhance their skills and knowledge about the work.

(...) I went through three jobs, one of which I consider to be the most important because it helped me to develop professionally and to acquire a lot of knowledge and experience.

Fourth, executives in the organization are oriented to occupy leadership positions, which implies for them to organize their collaborators into balanced teams, orient their tasks, deal with their differences and maintain a balanced work environment in the team.

...the most important thing for a good leader is to be able to create a united team and a pleasant work environment. In the end, it is not all about earning a good salary, obviously it is very important, but it is not everything.

When facing a situation of uncertainty, executives consider that they should be attentive and willing to change or start looking for a position appropriate to their status. They are also willing

to resign from their job if the payment conditions and responsibilities do not meet their expectations.

I also understood that my destiny was not to continue working for someone else, that I could not be so selfish and let my father deal with all problems, that my mother could not stay in Buenos Aires to wait for any job, that Peru was getting better, and I wanted to be part of that progress. I dreamed of having a big company and giving job opportunities. I resigned and started from scratch.

Behavioral guidelines have been described to maximize the benefit to oneself or to the organization. In the following paragraphs we will describe the norms and values that have different purposes. These NVs do not have noble effects for the executives, their peers, subordinates, bosses or the organization, but are nevertheless presented as NVs specific to the executive group.

The norms and values of the group of executives direct their behaviors to the achievement of short-term goals to demonstrate their capabilities and justify the position they have assumed. The fulfillment of the goals forces them to be creative in order to work with the right resources and even below what is necessary.

(...) It was a very big sacrifice since I worked far away from society with very hard work routines and the stress of reaching the established production goals. I formed a very good human group with people recently graduated from the city with different talents, but we all formed a synergy that helped us achieving the established objectives.

Linked to the previous norm and value, it can be observed that the group of executives assume the organization's objectives at a very personal level. Therefore, they force themselves to seek additional resources or make sacrifices in order to achieve these objectives. In addition, they tend to demand this type of sacrifices from the people around them, such as, for example, demanding additional hours of work, taking on tasks above and beyond their roles, among others.

That year and a half was very hard, I slept four hours a day, I worked Sundays, but the work

was going very well, the people in charge of the project were satisfied with my work...

Thirdly, those who are starting their professional life must follow a set of tough demands from senior members as NV. The aim of these demands is for people to earn the right to be members of the groups. These are NVs that those starting out in their working life know they must go through and that are rationalized.

I had a family, so I had to endure and persevere through the cold, the early mornings, the fatigue and the abuse of employers, little by little I was demonstrating with work and dedication, and always with a smile, and the doors began to open...

They also suggest that the work should be oriented in such a way as to ensure one's own goals, even if these are not necessarily interrelated with others.

...there were many bosses, all of them ordered in their own style and for their own well being, and because of their position they took advantage of whatever they could.

## Norms and values in the organization and family group

This field places the NVs that model the decision making of executives in organizations and family environments. The explored NVs are part of the unconscious framework of their eligible behaviors in the organizational and family context.

The NVs socialized in the family have an impact on the way the executive performs in the organization and, in turn, those acquired by belonging to the group of executives of the organizations that impact the family group. The accommodation of these NVs, sustained by their attitudes and strengthened by their experience in the social environment, makes it possible for the executive to adapt to both groups.

The first NV found in this field is described in the executives' affirmation that the work they do should allow them to have personal spaces to

develop their family and personal life in a profitable way, so that they can fulfill their roles in the family and in the organization in a balanced way.

...to get a stable managerial position in a private and recognized company, which will allow me to be financially secure, and to be able to enjoy my family, travel with them or with my friends...

Second, executives try to link work with their personal goals. Executives seek to ensure that their membership in the company allows them to achieve their personal goals. They relate the effort invested with the income obtained in return; they translate their professional success with the resources they obtain for it.

Everything was going very well for me on a work and personal level, but I decided not to renew my contract with (name of company) despite my boss's refusal to accept my retirement, explaining that I was leaving the company for family reasons.

Thirdly, they assume as NV that the job is a responsibility and represents the trust that someone else has placed in them, for which they must respond and be reciprocal.

...to repay the trust they place in me by performing high quality work that contributes to the achievement of the company's objectives.

It is also possible to observe the existence of NV with non-positive purposes for the executives. One of these NV described in the executives' behaviors shows that they are willing to make overexertion and personal and family sacrifices. These are made with the objective that in the future they will be able to get back what they have invested, with a better position or better income.

...in the future I will have more freedom to enjoy more time with my family, time that I am sacrificing at the moment in order to be able to harvest later. In the future I will be able to give my family the necessary tools so that they can better serve society and be good people...

## Norms and values for the organization and the friendship group

In this field, NVs are part of the framework that regulates decision making on the behavioral expressions of executives in the friendly environments and the organization. As in the previous fields, there are guidelines that orient executives in the organization and at the same time have an impact on their friendship contexts.

Among these NVs, there are behavioral guides that orient and organize their work experiences to achieve changes in the dynamics of their group and their responsibility with their environment. These NVs guide them to relate with others to form alliances, share their knowledge and improve their social image in the groups they are part of.

Professionally I will use the knowledge and experiences to develop personal ventures, if I have the chance I want to teach young people and adults to share my experiences and contribute to the development of people, the training I am receiving will help to achieve that goal.

Secondly, they are oriented to achieve the collaboration of people, of the members in the projects entrusted on the basis of being attentive to them, with an image of empathy to seek and achieve the commitment, their realization and that of others.

I consider that my simplicity and way of being has allowed me to have a good number of friends and friendships. Collaboration and empathy are part of my daily work and in the main decisions that correspond to my office and position.

Thirdly, some NVs are to be responsible for the fulfillment of the objectives and for the people under their responsibilities. These NVs guide them to assume both the success and the failure resulting from their executions. This responsibility is related to the commitment they show both to the work and to the people.

...responsible, proactive, dedicated and always looking to generate spaces for improvement for each of the collaborators of my organization.



On the other hand, there are also some NVs that negatively influence their behavior and orient them in a way that could cause discomfort to others, since they try not to be involved with what happens to the people they work with, especially when they do not consider them as members of their friendship groups. Even when their responsibility is direct, they try to stay out, showing the reduced commitment to those they do not consider friends; they try to keep the relationship at the level of work relationships.

I learned not to trust people and those who are acquaintances are not your friends. I learned, injustice, the double faces, hierarchical abuse, i.e., the true face of competitiveness. I learned that ignorance and wickedness can destroy a human being.

### Norms and values in the organization, family and friendship group

The NVs in this field (“w” in Figure 1) organize decision-making on the behaviors that executives can express in organizations and that also have an impact on family and friends. These NVs organize their professional life and their interaction with friends and family groups.

Among the first NVs, it is observed that the commitments accepted with the family, work and friends must be assumed with responsibility, and that their interaction has an impact on each one. In other words, responsibility and commitment should be reflected in the organization, family, friends and society.

To educate my children well, to share time with them and my wife. I believe that the most valuable contribution to society is the seriousness to raise future generations.

In the second place, the interpretation of constancy and perseverance behaviors as NV is raised, justifying their efforts in front of their family and friends and is also necessary to achieve the following goals.

...I learned that with perseverance, effort and discipline one can achieve everything set out to do for one’s personal and professional development...

On the other hand, NVs guide behaviors that have positive effects in one context and possible negative effects in others. For example, one of these NVs orients them to take almost any job, as long as it ensures sufficient income and, in addition, provides an adequate or relevant social image for them.

That year and a half was very hard, I slept four hours a day, I worked Sundays, but the work was going very well, the people in charge of the project were satisfied with my work and there were economic benefits (...).

In conclusion, the texts analyzed show that executives share some norms and values expressed in their behaviors within their roles in the organization, as well as in the groups, such as family and friends.

### Discussions and conclusions

The theoretical model proposed shows two main areas of analysis. The first states that in order to belong to and self-categorize as a member of the group of executives, an individual adapts to the norms and values of the organizational contexts of his or her society. The second axis of analysis indicates that executives, like any individual, belong at the same time to other groups that have intersection points in their Norms and Values (NV), such as the family and friendship groups presented in the study. In other words, the group of executives has norms and values that guide part of their behaviors in an organization, which in turn can be guided or oriented by the NV of the family and friends, belonging to a specific society.

Group members may perceive that certain behaviors are inappropriate or differ from their personal values, but they will follow them because they are part of the guidelines of the group’s identity (Bicchieri, 2002; Bicchieri and Xiao, 2009). Therefore, values and norms may be different or contradictory between groups and even with

society in general, but they are valid for them and are the basis for constructing their identity (Gelbrich *et al.*, 2016).

The analyses carried out show the existence of some NVs that have social acceptance or group recognition. At the same time, they demonstrate others verbalized, used and legitimized by the group, but are not necessarily socially approved. In the group examined, phenomena arise with their own laws irreducible to the psychology of its members (Reynoso, 2018). The group generates an identity that differentiates them from others and allows people to categorize themselves in it and find support for these norms and values, even if they have negative effects for other groups, as observed in this study. These descriptions are consistent with previous findings (Hsieh *et al.*, 2020; Romero, 2011; Tang *et al.*, 2020).

The contributors of the study mention these NVs as common characteristics of the group of executives; these are emergent NVs from their expressions in their professional life histories. They are said to have an emergent character for the group because it is easier to observe them in people's interaction. Due to these conditions, the choice of the qualitative projective method used facilitated the collection of information on these social phenomena in organizations; thus, demonstrating the usefulness of projective methods (Portuondo, 1979). However, the nature of the method only allows the description of the NV of the participants. Although the objective is not to generalize these findings, this study gives us indications that there are NVs that are emergent to the social group category that we call "Peruvian executives".

In this group, the NVs, when perceived as belonging to and determining the group, are also considered as a means of belonging. This perceived requirement means that responsibilities on others are transferred to the outside. In the Peruvian context, being an executive is related to the achievement of social repositioning and promotion to a social group of a higher status than those of the operative positions in the organizations. The achievement of this social promotion does not concentrate in the improvements obtained with respect to the conditions of their previous

positions, but rather they make an unconscious comparison of the disadvantages to which they are not exposed because they no longer belong to the previous group.

The study has found other NV of the group of Peruvian executives that did not reach the saturation level to be included in the list, but which show that Peruvian executives tend to be oriented in an individualistic way to increase their status in the organization. These practices do not necessarily seek to increase the qualities of their position, but rather to defend or maintain the conditions that establish status distances with subordinates, family and friends. These results are consistent with Barreto *et al.* (2000).

On the other hand, it is observed that some executives expect their employees to be willing to accept these difficult working conditions and link this support or endurance with commitment to the organization. In some contexts, these conditions are treated with the euphemism of "floor fee", which is a form of rationalization usually presented for accepting and maintaining these difficult working conditions. These results are consistent with theoretical frameworks developed in other research (Andrés Guzmán *et al.*, 2007; Brown, 2015, 2011).

The chosen methodology and instrument used allows exploring a group phenomenon that is difficult to access directly. Future research could use the projective "life history" technique to address sensitive topics indirectly, especially topics related to ethics or corruption in companies. In this regard, this research can complement what is being done on "unethical business practices in favor of the organization" (Graham *et al.*, 2020; Lian *et al.*, 2020; Umphress *et al.*, 2010).

Due to the nature of the study, the results described are limited to the participant group and its context. Other studies could also include the difference by gender and by industry sector and compare these results. Some previous studies indicate that there are differences by gender in management style (Beji *et al.*, 2020; Cambrea *et al.*, 2019). Expected roles, according to gender or industry of origin, could directly affect the NVs of these executives.

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