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PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF THE DEREGULATION OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS' LABOR COMPETENCIES IN THE USA

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ABSTRACT

Increased Mexican migration to the United States has led to policy challenges in both countries, with ethical, social, human, health, and labor implications. For this reason, bilateral relations between these countries have long-standing needs in legal, human, and labor matters. There is an urgent need to find formulas and solutions to confront multiple challenges. This study explores the professional profile of Mexican immigrants in the USA. Its purpose is to describe the job profile of Mexican immigrants. A random sample of individuals was interviewed before crossing from the USA to Mexico, through the Juarez II International Bridge, from Laredo, Texas to New Laredo, Tamaulipas. This qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive study identifies Mexican immigrants' labor competencies. The findings could assist public and private organizations to evaluate and implement public programs for labor insertion and reinsertion of Mexican migrants on both sides of the USA-Mexico border.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is a common phenomenon that results as an effect of globalization. The immigration rate among the global population is estimated at three percent and rising. Managing migration is a challenge for all related countries because it involves balancing the security and freedom of the recipient country, and the alignment of international laws and agreements with the recipient country´s laws (Sasnal, 2018).

According to Israel and Batalova (2020), in 2019 about 10.9 million Mexican-born individuals were living in the United States of America, representing the largest group of immigrants with about 24 percent of the nearly 45 million foreign-born residents. Compared with other immigrant populations in the USA, Mexican-born individuals tend to be long-time U.S. residents, with more than two decades of residency. However, since more than 60 percent are unauthorized Mexican immigrants, fewer seek to be naturalized U.S. citizens than other groups. They are also more likely to live in poverty and less likely to have health insurance than the overall immigrant population.

Sasnal (2018) considers six actions for taking full advantage of what migration has to offer to countries of origin, transit, and destination. Among those actions, the most relevant to our study are two: the involvement of states in an agreed normative framework for governance and the adoption of the standards and norms for managing migration on a safe, orderly, and regular basis.

This document presents the findings of a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive analysis resulting from interviewing Mexican immigrants working in the United States of America. We carried out this study in December 2019 as part of the third stage of our research program. Data gathering was held on the night of December 19th, 2019 in the city of Laredo, Texas from a group of individuals who were waiting to cross the International Bridge from Laredo, Texas to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Those individuals were on their way to visit their families in Mexico for the Christmas celebration and were driving from different cities in the USA to the crossing point.

The instrument used to interview the immigrants was an 80-item survey developed in a previous research stage: The twelve core competencies in the job profile of Mexican immigrants to the USA (Herrera & Gonzalez, 2019). The research outcomes are perceptions regarding 31 individuals' labor competencies gathered through 12 core competencies factors. We collected their comments, experiences, and perceived feelings while working and living in the USA.

The study findings provide a picture of the immigration diagnosis, as well as key information to address binational migration programs in the US and Mexico. Managers, policymakers, and government officials of both countries could develop legal processes to regulate labor migration for basic and specialized competence profile of Mexican workers. This article is structured as follows. We begin with a literature review. Then, the methodology is detailed. We follow with the presenting of our findings. We finish by deliberating our conclusion and opportunities for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration from Mexico to the United States

The first massive migration wave from Mexico to the U.S. surged in the 1900s. The Mexican Revolution and a strong U.S. economy brought a tremendous increase in immigration rates. The United States Census Bureau estimates that from 1910 to 1930, the number of Mexican immigrants tripled from 200,000 to 600,000. According to Massey (et. al., 2002 in Hirschman, 2014), the second migration wave from Mexico to the United States of America (USA), both legal and not documented, surged after the Bracero Program, which was a temporary farm worker program that ended in 1964. The United States and Mexico share almost 2000 miles of border, so the bordering states are the most immersed in migration issues.

Currently, an estimated 11 million Mexicans live in the U.S., representing 30% of all U.S. immigrants (Hirschman, 2014). This is an approximation because the real number is unknown due to the absence of a precise record of non-documented immigrants. Hirschman found that highly skilled Mexican immigrants are hired in universities and technology sectors, while the less educated ones are hired in agriculture, food processing, and manufacturing industries.

Peri (2010) found that occupations among more educated US-born workers tend to pursue jobs as managers, teachers, or nurses, while immigrants tend to pursue jobs as engineers, scientists, and doctors. Among the educated, US-born individuals tend to work in manufacturing and mining, while immigrants work in agriculture and services. In general, U.S.-born workers tend to specialize in communication tasks, while immigrants tend to specialize in other tasks, such as manual labor. He also affirms that immigrants expand the US productive capacity, and economy while stimulating investment, promoting job specialization, and boosting productivity with no effects at the expense of jobs for US-born workers. Peri believes that immigration implies great effort for assimilating to a different culture, including assimilation of the language, religion, food, as well as social and educational aspects.

Mexico and the United States have a long-standing need to address immigration regulation. In our view, the agenda needs to consider immigrants' ability to enter legally into the US labor force and match their labor competencies to the US labor market needs with the support of binational governmental organizations.

The Competence-Based HRM Model: The Immigrants' Labor Competencies

According to Gan and Kleiner 2005 (in Herrera & Gonzalez, 2019), job descriptions help organize and classify the workforce. Defining the position's purpose provides "clearer expectations and responsibilities. After defining the purpose of the position, it will be easier for the job description writer to communicate the employer's expectations of the employee and the employee's responsibilities" (Gan and Kleiner 2005, in Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019). In the same context, Boyatzis (1982 & 2008, in Herrera & Gonzalez, 2019), stated that "a theory of performance is the basis for the concept of competency, "Maximum performance is believed to occur when the person's capability or talent is consistent with the needs of the job demands and the organizational environment".

Beata (2015) argues that a competency model is adaptable to different kinds of research. As Herrera and Gonzalez (2019) note, competency models may provide the framework for significant human resource development. They further argue that job description competencies must include the candidate's qualifications and professional skills. The competencies in academic background terms can be measured with the following levels: no education, primary, secondary, secondary vocational school education, bachelor, master, or Ph.D. degree. Professional skills can be measured in terms of experience, physical fitness and health, PC skills, physical load (muscular, static, dynamic), and psychological effects (stress, isolation, attention concentration, monotony). As part of the professional skills, they included a driver's license and a certificate of good conduct.

One of the precursors in this matter was David McClelland (1973, in Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019) who argued the best predictors of outstanding on-the-job performance were underlying, enduring personal characteristics addressed as "competencies". He stated that "competencies by themselves are insufficient for performance unless defined in behavioral terms." Vazirani (2010, in Herrera & Gonzalez, 2019) affirms that "although different sets of competencies predict success in different roles, there are certain consistent patterns as well". Then, he affirmed that "competencies form the base for effective and superior performance. There are at least five terms in this definition that require understanding: knowledge, skill, self-concepts and values, traits, and motives. Competence thus requires developing skills and knowledge and designing appropriate competency models that tie to current roles and anticipate future skill requirement".

Later, Dubois (1993) posited that competency models are the best approach to help organizations design an effective Human Resource Management (HRM) System. In the same stream, Fogg (1999) said that in any organization or industry, the behavioral job description is a tool to point out the competencies required for a particular job or occupation. Parallelly, Shippman said that a job description is generally composed of 7 to 9 competencies.

A precursor in this matter was Boyatzis (1982 in Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019), who stated that a theory of performance is the basis for the concept of competency, "Maximum performance is believed to occur when the person's capability or talent is consistent with the needs of the job demands and the organizational environment." Later, he (2008) stated that "the construction of the specific competency is a matter of relating different behaviors that are considered alternate manifestations of the same underlying construct. But they are organized primarily or, more accurately, initially by the similarity of the consequence of the use of these behaviors in social or work settings". He also affirms that the competencies are the most helpful focal point for the description and study of job performance and that the design of the jobs and roles must

include factors like culture and climate, structure and systems, maturity of the industry, and strategic positioning, as well as economic, political, social, environmental, and religious influences.

In a previous stage of this study, we designed a 12-core competencies model (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019) to measure and determine the job profile of Mexican immigrants to the USA. The 12 competencies were linked to factors. This characteristic of decomposition in factors allows a clear identification of the labor profile.

The 12 core competencies are "Academic training/profession, Adaptation to labor environments, Acculturation, Specialized equipment handling, Capacity to perform in conditions of risk or extreme effort, Self-management of continuous education, Communication in the English language, Management of information and communication technologies, Entrepreneurship, Decision making, Career planning and Capacity to identify conditions of improvement." Table 1 shows the 12 core competencies in the job profile of Mexican immigrants to the USA adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Table 1: Competencies in the Job Profile of Mexican Immigrants to the USA

Competencies in the Job Profile of Mexican Immigrants to the USA	
I	Academic Training / Profession
II	Adaptation to Labor Environments
III	Acculturation
IV	Specialized Equipment Handling
V	Capacity to Perform in Conditions of Risk or Extreme Effort
VI	Self-Management of Continuous Education
VII	Communication in English Language
VIII	Management of Information and Communication Technologies
IX	Entrepreneurship
X	Decision Making
XI	Career Planning.
XII	Capacity to Identify Conditions of Improvement

This table presents twelve competencies for a Mexican immigrants' profile. These Competencies groups knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that together allow an individual to develop a concrete activity or group of them successfully. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

This model includes an 80-item questionnaire designed to link the 12 competencies to the factors that allow us to measure each of them. In the Appendix section of the referred paper (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019), noted from A to L (p. 73-76) presents the questions that correspond to each competence.

In the frame of the current study, we conducted a qualitative study by applying the competencies 80-item questionnaire under a survey format. Thirty-one Mexican immigrants were surveyed. The purpose was to gather information about their labor competencies. We believe the outcomes of this study will provide a picture of immigrant labor competencies, issues, and needs, as well as key information to address binational public programs. Through its application, managers and government officials in the USA and Mexico could develop schemes to regulate labor migration.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The third stage of our study was programmed to start in December 2019 to conclude by May 2020. Originally, this third stage consisted of the application of the 80-item questionnaire in survey format (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019), to Mexican individuals working and living in the US, mainly in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) area, which is located in the South of Texas border with Mexico.

We were at a point when the pandemic affected the continuation of this research stage. Even though, before the pandemic shut down the survey down, on the night of December 19th, 2019 we were able to gather information from a group of documented Mexican immigrants and Mexican American citizens (who entered the US as immigrants, when most of them were non-documented) by interviewing them in the city of Laredo, Texas. These individuals, who migrated from Mexico to the US in the last 40 years were on their way to visit their families in Mexico for the Christmas holiday. They were driving from different cities in the USA to gather at the *Caravana del Migrante 2019* border meeting point, to cross the Juarez II International Bridge, from Laredo-New Laredo, México.

It is important to mention that every December on a specific agreed-upon date and cities, Mexican immigrants and Mexican American citizens along the USA, cross the border to Mexico to travel in caravans to their hometowns. Regularly they stay for a maximum of four weeks in Mexican territory and then come back to the USA. They interrupted this yearly trip in 2020 and 2021, and the fluence of them in 2022 was low.

The original plan for gathering information was the survey application, but since most of the individuals were hurried and impatient with the paperwork of filling out the immigration forms and paying the tax fares, we decided to gather the information through interviews based on the questionnaire. The interviewees were randomly selected from the individuals that were parked at the crossing point.

A total of 31 interviews were conducted and analysis of the responses allowed us to conduct a qualitative study which is presented in the current paper. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the Mexican immigrants' labor competencies, by applying the 12-core competency-based model in its 80-item questionnaire format to 31 individuals. This is an exploratory study that focuses on a qualitative description of the immigrants' competencies and does not include quantitative statistical analysis. Currently, a fourth stage of this study is being conducted, and its goal is the completion of a valid number of surveys to proceed with the statistical analysis originally planned for the third stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interviews measured "standard behaviors" that, in concordance with Vazirani´s model (2010), reveal potential assessments of competencies. This section shows the interview results. Interviewers gathered the answers to the items under each competence but also other information the interviewees shared and is presented under each section. The results are presented in a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory format.

Demographics

The first section presents the interviewees´ demographics, including migratory status, and other relevant information. Table 2, from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019) shows the 7 items that were used to gather this information.

Table 2: Demographic Data

Demographic Data
1. Where are you from?   City: _____State: _____
66. What is your year of birth? _____
67. What is your gender: Female _____   Male_____
77. Do you have children?   Yes___ No___
78. And if so, how many? _____
79. How many of your children were born in Mexico? _____ or in the USA? _____
80. What immigration status in the USA do you currently have?
Resident / Green card _____   DACA _____   Citizen_____
Tourist Visa _____   Not documented _____   Other _____ if so, which? _____
Prefer not to say _____

This table shows 7 items that provide Demographic Data. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

The interviewees lived and worked in the USA, mainly in cities along the East Coast. They were driving from their current domiciles for one to three days to reach the gathering point, which was Laredo, Texas.

Since many of them live in large cities, airports are a good option for them, but they decided to drive their vehicles for the following reasons: they were planning to stay for two to three weeks in Mexico; they were traveling with their family, friends, and/or acquaintances from the same hometown; besides their luggage, they were carrying new and used bikes, tires, electronic and domestic appliances, toys, gym equipment, and other artifacts, mainly for their parents, family, and relatives in Mexico. A few of them sold the products in their hometowns.

Regarding the question about their migratory status, respondents all reported being originally Mexican. From this group, the majority indicated they were taking advantage of the US government's actions that allowed them to regularize their migratory status. Most of them reported they got permanent resident/citizen status after working in the US for 10 to 20 years under the non-documented status. Few individuals said they are permanent residents (green card holders) or citizens of the US, after passing the corresponding administrative process by taking the son/daughter of a permanent resident/citizen option, once their parents got a legal migratory status. A few of the individuals did not answer this question.

We assume that all individuals participating in this study were documented and are working legally in the US because they all said that were planning to come back to the US by the end of January (which implies to cross with their vehicles through official roads/bridges from Mexico to USA).

Our assumption lies in the fact that they were about to cross the US-Mexican border in American-registered vehicles, besides American and Mexican customs authorities and catholic priests (local from the US and some from their Mexican provinces), were helping them to register in the *Virgen de Guadalupe Immigrants Caravan* (also known as *Caravana del Migrante)*, and they were in the process of toll and tax payments.

Five-sixths of the interviewees were men, and the rest were women. The age range for most of the interviewees was 30-50 years old. Those over 50 years old were paired with someone in the range of 20-30. Interviewees reported being householders in the US. Half of them were traveling with their spouses/partners and children. Most of their children living in the US are born American citizens and generally the first and/or second child was/were born in Mexican territory. Another relevant fact due to cultural reasons is that many male immigrants in the sample said that they have children in Mexico from their first marriage, and the children traveling that night with them are common children with their current partner. The range of children per interviewee was 2-5.

Interviewees were natives of different provinces in the Mexican territory. The closest one to the crossing point is 400 kilometers, and the farthest one is 1600 kilometers. Most decided to join the *Caravana del*

Migrante to take advantage of the group administrative process and fares negotiated in advance by the caravan leaders. They reported distrust of the customs Mexican authorities for determining the import taxes for the products that they were carrying as well as for the vehicle permit fares to allow them to drive their American cars in Mexico. Besides, by being in the caravan, the risk of being assaulted is much less.

I-Academic Training / Profession

The interviewees' academic training and profession were explored with the questions under Competence I: Academic Training/Profession shown in Table 3 (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 3: Competence I-Academic Training/Profession

I. Academic Training/Profession
2. What is your job? _____
3. Where do you work?   City: _____   State: _____
5. Have you worked in another profession/trade?   Yes ___   No ___
6. If so, which? _____
7. Where? In Mexico _____ or USA _____
8. What completed studies do you have?
Elementary School ___   Middle School___   High school ___   Bachelor____   Master ____
PhD ____   Other___   in which are your studies? _____
9. Where did you learn/study your trade or profession? Mexico _____   USA _____
10. Who taught you that trade or profession? Teachers_____ Parents_____ Relatives _____ Friends_____
Others _____ if so, who? _____

This table shows 8 items that are used for the assessment of Competence I, Academic Training/Profession. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

The interviewees' jobs in the US were mainly in maintenance, cleaning, gardening, trucking, factory working, plumbing, furniture upholstering, childcare, sanitation, construction, carpenter, teaching, teaching assistant, nursing (registered nurse, nurse assistant), health care providers, and dentistry.

Since the individuals were crossing through Laredo city, most of them are living on the East Coast and the central East states of the US. We found that they are working and living there because a family member, relative, or friend recommended the city and introduced them to their first employer.

Most respondents reported they were practicing another profession when living in Mexico and had to learn their current profession in the USA. They did not receive any training from their employees, but the family members, relatives, or friends who invite them to work take the responsibility for training them. For the professions that require certification (teachers and medical or medical-related professions), they enrolled in courses and approved the required certifications for working with their own resources.

Except for those working as teachers, medical and medical-related professions, respondents did not know the process of getting their transcripts from any of the certified organizations to do so in the USA.
Most professions worked by the interviewees do not require a secondary or postsecondary degree. As a result, they did not find it necessary to study under any formal program in the US.

II-Adaptation to Labor Environments

Table 4 shows six items that used for the exploration of Competence II, Adaptation to Labor Environments (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 4: Competence II-Adaptation to Labor Environments

II. Adaptation to Labor Environments
11. How long have you been working in the USA? _____
12. What are the ideal cities to work in the USA? (Named up to three)
_____, _____, _____, _____
13. Why? _____
14. How many times have you entered the USA? _____
15. In what year was your first entry? _____
43. Have you a driver´s license? … American? ___   Mexican? ___   Both? ____

This table shows 6 items that are used for the assessment of Competence II, Adaptation to Labor Environments. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

In the process of adaptation to labor environments, the interviewees said their family members, relatives, friends, and co-workers were key to their adaptation to the workplace and labor environments. Those "padrinos" (good fathers) as they call them, introduce them to the employer and help secure their first employment. Some of them said that got an employment promise before coming to the US, and many reported getting employed within the first week of arriving.

Most indicated they were ready to learn a new profession to get a job as soon as possible and that accommodating employers' requirements was not a problem for them. Many indicated the key to finding and keeping a job is to work shifts that others do not want (the night one mainly) and be ready for overtime. Some of them said that working hard helps them relieve the pain of living apart from their family and away from their home. They all know the best places for working in the US from word of mouth. The criterion for classification is wage per hour and immigration restrictions. So, they assigned California the first place, Texas the second place, Illinois the third place, and New York City the fourth place.

III-Acculturation

To gather information regarding the Acculturation competence, we used 13 items from Herrera and Gonzalez's (2019 in Baronas and Miller's, 1994) Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanic Youth (SASH-Y), shown in Table 5.

Most respondents said that they speak, think, sing, and listen to music in Spanish, in the workplace, and at home. Most of them reported a low or basic understanding of English and would like to learn more but had not found the means to do it.

Most relate with people from the same cultural background, which means they prefer Mexican and Latino friends, TV programs, music, and parties, extending those preferences from their child behaviors. Many interviewees complain because their children speak English to them. Many individuals reported feeling like Mexicans living in foreign territory, away from their people, and that after many years of living in the US, they are barely acculturated to America. Some even mention they would like to have the labor conditions of the US in their own country, so they could be working at "home".

Table 5: Competence III-Acculturation

III. Acculturation						
(Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanic Youth (SASH-Y) taken from Barona and Miller, 1994).						
Answer the next questions, circling the number that you most agree, according to the scale:						
1 (very weakly identified) _ _ _ _ 6 (highly identified)						
44. How much do you identify with American culture?	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. How much do you identify with Mexican culture?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Answer the next questions, circling the number that you most agree, according to the scale:						
5. Only Spanish						
4. Spanish is better than English						
3. Both equally						
2. English better than Spanish						
1. Only English						
46. In general, what language (s) do you read and speak?	1	2	3	4	5	
47. What was the language (s) you used as a child?	1	2	3	4	5	
48. What language (s) do you usually speak at home?	1	2	3	4	5	
49. In which language (s) do you usually think?	1	2	3	4	5	
50. What language (s) do you usually speak with your friends?	1	2	3	4	5	
51. In what language (s) are the TV programs you usually watch?	1	2	3	4	5	
52. In what language (s) are the music you usually listen to?	1	2	3	4	5	
Answer the next questions, circling the number that you most agree, according to the scale:						
5. All Latinos/Hispanic						
4. More Latinos than not Latinos						
3. About half and half						
2. More not Latinos than Latinos						
1. All not Latinos						
53. Your close friends are:	1	2	3	4	5	
54. You prefer going to social gatherings/parties at which people are:	1	2	3	4	5	
55. The person you visit or who you visit are:						
56. If you could choose your children´s friends, you would want them to be:	1	2	3	4	5	

Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanic Youth (SASH-Y). This table shows 13 items that are used for the assessment of Competence III Acculturation. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez's (2019 in Baronas and Miller's, 1994)

IV-Specialized Equipment Handling

Table 6 shows four items used for the exploration of competence IV, Specialized Equipment Handling (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 6: Competence IV-Specialized Equipment Handling

IV. Specialized Equipment Handling
16. What equipment do you use to do your work?
_____ _____ _____
17. What machines do you use to do your work?
_____ _____ _____
18. What tools do you use to do your work?
_____ _____ _____
19. What instruments do you use to do your work?
_____ _____ _____

This table shows four items used for the assessment of Competence IV, Specialized Equipment Handling. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Interviewees know how to handle a cutter, saw, drill, and sandpaper (mainly for construction); industrial machinery, lift trucks (factories), scissors-hoe-mower (gardening) and broom-mop (cleaning); trailer trucks, hammer-pliers-screwdriver (maintenance) and cutter-jointer industrial machinery (manufacturing factories); medical equipment; and Learning Management Systems and internet platforms.

V-Capacity to Perform in Conditions of Risk or Extreme Effort

Table 7 shows six items used for the exploration of competence V, Capacity to Perform in Conditions of Risk or Extreme Effort (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 7: Competence V-Capacity to Perform in Conditions of Risk or Extreme Effort

V. Capacity to Perform in Conditions of Risk or Extreme Effort
20. What is your work schedule, normally?   Monday-Friday __ Monday-Saturday __ Monday-Sunday __ Other__ if so, which? _____   From _____am/pm To _____am/pm
21. In carrying out your work duties, do you face risks or need to use extreme efforts? Yes___ No___
22. What type of risks? _____
23. What type of extreme efforts? _____
24. In carrying out your work duties, do you face stress? Yes___ No___
25. if so, which level of labor stress? Minimum 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5____ Maximum

This table shows 6 items that are used for the assessment of Competence V, Capacity to Perform in Conditions of Risk or Extreme Effort. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Interviewees reported working at least 8 hours a day with a maximum of 12 hours. They do not mind working different shifts and even rotating shifts if the employer needs them in non-regular, broken, or extended schedules. Many of them said they are here to make as much money as possible to pay for their living expenses and to send funds to their family and relatives in Mexico.

They reported risks and extreme efforts in the performance of their work. Among the main risks mentioned are cuts, burns, falls, run over, and accidents in general. Among the extreme efforts, they mentioned heavy lifting, working at heights, noise, standing for long periods, sleeping at modified times, and patience.

VI-Self-Management of Continuous Education and VII Communication in the English Language

Table 8 shows five items used for the exploration of competence VI, Self-Management of Continuous Education (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 8: Competence VI-Self-Management of Continuous Education

VI. Self-Management of Continuous Education
26. Have you had the opportunity to study in the USA?   Yes___ No___
27. if so, what? _____
28. Would you like to study or take a class?   Yes___ No___
29. If so, where would you like to take it? Mexico _____   USA _____
30. What studies or classes interest you? _____

This table shows 5 items that are used for the assessment of Competence VI Self-Management of Continuous Education. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

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Table 9 shows six items used for the exploration of competence VII, Communication in English Language (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 9: Competence VII-Communication in English Language

VII. Communication in English Language
31. Do you speak English?   Yes___ No___
32. Do you read English?   Yes___ No___
33. Do you write English?   Yes___ No___
34. Have you taken English classes?   Yes___ No___
35. If so, where? México _____   USA_____
36. Named the school/institution _____, City _____State_____

This table shows six items used for the assessment of Competence VII, Communication in English Language. Adopted from Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Not more than a third part of the interviewees can speak and read English, and just half of the individuals in this group can write in English because they were taking some classes to learn the English language in the US.

Most reported a high interest in learning English under formal courses. But indicated they were not offered by means for learning English by the employer, coworkers, local governments, and the federal governments from both countries (Mexico and the USA). The were also not offered training in other areas like electricity, mechanics, or welding.

A few of them mentioned the local community colleges as the source for helping them continue with their education (say the certifications required for working or the English language). This last group (mainly when living in California) found education options by themselves when searching for paths to improve their competencies. Just a few report no interest in taking classes of any type, arguing that they were almost retired, and when living for more than 20 years under these restrictions on communication and training for their professions, they can continue like that for a few more years.

VIII-Management of Information and Communication Technologies

Table 10 shows six items used for the exploration of competence VIII, Management of Information and Communication Technologies (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 10: Competence VIII-Management of Information and Communication Technologies

VIII. Management of Information and Communication Technologies
37. Do you know how to handle computer programs? Yes___ No___
38. Which ones (name the most important ones, up to three)?
_____, _____, _____, _____
39. Do you use those computer programs in your work? Yes___ No___
40. Do you have an email account?   Yes ___ No___
41. Do you have a Facebook account? Yes ___ No___
42. Do you have a smartphone?   Yes ___ No___

This table shows 6 items that are used for the assessment of Competence VIII, Management of Information and Communication Technologies. Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

All the interviewees reported having a smartphone; no more than a third of them have an email account; no more than a fifth of them have a Facebook account and use a computer in their daily work.

IX-Entrepreneurship and XI Career Planning

Table 11 shows eight items used for the exploration of competence IX, Entrepreneurship (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 11: Competence IX-Entrepreneurship

IX. Entrepreneurship
4. Are you self-employed? Yes ___ Not _____ If so, do you work for a small___ , medium _____ , or large business___?
57. Have you attempted, or would you like to open a business in the USA? Yes___ No___
58. If so, what kind? _____ and where? City_____ State_____
63. If you return to Mexico, would you intend to continue working? Yes___ No___
64. If yes, what would you do for work? _____
65. Would you like to start a business in Mexico? Yes___ No___
66. What kind? _____
67. Where? City_____ State_____

This table shows eight items that are used for the assessment of Competence IX, Entrepreneurship. Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Table 12 shows three items used for the exploration of competence XI, Career Planning (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 12: Competence XI-Career Planning

XI. Career Planning
59. Do you plan to retire in the USA?   Yes___ No___
60. Do you plan to return to Mexico to stay?   Yes___ No___
61. In case you plan to return to Mexico, would you do it
before_____   after _____ you retire and get benefits or pension from the USA?

This table shows three items that are used for the assessment of Competence XI, Career Planning. Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Approximately a fourth interviewees were small business owners in the US, mainly in painting, gardening, maintenance, preparation and sale of Mexican food. Another fourth of them wish to start their own business in the US in trucking, grocery stores, and most of the areas listed in the previous sentence. They said that large cities are best for business.

Approximately half of the interviewees reported that once they retire, they will return home to Mexico. From those, most said they will start their own business in cattle raising, carpentry, agriculture, grocery stores, and trading merchandise from the US to Mexico.

X-Decision Making and XII Capacity to Identify Conditions of Improvement

Table 13 shows three items used for the exploration of competence X, Decision Making (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 13: Competence X-Decision Making

X. Decision Making
62. If you had similar job conditions and salary, where would you choose to work?   México _____ USA _____   70. What were the main reasons that made you migrate to the USA? (List up to three).   _____
71. What reasons would make you return to your place of origin or to another city in Mexico?   (Name up to three).   _____

This table shows three items used for the assessment of Competence X, Decision Making. Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Table 14 shows five items used for the exploration of competence XII, Capacity to Identify Conditions of Improvement (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019).

Table 14: Competence XII-Capacity to Identify Conditions of Improvement

XII. Capacity to Identify Conditions of Improvement
72. What kind of SUPPORT from the Mexican government or other institutions would you like to be offered if you were to reside in Mexico in the future?   _____
73. And what kind of SUPPORT from the Mexican government or other institutions would you like to be available to you if you were to continue to reside in the USA?   _____
74. Have you used the services of a Mexican Consulate in the USA? Yes___ No___   75. Have you used the services of a Mexican Migrant support Institute? Yes___ No___   76. Have you used the services of an American Migrant support Institute? Yes___ No___

This table shows five items used for the assessment of Competence XII, Capacity to Identify Conditions of Improvement. Herrera and Gonzalez (2019).

Most interviewees indicated they migrated to the US because they lacked opportunities in general in Mexico, they were unemployed, or the available employment only afforded a low-life quality of life for their families (not enough meals to feed, lack of school, and no medical service, mainly). Another relevant reason for many of them to migrate, especially for the young ones, was the lack of safety in their hometowns due to the producer and drug dealer gangs that were forcing landowners to change their traditional agricultural activities for sowing and harvesting drug base plants or to get involved in the "narco" activities by force.

Most had family living in Mexico and a few, because of their affection for their home country, are planning to return to their hometowns after retirement. The rest said they will continue living in the US and will go to Mexico for vacation, weddings, baptisms, funerals, Christmas, and other religious celebrations.

Most of the interviewees said if they had had in Mexico the labor opportunities they currently have in the US, they would have stayed in Mexico, especially because they suffer from discrimination, bad treatment (including the label of criminals and rippers), worse labor conditions than the rest of the workers, the separation from their family (many of them for all the time living in the US and few for an initial period while they earn enough for pay "a pollero" to move their family members to US), the lack of understanding

of the US culture and missing of their own culture. They said that if the Mexican government heard them, they would request, while living in the US, issuance of official documents by Mexico and courier services between both countries, legal advice for US legal procedures (especially for pension purposes), mortgages, loans, and financial support to start their small businesses in the US (many of them lack credit history in the US).

Finally, they said that if the Mexican government heard them, for returning home now or after retirement, they would request availability for loans (they lack credit history in Mexico), counseling and economic support for the startup of a small business, employment opportunities, and safe conditions for living and working (free of "narco" gangs, where they integrity and their family members integrity be assured).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The United Nations Population Division estimates that in 2019 the United States was the destination of 97 percent of Mexicans living abroad. Since migration between Mexico and the United States is a natural and recurrent phenomenon that will continue for future decades, we believe it requires the creation of a broad and consensus-based migration agenda for both countries to find formulas and solutions to confront multiple challenges and opportunities, including the perspective of human resource management.

The goal of this paper is to diagnose the competencies of 31 documented Mexican immigrants living and working in the USA. Consistent with Beeson (2014) we find identifiable and measurable competencies, constitute a reference for providing policymakers, civic leaders, and the public with the facts and figures needed to design policies and programs that increase the economic potential of immigrants in border labor markets.

Data for this qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive study was conducted on the night of December 19th, 2019 through 31 interviews with Mexican individuals working and living in the US. Results do not include any statistical analysis. The interview was based on an 80-item questionnaire, framed by the 12-core competency-based model (Herrera and Gonzalez, 2019). The goal was to explore the Mexican immigrants' labor competencies.

Interviewees were randomly selected from the individuals that were parked at the *Caravana del Migrante 2019* meeting point, in Laredo, Texas, USA. They were driving from different cities in the USA to cross the Laredo-New Laredo International Bridge to reach their hometowns and stay there during the Christmas holidays.

Interviewees reported they work in the USA in maintenance, cleaning, gardening, trucking, factory working, plumbing, furniture upholstering, childcare, sanitation, construction, carpenter, teaching, teaching assistant, nursing (registered nurse, nurse assistant), health care providers, and dentistry. Most interviewees indicated that in the USA they work in a new profession, different from what they were working in Mexico. They are not using their previous labor competencies in their current professions and new competencies to find a job in the USA. They did not receive any formal training from their employees, or any Mexican-USA organization. Neither their employers nor organizations in the USA or Mexico let them know about the transcripts and certification processes to use their previous labor competencies and training in the USA.

In Adaptation to Labor Environments, interviewees said that no governmental or organizational actions were taken to help them find a job. The best places for working are identified by word of mouth. The average time for starting work is two weeks. Interviewees said their family members, relatives, friends, and co-workers were key to their adaptation to the workplace and labor environments. They consider that being available for work in any profession, shift, schedule, and place is key to finding and keeping a job.

Most interviewees do not hold the competencies for acculturation into the American culture. They continue speaking Spanish at home and at their workplace and mainly interact with Latino Spanish speakers. Their children support them as translators in personal and working environments, but contradictory feelings arise when they realize their kids are losing their roots. Most of them said they are missing their hometowns, food, family, and relatives, and the feeling of being foreigners is always present in their lives.

According to their professions, they have the competencies for handling the following equipment: cutter, saw, drill, and sandpaper (mainly for construction); industrial machinery, lift trucks (factories), scissors-hoe-mower (gardening) and broom-mop (cleaning); trailer trucks, hammer-pliers-screwdriver (maintenance) and cutter-jointer industrial machinery (manufacturing factories); medical equipment; and Learning Management Systems and internet platforms.

Interviews have the competencies to perform in conditions of risk or extreme effort, like working different shifts, from 8 to 12 hours a day, in non-regular, broken, or extended schedules. The most common risks they face are cuts, burns, falls, run over, and accidents in general. Extreme efforts reported were lifting heavy items, working at heights, noise, standing for long periods, and sleeping at modified times.

Regarding the self-management of continuous education and communication in the English language, less than a third of the interviewees can speak English as beginners and a fourth can read it. This group said they were taking some classes to learn the English language in the US. The rest said they would like to learn English under a formal program but have not found the means to do it. They affirm that neither the employers, nor the local, state, or federal government in the US or Mexico help them with the language courses or training in the profession field.

Most interviewees lack competencies in the management of information and communication technologies. No more than a third of them have an email account and no more than a fifth of them have a Facebook account and use a computer in their daily work.

A fourth of the interviewees possess entrepreneurship competencies since they are owners of small businesses, mainly in painting, gardening, maintenance, and preparation and sale of Mexican food. Another fourth of them wish to start their own business in the US in trucking, grocery stores, and most of the areas listed in the previous sentence. They said the best cities for business are the big ones.

On average career planning competencies of the interviewees are high since half of them reported they will start a business in Mexico when they retire in the US. The most popular businesses they are interested in are cattle raising, carpentry, agriculture, grocery stores, and trading merchandise from the US to Mexico. Regarding the decision-making competencies, interviewees' decision to immigrate to the US was based on the low rates of employment, the lack of safety, and the lack of opportunities in their home country. The interviewees' capacity to identify conditions of improvement is tangible. Interviewees said they would remained in Mexico if they had the labor opportunities they currently have in the US would hope to avoid discrimination, bad treatment, and marginalization present in the U.S.

Another condition of improvement they identify is support the Mexican government offers to them. They would like to see Mexican offices in US territory offer bidirectional courier services as well as the issuance of official documents. They reported urgently needing legal advice to regularize their migratory status in the US, advice on financial matters, and on legal procedures to get their pension when they retire. They mentioned that if the Mexican government heard them, they would request support for planning their return to their hometowns after retiring in the US, and the most popular needs they mentioned were counseling and availability of loans for startup small businesses, employment opportunities, and safe conditions for living and working.

The research results may be used as a parameter for researchers and policymakers to design and implement policies and programs for the regulation of migration on both sides of the US-Mexico border based on a measurable job profile of the immigrants. The development of legal schemes intended to regulate labor migration for the basic or specialized competence profile of Mexican workers may be designed, for labor insertion and reinsertion of on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

The main limitation of this research is the lack of precise and real data about indicators related to immigration from Mexicans to the US. A second limitation, and probably the most important, is the bias that may cause the attitude of distrust, fear, and segregation among Mexican immigrants, either documented or not documented.

The key opportunity of our research is that managers and politicians can focus on Mexican immigrants as a source of human resources for a wide variety of firms, as well as macro human capital management in both the sender and receiver migration countries (i.e., Mexico and the USA). Future research with a larger sample and a quantitative analysis will diminish bias in the gathered responses.

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