UNIVERSIDADE FUMEC
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS EMPRESARIAIS – FACE

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**THE INFLUENCE OF PROACTIVITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR IN
ORGANIZATIONS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY CONSIDERING
GENERATION AND GENDER**

Belo Horizonte
2018

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Organization Performance

Dissertation presented to the Course of Master's Degree in Administration of FUMEC University, as part of the requirements for obtaining a Master's degree in Administration.

Area of concentration: Strategic Management of Organizations.
Research Line: Organizational Strategy and Behavior.

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Belo Horizonte
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Dissertação intitulada **"THE INFLUENCE OF PROACTIVITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY CONSIDERING GENERATION AND GENDER"** de autoria de Jussara da Silva Pontel, aprovado pela banca examinadora constituída pelos seguintes professores:

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Belo Horizonte, 17 de dezembro de 2018.

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

Organizational behavior is a topic present in many studies; it offers several study possibilities and discoveries. Individual performance is a complex subject, widely studied through the lenses of different approaches. Under this scenario, proactivity becomes the focus of this paper, considering the opportunities of understanding better the elements that compose proactive behavior, and how this behavior might influence the performance of an individual. The objective of this work was to comprehend how proactivity relates to the performance of individuals, taking into account generations and genders existing in a financial institution. By using phenomenology as method of investigation, one sought to investigate the essence of individual behavior, the thoughts and feelings that move people towards one direction. Comparing two groups of managers, high and low-performances, the results show that proactivity presents itself as a dynamic characteristic in the individual, it is not constant. An individual may be more or less proactive in determined scenarios and situations. Generations reveal different meanings inside the same performance universe. The engagement appeared to be positive, even in situations in which feelings and affections towards the job was negative. These findings are new to the literature. As an essential limitation, it is necessary to point out that this work investigated only people in management positions.

Key words: Proactivity. Performance. Generations. Gender. Phenomenology. Organizational behavior.

RESUMO

O comportamento organizacional é tema de estudo amplo e de muitas possibilidades e descobertas. O desempenho do indivíduo é um tema complexo, frequentemente estudado sob enfoque de várias abordagens. Sob esse cenário a proatividade ganha enfoque neste trabalho, tendo em vista as oportunidades de se compreender melhor os elementos que compõe o comportamento proativo e como esse comportamento pode influenciar o desempenho do indivíduo. O objetivo deste trabalho foi compreender como a proatividade se relaciona com o desempenho do indivíduo contemplando as gerações e gêneros presentes numa instituição financeira. Utilizando a fenomenologia como método buscou-se investigar a essência do comportamento individual, seus pensamentos e sentimentos que os movimentam em uma direção. Comparando dois grupos de gerentes de alta e baixa performance, os resultados mostram que a proatividade se apresenta como uma característica dinâmica no indivíduo e não permanente. Um indivíduo pode ser mais ou menos proativo em determinados cenários e situações. As gerações demonstram diferentes significados dentro de um mesmo universo de desempenho. O engajamento se mostrou positivo mesmo em situações onde o sentimento e afeto em relação ao trabalho se mostrou negativo. Esses achados são inéditos na literatura. Como limitação essencial este trabalho investigou somente pessoas no cargo de gerência.

Palavras-chave: Proatividade. Desempenho. Gerações. Gênero. Fenomenologia. Comportamento organizacional.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are currently seeking solutions for the dilemmas faced in their daily activities. The organizational environment presents important challenges, specially the interrelation among the different scenarios that compose administrative environments. In this context, the topic 'people management' receives an important focus, because it is present in organizational interactions and challenges. The organizational behavior is a broad subject that allows multiple possibilities and discoveries. On the other hand, many are the factors that make this subject challenging, because each behavior of an individual brings along several elements that are related and contribute for the product of his/her work, that is, his/her deliveries.

Individual performance is a complex topic, frequently studied by several authors that focus on different approaches. Presenting a satisfactory performance is a wish not only from the individual, but also from the organization, which makes this topic always rich in opportunities to be better studied and understood. There are many possibilities of diagnostic and comprehension that may support organizations in the construction of increasingly adherent models that contemplate their needs and complexities.

Personal behavior is full of parts and variables that unfold in satisfactory or unsatisfactory performances. According to this scenario, proactivity receives emphasis in this paper, taking into account the opportunities of better understanding the elements that constitute proactive behavior, and also how this behavior may influence an individual efficiency. In face of the complexity of human behavior, proactive behavior can present itself as one more element to contribute to people development.

In a society of multiple cultures, with extensive geographical area, which further contributes to this multiplicity, both generation and gender at work are constructs that receive a lot of attention and are significantly studied. Different genders and generations relationships at work are objects of frequent study and comprehension. In front of broad and complex themes, such as performance, and organizational behavior, there will always be new study opportunities under new approaches.

Proactivity and performance, even though just subjectively related, might be better understood together. It is possible seeking to understand if performance is also the result of intrinsic individual phenomena about his/her life experiences and outside world perceptions. The

studies about performance progress in a way that personal behavior is studied considering the contexts in which the person is introduced, that is, external factors. However, studies that investigate performance observing the essential thoughts of an individual have not been found, this justifies the methodological choice for this project.

With the purpose of understanding better relations still little studied, and also with the intention of discovering more influences in behavior, the phenomenological method of investigation starts to play a fundamental role in this paper. Phenomenology carries along the study of essences, that is, human most pure and profound perceptions may be identified and studied. These perceptions might contribute to a better comprehension of diagnostics already found, since that the context in which the individual is introduced is widely studied; however, studies about performance considering the essential thoughts of an individual have not been found, that is the reason for choosing a phenomenological approach to the investigation led here.

Human situations, interactions and meeting are characterized for being full of significance. It is a lifeworld partially shared, based on forms of action somewhat agreed. The lifeworld is originated in an individual and in his/her daily activities. Sharing the lifeworld means that individuals participate of activities similarly. The way of acting of certain individuals are usually related to their life situation, that could be their own or from people around them. People may engage in a common project, establishing a connection between the self and the environment, guided by a vision of the future. This might happen under somewhat corporative, democratic, and socially positive conditions, but it always happens in a specific situation, characterized by cultural, individual, and material (in a physical private environment, for instance) aspects. Those aspects should be taken into account in all parts of the research process; they are always involved in a continuous and mutually influential process of change and development (Sages, 2014).

Understanding the essence of behavior can contribute to the identification of problems more assertively, including new views and approaches. The phenomenological approach consists of searching the meaning of a certain topic purely, without external interferences that would normally affect the perceptions in the identification of problems, solutions, or opportunities.

The purpose of this paper is to study the gaps in the existing theory about the essence of the behavior of an individual, under this view, proactive behavior may be better understood when there is the intention of better comprehending performance. Gender and generations are also

objects of investigation of this project, in order to complement the relation between proactive behavior and performance.

1.2 Research Problem

How does proactivity relate to individual performance considering generations and genders present in a financial institution?

1.3 Main Objective

The main objective of this paper is to comprehend how proactivity is related to the performance of individuals by means of an analysis of genders and generations of employees in a financial institution.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- Analyzing the thoughts and the feelings of generations Baby Boomer, X, and Y considering male and female genders in relation to their deliveries in the organization environment;
- Identifying the elements of proactive behavior in each generation and gender;
- Analyzing how the thoughts and feelings of generations Baby Boomer, X, and Y, considering male and female genders, are associated with proactivity in the organizational environment;
- Analyzing how the elements of proactive behavior are related with performance.

1.5 Justification

Nowadays we live in a world full of differences and variations, in face of innumerable cultures, traditional customs, habits, belief systems that, due to technology, are in constant interaction. It is easily possible to note several manifestations from different social groups. The organizational world introduced in this scenario is increasingly seeking engaged and active people, from whom it is expected contributions to make a competitive difference, and also to use all technological resources available in a complete and adding way.

The organizational behavior is frequently studied, and, very important in the construction proposed here, since that having the right people in the right place may potentially increase the competitive differential of an organization. In order to do that, there are many tools, models, mappings, with the intention of helping organizations to be more assertive in their management model, seeking performance in its totality.

Generation and gender are human characteristics that are essential to the comprehension of the behavior of an individual in the organizations. In light of these characteristics, it is possible to see an opportunity of better comprehending some phenomena that influence in the distinction of a high performance individual to a low performance one. In this context, the point here is to understand better the connection between proactivity and behavior.

Proactive employees are dynamic and flexible. They select, create, and change their working environment in a way that they can improve their careers, and, consequently, improve the organization (Huang, 2017). This concept related to gender and generation may contribute to understanding better the problems that organizations face while hiring an excellent professional, or promoting him/her, and then, sometime later, being presented with a performance lower than expected.

With the intention of understanding the core of what moves an individual towards proactivity, the choice for a phenomenological approach is justified in this paper. Phenomenology is gaining ground and recognition as an approach to qualitative research, possible to be applied to the study of important phenomena in a variety of fields, including Administration and Organizational Studies.

The present paper becomes important to contribute to the comprehension of human behavior in the organizational environment, taking into consideration gender, generation, and

other elements that lead a person to be proactive. It is found in literature the opportunity of understanding better how those elements are related to performance. In the most researched portals to perform this work (spell and ebsco), no studies were found relating these constructs. Feelings and thoughts existent in each individual may aid the comprehension of the organizational context that, in its majority, works with goals and results. Besides that, investigating proactivity as a phenomenon may contribute to the development of new models and future trainings for organizations.

In the field of management, one can see the opportunity to investigate new diagnoses to understand the dispersion of deliveries and differences of engagement. There is an opportunity to better understand which triggers can assist in greater engagement, and consequently better delivery. The dynamics of the individual's behavior in organizations and their deliveries are opportunities for discoveries that must be frequent. In this line, bringing the new findings closer to practice must always be applied.

2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE

In this chapter, it will be presented theories that support the objective that this research has aimed to investigate.

2.1 Proactive behavior: definitions

Proactivity is the human capacity of anticipating and planning how to achieve a determinate state or result. The proactive model is characterized by the freedom of choice, which is an odd characteristic of human beings, which differentiate us from animals. The animals react only to stimuli according to their instincts or to the training that they have received. Between stimulus and responses, human beings have the freedom of choice, which can make them a protagonist of their own life, and their behavior is a result of the solutions proposed by themselves, not by external conditions (Silva, 2000).

The complexity of organizational dynamics is increasing, so proactive behaviors are a key component of practical behavior in dynamic environments in which coworkers and organizations should not only anticipate the change, but also respond to it proactively in order to be effective. Actually, individuals (that is, coworkers, team members, managers, CEOs) should not only be proactive and anticipate changing situations, but also identify opportunities and enjoy to its most the benefits of collectivity, which may be the team, the organization, etc. (Quintero & Curral, 2012).

Still according to Quintero and Curral (2012), organizations may benefit from promoting self-leadership in their working force; this could happen by recruiting self- leader people or investing in training initiatives. Through these practices, organizations can increase their working force capacity to execute proactively what may be an organizational success, a key component in the construction of interdependent contexts. Fay and Sonnentag (2012) affirm that small proactive attitudes may, not only lead to positive results as times passes, but also help individuals to continue motivated to feel competent in their daily work.

Proactive behavior refers to a process oriented by objectives, consistent in proactive object of generating goals and effort. Inside the working place, this process may stimulate innovation of the employees, improve performance at work, and facilitate career success, what, in

its turn, contributes to organizational success. The proactive behavior might be related to a psychological empowerment that plays an important role in promotion of proactive behaviors, such as feedback seeking, creative process engagement, and innovative behavior. The psychological empowerment represents an active individual, oriented to his/her working role. This means that this type of individual sees his/her situations at work as something they can change according to their behavior, and this stimulates their creative behavior. Huang (2017) argues that offering employees the opportunity of more auto determination is increasingly important to involve them in engagement. The proactive workers are flexible learners, autonomous, and anxious. They select, create, and change their working environment in a way that they can improve their careers (Huang, 2017).

If organizations need to react to changes, managers should embrace and reinforce proactive behavior. Experienced leaders usually accept employees' challenges. They are able to share power with their employees, and to be receptive to their ideas. They listen to their staff members, instead of promoting their own agenda. Instead of being defensive in relation to suggestions, leaders recognize that two thinking heads work better than one. An organizational culture that incentivizes communication, and avoids an intimidation environment, allows the employees to discuss issues that are relevant to their mission. Even when a suggestion made from someone is not very precise, an internal environment where workers may share what they think about the problems may also bring innovative solutions (Slatten et. al. 2013).

The authors still affirm that in complex environments, managers depend upon their employees to have solutions, in a way that threats and opportunities can be anticipated and resolved. The employees should be willing to help and capable of challenging the status quo, so that the organization can become more flexible. The proactive people do exactly that, they not only express their worries, but they also take responsibility of making the changes needed, in this way, most of the times, they solve the problem innovatively. If the administration is favorable to the proactive worker, there are several benefits to the individual and to the organizations.

The proactive personality of a person represents his/her lasting behavior tendency, and this tendency might unfold in proactive behaviors along time; however, it is believed that personality is fairly the central predictor of results at work, in comparison to real behaviors (Zhang et. al. 2012).

Slatten et. al. (2013) conclude in their study that proactive employees refer to a protective professional career in which they make constant adjusts in their working journey. As many others, proactive individuals, in their majority, do not wish to stay in a single position throughout their lives. On the contrary, they tend to modify their jobs or tasks, maybe even leaving a position to work in another company, because they would like to promote their own career. Essentially, they crave a path without borders, and are not stuck at a specific company.

2.2 Proactive behavior and psychological factors

In his research, Huang (2017) looks at the relation between psychological empowerment of employees and their proactive behavior; he also explores the mediating role of self confidence in this relation. Still according to this study, psychological empowerment and self-confidence lead to a proactive behavior. Besides that, self-confidence is partially mediated by the relation between psychological empowerment and proactive behavior. These discoveries make clear the importance of having at the working place managers that promote the psychological empowerment of employees and self-confidence, so that their proactive behavior is also promoted. This implies sharing power, trusting the employees' execution and delivery abilities.

By means of empowerment, employees are encouraged to do their job well, to develop meaning in their work, and to have the confidence to influence organizational results through their working roles. The author cites that the psychological empowerment of employees generates motivated behaviors desired by the employer. When employees feel able to do their jobs, they are more likely to be innovative, to deal better with high uncertainty, and to have greater ability to overcome problems; as a consequence, they are more likely to be seen by employers as proactive (Huang, 2017).

In his study, the author tests the mediating role of self confidence in the relation between the psychological empowerment of employees and proactive behavior. The psychological empowerment is positively related to the proactive behavior, since that, employees with a stronger perception of preparation were more to exhibit proactive behavior. This finding indicates that proactivity represents a direct orientation to psychological empowerment. Moreover, the psychological empowerment is positively associated to self-confidence, and this latter is certainly

related to proactive behavior. These results validate the findings that the empowered feeling precedes intrinsic motivation, which compels the behavior of an individual.

Crant (1995) cites in his work a discussion about the proactive component of the organizational behavior; he also tests a measure for proactive personality. This measure of personal disposition in relation to proactive behavior aims to identify the differences between people as they present attitudes to influence their environments. The author defines a proactive personality as a characteristic of a person that usually is not influenced by situational forces and that causes environmental changes. Proactive people identify opportunities and act on them; they show initiative, act, and persevere until they make significant changes.

In contrast, people who are not proactive show opposite patterns; they cannot identify, or embrace opportunities to change things. It is expected that proactivity is related to performance at work, because it represents personal behaviors that are important elements to tasks associated with work (Crant, 1995).

The employees that have a strong feeling of empowerment are more likely to present proactive behavior than the other employees. Additionally, employees that feel empowered also present more self-confidence than the ones who do not feel empowered, which, in its turn, promote their proactive behavior. In this way, psychological empowerment not only affects directly the proactive behavior of an employee, but it also indirectly, increasing his/her self-esteem. The partial mediator effects also suggest that, in addition to self-confidence, there are other factors (such as attitude at work) that also mediate the effect of psychological empowerment on proactive behavior. Empowered employees will be satisfied with their work, which results in better working behaviors (Huang, 2017).

The author still states that employers may promote proactive behavior of their employees, by training them and promoting their self-confidence. Moreover, the psychological empowerment affects not only the proactive behavior, but it also influences indirectly proactive behavior through self-efficiency, which reveals a mechanism still not detected before to explain the relationship among psychological empowerment, proactive behavior, and self-confidence (Huang, 2017).

Rooted in an interactionist perspective, the proactive approach considers the possibility of individuals creating their environments. In Psychology and in the literature of organizational behavior, the topic of interactionism supports that this behavior is controlled internally and

externally, and that the situations are a function of people as much as the opposite is true. Consequently, individuals can intentionally and directly influence their situations at work, making their working performances more successful (Crant, 1995).

This author's study results show that the proactive personality is associated to performance, even when there is not control of the effects from experience, social desirability, consciousness, and extroversion. The individuals select, interpret, and alter situations. The evidences suggest that proactivity may be more useful in behavior when there is a high autonomy from the individual. Therefore, an explanation for these findings is that more proactive people tend to create situations that consist with the effective performance of their work (Crant, 1995).

Jafri et. al. (2016) analyzed the connections between emotional intelligence and employees' creativity, and, specifically, the moderating roles of proactive personality and organizational atmosphere in the relation emotional intelligence/applied creativity. The studies revealed a positive and meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity. The analyses revealed that employees' proactive personality and organizational climate influenced the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee creativity. The emotional intelligence, specifically, leaded to a higher creativity from the employees when they presented a more proactive personality and when the organizational atmosphere was favorable to creativity (Jafri et. al. 2016).

Employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence are more able to think in different ways, to evaluate multiple options, and to come up with new ideas in their professional lives. The results supported that the association between emotional intelligence and creativity became stronger in a situation that a person has a strong tendency to be proactive. The results also revealed that the organizational atmosphere activates the emotional intelligence of an employee in his/her creative performance (Jafri et. al. 2016).

2.3 Proactive behavior and its relation to leadership and resilience

Using field experience in the United Arab Emirates, Martin et. al. (2013) compared the impacts of directive and enabling leadership in basic tasks' proficiency and proactive behavior. The results showed that both directive leadership and training increased the proficiency of basic tasks in the working unit, but only empowering leadership increased proactive behavior. The

study of working conditions revealed that directive leadership increased proactive behaviors in the working units that were extremely satisfied with their leaders, whereas empowering leadership had stronger effects both in the proficiency of basic tasks and in the proactive behaviors in the working units less satisfied with their leaders. The authors concluded that the capacity of leadership interventions impact the performance of the individual, and, consequently, the organizational environment.

Research indicates that, when leaders are willing to improve their proactive behaviors, a protagonist leadership is usually superior to a directive leadership. This reinforces the arguments, supports the values of directive leadership. Alternatively, a situation in which the employees seem less satisfied with the leader may offer an appropriate opportunity to implement empowerment leadership, especially if it is necessary to improve performance and proactivity in the main tasks, in these conditions, the employees are more inclined to embrace the chance of working independently (Martin et. al. 2013).

Schmitt et. al. (2016) present a study in which transformational leadership and proactive behaviors are connected, and reveal that the involvement at work only unfolds into proactivity is the employees have their tension at work controlled. The study contributed to clarify a boundary condition between the transformational leadership and the proactivity of the employees, promoting an understanding of the relation between leadership and proactivity.

More than considering a self-confidence behavior focused on strategies, the organizations can also benefit from considering the indirect conditional effects of strategies for a self-leadership reasoning in addition to natural reward strategies. As results point out, both strategies play an important role in the relation among orientation towards learning, behavior focused on strategies, and proactive performance of working roles. This is of extreme importance to the organizations, since that the positive effect of the self-leadership behavior might be maximized through cognitive strategies of self-leadership. Besides that, there will only be a significant indirect positive conditional effect to higher strategies of the thinking model (Quintero&Curral, 2012).

Proactive behavior can unfold into the organizational environment as resilience and optimism. Resilience received an increasing interest taking into consideration its potential to generate organizational results. Nguyen (2016) explored in his study the relations between proactive personality variables and optimism, leadership styles, and the resilience of employees. Results show that leadership, proactive personality, and optimism are significantly related to

resilient behaviors. The results also indicate that the resilience of the employees is related to the variables of proactivity and optimism, associated with the structure of resilience (that is, proactive personality and optimism), but, operationally distinctive (Nguyen, 2016).

Still according to Nguyen (2016) goal clarification and performance expectations through recognition include important feedback behaviors that promote intrinsic motivation and facilitate continuous learning and adaptive capacity. Although the use of recognition behaviors as a feedback tool imply a contingent leadership approach, such behaviors may be present in a broader context, implicitly and explicitly, by the empowerment leadership framework.

Proactive personality emerged as a significant predictor of employee resilience. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggest a positive connection between proactive personality and behaviors of construction of a net of feedback seeking, both related to the construction of resilience of the employees considered in the study (Nguyen, 2016).

In addition, the author complements by saying that proactive personality has been associated to the active search and identification of opportunities in times of change, consistent with the adaptive facet of construction. Optimism also contributed significantly to the prediction of resilient behaviors. Aligned to previous research linking optimism to an adaptive stance and to resilience from a coping perspective, optimistic employees have adopted resilient behavior more often.

Quintero and Curral (2012) explore the relationship between goal orientation, self-leadership dimensions, and proactive performance in the working function. The authors hypothesize that learning orientation, in contrast to performance orientation, positively predicts proactive performances. They also affirm that natural reward strategies, self-leadership, and thought patterns are expected to regulate this relationship. Workers from a software company participated in this study. As expected, the learning orientation predicts performance in the adaptive and proactive working functions. Besides that, in the relation between learning orientation and role performance in proactive work through strategies focused on self-leadership behavior, a moderate mediation effect was found for natural leadership strategies and natural reward thinking.

Grant (2009) brings a counterpoint in the theory of proactivity when he states that even though proactive behavior is important to organizations, it is not always appreciated by supervisors. It is proposed that the values of the employees influence their subjective intentions,

which influences supervisors' attributions to the employees, who deserve credit for their proactive behavior. More specifically, the hypothesis that the employees express strong pro-social values or low negative effect, proactive behaviors will have stronger relationships with supervisory performance evaluations.

Bolino et. al. (2010) also bring in their work another negative view when they investigate proactive behavior. Proactivity is usually focused on forms that allow individuals and organizations to be more effective. Even though it has been observed that some proactive behaviors are undesirable or have potentially negative consequences, researchers explore individual and organizational negative implications of expecting that workers behave proactively. Specifically, in the individual level, it was argued that expecting proactive behavior in the organizations might contribute to stress among employees and also conflict between less and more proactive employees.

In the organizational level, the authors suggest that depending upon a proactive behavior may cause damage to an organization, harming its ability to socialize employees and promote its organizational culture, weakening learning capacity and reducing the potential of raising new leaders. The conclusion discusses additional paths for studies that examine the potential costs of proactive behavior for both individuals and organizations (Bolino et. al. 2010).

2.4 Proactivity as innovation in stressful environments

Montany et. al. (2014), in their work, examine the extent to which proactive generation is a self-aligning mechanism that explains how individual and contextual factors influence employees' innovative behavior at work. Specifically, it proposes that the orientation of learning objectives, the psychological atmosphere for innovation, and a variety of tasks positively influence in an indirect way the innovative behavior through proactive activities of goal generations, that is, predicting and planning.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that small business management can rely on its employees' engagement as a valuable means of supporting innovative behavior in the workplace. This also implicates that, when delegating such responsibilities to their followers, managers and businessmen can better manage their internal resources, ensuring greater support for innovative activities.

The research by Sonnetag and Sphychala (2012) shows that workplace stressors are positively related to proactive working behavior. The study examines whether these relationships can be generalized to proactive behavior and whether relations of workplace stressors (time pressure, situational constraints) and work control with proactive behavior can be explained by the breadth in the role of self-confidence as an underlying mechanism. Working control and time pressure were positively correlated to self-confidence, and the role of self-confidence was positively related to proactive behavior. Working control also had a direct relation to proactive behavior.

As proactive behavior is beneficial to the organization, managers may want to encourage their employees to be proactive. In order to promote self-confidence and proactive behavior, managers should try to improve the working control of their employees. Moreover, in order to promote working control, managers can involve their employees in decisions about rules for working procedures, attribute complex tasks, and even let the employees decide what are the steps needed to complete tasks. Relating stressful working places, time pressure seems to promote proactive behavior (Sonnetag&Sphychala, 2012).

In this way, temporary pressure seems to be acceptable. Therefore, managers may use time pressure, especially in project based works, to promote proactive behavior, but they should offer possibilities to avoid a lasting time pressure (Sonnetag&Spychala, 2012). Such as the authors cited before, Schmitt et. al. (2016) state that organizations that wish their employees to show higher levels of proactivity need to control their stress levels, because it can lead to negative reactions if it lasts long.

Situational constraints as a typical obstructive stressor were not related to proactive behavior. According to the findings that show negative relations between obstacle stressors and performance, as much as the involvement at work, the authors suggest that the administration uses an appropriate approach to increase employees' proactive behavior. The study demonstrates that the role of self-confidence is an important mechanism of connection in control of work and time pressure, on the one hand, and proactive behavior at work, on the other hand. Supporting employees in the development of a high level of self-confidence, for instance, by providing job control, is an important task for today's job settings (Sonnetag&Spychala, 2012).

Based on previous research on proactive personality and person-environment adjustments, Zhang et. al. (2012) examined the congruence effect of the proactive personality, which, in turn,

influences job satisfaction, affective commitment, and working performance. Moreover, the effects found were of poorer job outcomes when employees' proactive personality was smaller than that of their leaders, in comparison to when their proactive personality was larger. These findings raise awareness to the fundamental role played by leaders in promoting their employees' proactivity at work (Zhang et. al. 2012).

According to the authors, it is believed that the proactive personality of employees can be beneficial to their working results. In the referred study, it was identified an important contingency to the working results of the worker with proactive personality, that it, the leader with proactive personality. Organizations could better benefit from proactiveness applied by leaders combining them to followers that present proactive personalities, this is a provision that many organizations consider to be critical to innovation and sustainable competitive advantages.

Most researchers that work with the resource model demands to investigate the factors that influence engagement at work have little discussions about the effects of personal characteristics. Social support as a working resource promotes the development of individuals, stimulating their potential, and it also plays a supporting role in achieving working deadlines; therefore, it strengthens the involvement of the employee with the work done, stimulating organization members to be more dedicated in their jobs (Li et. al. 2014).

Highly proactive employees are more willing to improve their performance at work by means of their own efforts, which can be communicating with their managers and colleagues, or seeking feedback. Highly proactive individuals will benefit more from a proper work environment, abundant in social support, that will guide them to a high level of engagement in their jobs, than will low proactive individuals who have a strong purpose in maintaining the status quo. They will not easily reduce their involvement with the work they are doing, even if they do receive less social support. They are frequently considered to be less sensible to the changes in their working environment. About the factor of positive personality, previous researchers concluded that high proactivity is found in individuals that present initiative (Li et. al. 2014).

This chapter aimed to define proactivity and to cite its possible relationships with other factors from the perspective of performance. The next chapter intends to understand what literature says about the generations trying to add this variable in the context of the proactive behavior and the performance of the individual in organizations.

2.5 Generations

A generation is defined as a group that shares a particular period of birth years and a group of worldly well-founded visions associated with the definitions of social and historical events that happened through the years of their formative development. The generational groups share a common consciousness and develop ideas and experiences. Proponents of the notion of multigenerational theory argue that people growing at different periods of time have very different sets of beliefs, values, attitudes and expectations, which influence their behavior in general and in the workplace (Cogin, 2012).

The working spaces are becoming more diverse and the probability of an older employee having to report to a younger manager is increasing. Cogin (2012) says that in organizations with 500 employees or more, 58% of human resources management professionals reported conflict between younger and older employees, in its majority due to their different perceptions of professional ethics and requirements for work-life balance. Although cultural and gender diversity has received significant attention in the literature, little attention has been given to the impact of age diversity on management practices.

Today's working force includes at least three generations close to 60 years-old: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. In light of various age segments in the workforce and the aging of the population, strategic management human resources are destined to attract, to engage, and to maintain employees from all ages. There are accentuated differences in the expectations and motivations between these generational groups. For instance, Generations X and Y have a vision about the working world which is totally different from Baby Boomers' vision (Cogin, 2012).

Cavazotte et. al. (2012) define the Boomers as a group that tend to value job security. Born before 1965, this generation would be more loyal and attached to the companies, more diligent and dedicated to work, more traditional and used to hierarchy, interested in power acquisition and status quo along their careers and also in extrinsic rewards for their behavior, though with more difficulty to balance personal and professional life. Codeco et. al. (2013) define this generation as motivated, optimistic and addicted to work. They value the status and the

professional growth within the company, which they are loyal to, and, although they have little technological knowledge they tend to accept it in their daily lives.

Seipert, Baghurst (2014) affirm that most Baby Boomers long for a long time job, even within a poor economical context. They do not like the constant search for work; they long for a long time job and give up family and free time in order to ensure a stable and lasting working life. Dante, Arroyo (2017) add by saying that Baby Boomers were educated in a corporate environment in which leadership was a synonym or control, they show loyalty, always focus on the results, and maintain alignment and commitment to their company's mission, praising status and professional growth.

Formenton e Stefano (2017) point out that Baby Boomers are confident, independent, and self-sufficient. It is a generation that grew up in a reforming era, in which they believed that they could change the world. They are not afraid of confrontation and do not hesitate to defy established practices.

Generation X includes people born from 1965 and 1980. It is the group that descends from the Baby Boomers, who grew up in day cares and in the middle of divorces due to women's access to the job market; they also grew up with some social alienation and survived the shocks of the 1970s and 1980s, becoming skeptical and materialistic. It is understood that the Xs grew up under financial, familiar, and social insecurities. In Brazil, the members of this generation experienced a first period of a repressive dictatorship characterized by censorship, caution, distrust and cynicism; it was followed by the subsequent political opening, but also by economic recession, and financial insecurity, encouraging materialism and individualism (Cappi&Araujo, 2015).

Professionally, generation X is characterized by mobility, constant career changes; they are used to freelance and temporary contract work, and also to working changes several times along their career. Generation X is less optimistic, less idealistic, and less traditionalist than generation Y. On the other hand, it is a generation with more self-confidence and inclination towards entrepreneurship, and, still, due to the turbulences and changes from the context they came, they are practical while solving problems, independent, and creative (Cappi&Araujo, 2015).

Cavazotte et. al. (2012) describe generation X as a group more interested in opportunity gains, that would be more cynical and individualistic, and more concerned with their personal

goals and in balancing their personal and professional lives. Formenton e Stefano (2017) declare that the members of this generation tend to value work and financial stability, in the condition of guaranteeing the realization of their personal and material wishes. The youngest of generation X, are even less likely to delay their personal desires for the good of the company. Motivated to work, which best characterizes generation X is the capacity of learning new stuff, autonomy, and entrepreneurship.

Generation Y represents those born between 1981 and 1999, the youngest segment active in the labor market. They differ themselves by the arrival of the computational technology, in which individuals are used to deal with a great amount of information; they are attached to multidisciplinarity, and always connected to the world. These are young people more used to changes, more tolerant towards mistakes when compared to the older generations; they do not praise so much job security, they are moved by challenges, they expected a fast growing inside organizations, at the same time that they demand the development of their abilities and flexible working conditions. They are also described as members of a generation who is more socially active than the previous one, and prefer to work in companies that are considered references in terms of ethics and social responsibility (Cavazotte et. al. 2015).

Dante and Arroyo (2017) cite that this generation grew in the middle of technological development, having constant access to these tools since their childhood. As a consequence, they are more developed in the ability of connecting to other people virtually. Their capacity of virtual connectivity with people networks has increased. They present agility in everything they do, and are considered to be multitaskers, because they can perform two or three functions at the same time and are seen as elements that bring transformations to the labor market, since that they have different behaviors when compared to previous generations. The ethics of generation Y presents itself differently, it seeks primarily personal satisfaction, and the integration of personal and professional lives. People of generation Y prefer to work flexibly, try to be well-connected, prefer virtual contact, see respect as something deserved, and expect the company to change according to their needs.

Still referring to people of generation Y, they seek constant feedback as a tool of stimulation and recognition; however, they face difficulties when dealing with a critical tone, and feel discouraged by evidences of their mistakes. Having that in mind, there is a constant need of subjective motivational factors that stimulate their actions and independent development, even

though they constantly depend on outer recognition, which may seem contradictory at a first glance, the result of this generation psychological composition emphasizes the need for recognition and stimuli and the difficulty to deal with contrariety. In addition to the characteristics mentioned before, it is important to reinforce that this generation is more receptive to changes. Generation Y does make job security a priority, and it is more anxious than previous generations (Dante & Arroyo, 2017).

Dante e Arroyo (2017) still say that people of generation Y look for a less formal and less hierarchical workplace. Even though they do not appreciate rules in their personal lives, they consider their necessity in the business environment. They present a more independent and entrepreneur behavior, focusing on actions in results; therefore, they are known as the generation of results, since that they were born in the age of technology, internet and security excess.

The topic 'generations at work' offers many opportunities for discoveries and learning, because organizations have a persistent challenge, since that since the generations are related in different ways as: peers, partners, subordinates and leaderships. The three generations behave diversely, having many common goals and some different goals. The gender plays an important role in this context. The next chapter aims to understand the behavior of male and female genders in the organizational environment through the last five years in order to relate them to the other constructs cite until this points.

2.6 Gender

The analysis of the organizational context may involve some dimensions and their impact on interpersonal relations, such as race, gender, social class, schooling and sexual orientation (Diniz et. al. 2013). Today we live in a world of differences and variations, because there are many cultures, customs, habits, belief systems, rituals, among others issues in the world. It is easy to note different colors and different group manifestations in society. One of the main bases of this difference is gender. Two genders might differ significantly dealing with the same question, or to have the same opinions in other situations. Therefore, it is crucial for an organization to understand, analyze, and value these differences (Garg&Punia, 2015).

Still according to Garg and Punia (2015), the organizations from the XXI century are proud to declare themselves neutral in terms of gender. With the introduction of the high-

performance work system in modern organizations, the need to study the implications of gender has become much more important. This happens because this revolutionary system could not generate the desired excellence, if it is seen, treated, and promulgated in different ways by employees from the two genders. In this context, it has become essential to face differences based on genders in organizations.

Gender differences in the willingness to compete can have a profound impact on labor market outcomes and may help to explain the shortage of women in senior management positions. The disparities in the labor market outcomes persist even when faced with the progress towards female education and government initiatives to avoid gender discrimination. Other factors - such as gender differences in communication and negotiation styles, maternity leave, and consequent beliefs about workforce attachment and gender discrimination - certainly also help to explain occupational segregation and gender pay gap (Ifcher&Zarghamee, 2016).

Sloan (2017) made clear that women tend to be more committed than men, excluding working characteristics. Thanks to the link between co-worker support and affective commitment, co-worker support among women workers can help to explain their levels of organizational commitment.

The higher levels of social support perceived by women in relation to men are generally attributed to their broader social connection. Women, when compared to men, are more likely to look for support during hard times and to offer support for others. Besides that, common sense beliefs about gender, women's superior sensibility and men's expressive abilities of greater power and assertiveness, create expectations for both men and women during social interactions. On the one side, these social expectations may lead to a higher support observed among women, because it is expected and accepted that women share their problems seeking support from others (Sloan, 2017).

On the other hand, the author explains that the literature on the benefits of social support in the organizational environment have similar positive effects for both men and women. Therefore, although women tend to be favored in perceived social support towards men, they do not benefit more from support than men would do. However, regarding workplace support, Sloan (2017) claims that the female gender role mediated the relationship between supervisor support and work. The negative association between supervisor support and tension work was stronger

for more feminine workers. Nevertheless, gender role did not mediate the associations between coworker support and related work (Sloan, 2017).

Lavy (2013) suggests that women are less efficient than men in refined environments. Lab experiences concluded that men and women present different attitudes and respond differently to workplace competition. A considerable part of the gender pay gap could be explained by the affirmation that women are less effective than men in competitive environments, even if they are able to perform similarly to men in uncompetitive environments.

In a survey using boys and girls as subjects for a field experiment, it was concluded that competition improves performance in a non-competitive environment for boys, but not for girls. Unlike the results obtained from the lab experiment, girls' performance did not improve compared to the non-competitive environment even when two girls competed against each other. Its main dependent variable is the percentage of unforced errors, and the intention of the competitive environment is to determine, to define, and to combine the outcome of a game. This study results show that, during crucial moments of the game, men and women adopted conservative and less aggressive game strategies, which means that the probability of unintentional mistakes decrease (Lavy, 2013).

The author argues that male performance is sensible to the gender composition of the other; however, men usually improve more their performances in relation to other women than to other men. In contrast, the authors report that women performance is not influenced by gender composition. These discoveries are inconsistent to existent literature and to what has been cited in this paper, but the authors cannot make any unequivocal considerations for the reason why this is the case (Lavy, 2013).

The modern age witnesses an exponential growth of women's participation in the labor market. This phenomenal growth in the workforce gender diversity has fascinated researchers as much as professionals. Further studies begin exploring whether gender composition affects performance on an individual, group or organizational basis. In the early stages of research on diversity in the workforce, it was considered a miracle band that would revolutionize the company's performance. Though, later on, contradictory evidence came up, with few favoring diversity and others resisting to it (Lavy, 2013).

It has been understood that diversity can be a source of competitive advantage and can enrich the overall organizational climate. It has also been discovered that there are intangible and

social benefits associated to gender diversity that include market vision, creativity and innovation, and better problem solving. It has been concluded that women participation at the workplace increases general creativity and the employees' innovation sue two the joint of several abilities, perspectives, and origins from the two genders. Studies are also dedicated to verify the relation of gender diversity over motivation and ethical aspects from work (Lavy, 2013).

In this perspective, researchers suggest that women should play an important role in the ethical model of an organization. On this same front, other authors state that women are more sensitive than men to issues of an ethical nature and that they face gender diversity from a positive perspective (Lavy, 2013).

Coleman and Kariv (2013) cite in their study an increasing number of women in the companies. However, despite the increasing number, companies owned by women tend to be smaller on average and generate only a portion of total employment and income. On the other hand, study results did not reveal significant differences of performance between companies led by men and women in their first years of existence. The findings also pointed out gender differences in relation to the impact of specific financial strategies on the amount of capital raised.

Potrich (2015) raises awareness to the differences in the sexual division of labor, placing great emphasis on the study of gender in organizations. In the context of the hierarchy of values at work, differences between women and men are associated to the objectives and differentiated professional expectations. In this sense, the comprehension of the values related to work assumes huge importance, since that they are considered predictors of behavior in the workplace.

The authors emphasize that the increasing insertion of female contingent in the organizations has been changing the labor force behavior and the labor relations. Nevertheless, even with this participation increase in most activities, and also many conquered rights, there is still a lot of inequality in relation to genders. In this context, questions about gender in the working place are discussed, and women have been gaining more and more space within organizations. The differences influence their commitment to the organization in which they work, since that people take their values with them when entering an organization (Potrich et. al. 2015).

Zhang and Qu (2016) point out in their paper that while women have made steady progress in shifting to corporate leadership positions, including boards of directors and senior

executives, progress at the CEO level remains. This means that the differences in status accorded to women and women, coupled with the low frequency with which women are appointed to executive positions, make gender a salient feature that deserves empirical attention.

It has been observed that women tended to adopt a more participating style, while men were directed to a more autocratic or directive style. Another analysis revealed that female leaders were more transformative and involved in more contingent reward behaviors (a component of transactional leadership), while male leaders were more prone to adopt other aspects of transactional and laissez-faire leadership. The same publication demonstrated that women and men in leadership positions are seen differently (Zhang &Qu, 2016).

Diversity attributes, such as, age, gender, and race, can trigger group information processing, and social categorization processes, and, as a consequence, produce positive and negative effects in the team's results. The relationship between diversity and performance of the team should be further comprehended to ensure its performance (Schneid et. al. 2015).

Zhang and Qu (2016) suggest that there are still limits for the transformative power of women as managers. It is believed that the positive effect of women participation in management is clearer for lower qualification workers. This may be expected, since that female managers are more likely to administrate low-skilled workers, and that male resistance to equality might be weaker among low-skilled and low-paid workers. The worker-supervisor analysis provides a deeper insight into the dynamics of gender inequalities.

Women face income disadvantages when they work for a male supervisor, when compared to similar situations. The group bias of male supervisors appears to be an important source of inequalities in gender incomes. In other words, having a supervisor from the same gender is rewarding for men, but not for women. Secondly, in comparison to men, highly skilled men with a female supervisor received the same penalty gain as well as highly skilled women with male supervisors (Abendroth et. al. 2016).

According to what was mentioned above, different genders present at the workplace, if well understood, may bring along many benefits to the organizations. Women have played an important role in this scenario taking into consideration the characteristics of their own nature that make them different from men. Men have also played an essential role by outstanding in higher pressure more hostile environments. These behaviors if well understood may aid

organizations to promote environments that are favorable to satisfactory performances for both genders. The next chapter is aimed to present some recent studies about performance.

2.7 Performance

Borges and Mourão (2013) affirm that performance is a group of behaviors that we demonstrate in determined situations that depend from our expected action. It is the execution of a work, action, or business, something that demands previous competence or effectiveness in the execution. The product of an action or the manifestation of some behaviors results in performance.

Performance presents itself as an indicator of organizational efficiency, which determines how effective an organization is. Once those empirical results have been conflictingly, it is a concern of scholars to understand the aspects and identify the variables that affect performance, and, as a consequence, reveal the value created by the organization that may reflect its competitive position. Therefore, competitive advantage is the main hypothesis to explain performance heterogeneity between organizations (Oliveira et. al. 2017).

Siddique (2016) affirms that the companies' main goal is to develop committed employees who may be prepared to perform their jobs in accordance with organizational objectives. The high involvement approach affects the nature and the ability of employees. Within this high involvement management approach, it has been pointed out that employees with the chance of understanding their work have their involvement in the organization increased. This approach has a broader reach, it has the potential to improve the knowledge and the skills of a company and its employees, developing their motivation, reducing responsibility, and improving retention of high skilled employees.

The essential characteristic throughout the discussion about high commitment, high involvement and high performance management is the comparison with a type of control organization. Despite little definition as to what constitutes a high performance system, systematic reviews of studies suggest that the practices are consistently associated with organizational performance (Siddique, 2016).

Therefore, the notion of competitive advantage requires the development of new resources and capabilities or the combination of skills, abilities, and competencies that build,

maintain, and enhance the advantages that are distinctive and difficult to imitate; besides the exploitation of internal capacities and resources. The organization should be prepared to abandon obsolete knowledge, to learn how to innovate by continuous improvement of its activities, to develop new applications from its own results, and to continue its development as an organized process. The generation of a higher performance will rely on the revenues obtained from the strategies and the costs of implementing them. Other relevant elements are the costs of development, research, hiring, training, etc. (Ribeiro et. al. 2017).

Performance evaluation is a constantly studied topic, and it has been a research object of several research papers, especially from the 1980s on. At that time, works, such as, Roy's (1985) criticized the performance evaluation models of the time, which were superficial and deliberately used in organizations. Over the years, new paradigms carried the observation of contexts that presented peculiarities, and, because of that, should be treated in a customized way. Then, it is possible to see an attention to some elements, such as, vision, mission, organizational culture, and strategies in the development of performance evaluation models (Chaves et. al. 2017).

As a structural aspect, performance encompasses both behavioral and result bias. A behavioral bias includes what an individual does in a working situation and that is favorable to the organizational objectives. Bendassolli (2012) mentions that the implications of behavioral aspects lay in the identification of which behaviors are indeed related to relevant organizational results, and this takes part on the bias results. These are states or conditions of people or things that are modified by performance, and, as a consequence, contribute or distance themselves from organizational goals.

2.8 Task and context performances

Task performance can be defined as the manner in which individuals perform activities that contribute to the technical core of an organization. These activities may be contribute directly, such as, the implementation of one part of the technological process, or the provision of necessary materials or services. The aspects of a task are normally set in a way that not even satisfaction with the work affects the tasks performed by an employee (Borman&Motowidlo, 1993).

Contextual performance refers to activities that do not contribute to the technical core, but provide support for the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which the organizational goals are pursued. This type of performance includes not only behaviors such as helping coworkers or becoming a reliable member in the organization, but also making suggestions on how to improve working procedures.

Motowidlo&Schimidt (1997) present three basic assumptions that are associated to the differentiation between task and content: 1) activities relevant to job performance vary across jobs while contextual performance activities are relatively similar; 2) task performance is related with ability, while contextual performance is related to personality and motivation; 3) task performance is set and constitutes a functional behavior, while contextual performance is more descriptive and goes beyond a referred task.

2.9 Relation between the constructs

As pointed out in the theoretical references of this paper, the literature has important and clear definitions and implications on the concepts of proactive behavior, generation, gender and performance. The behavior of an individual in the work environment is a broad concept, because there are many variables that involve and influence behaviors.

If performance is defined as the expected behavior towards daily situations (Borges &Mourão, 2013), understanding further the relation between proactive behavior by observing the essence, the generation, and the gender of an individual may bring new perspectives to figure out performance. Proactive people not only express their worries, but they also take responsibility to make the necessary changes, and, they usually solve the problems in an innovative way (Slatten et. al. 2013).

Nevertheless, research relating these two constructs have not been found in the literature. This theoretical gap might be an opportunity to new findings and adding to the previously existing diagnostics. The aim of understanding the connection between these two constructs is investigating deeper if people's thoughts and feelings are connected to proactive behavior, and whether this behavior relates with the performance presented.

3. METHODOLOGY

According to the research question, and the main and specific objectives, this chapter will describe the methodology used in this work and its characteristics. The main point of using the method described here is to look for new forms of understanding and covering the challenges presented by people behaviors in the organizational world.

3.1 Nature and Approach

The present research has a basic nature, with an exploratory objective. Gil (2008) argues that the main objective of this type of research is to develop, enlighten, and modify concepts and ideas, taking into consideration the formulation of possible hypothesis to be studied later. This type of research is applied mainly when the chosen topic has been little explored before, making it challenging to formulate precise and operable assumptions. Exploratory research use to constitute the first moment of a broader investigation. The final product of this research can be an enlightened problem, prone to future investigations through more synthesized methods.

This type of sampling is called purposive sampling, used in many explorative types of research (Sages &Lundsten, 2009).

It is intended here to investigate whether the social environment to be studied is external to human beings or a product of their consciousness. This question brings to surface the separation between two points of view, objective and subjective, idea which many studies are dedicated to. From the objective perspective, it is questioned how to understand the world and transmit this knowledge, placing on the one hand the defense that knowledge is something concrete, objective, real, and possible to be transmitted objectively. From the subjective perspective, it is stated that knowledge is subjective or even transcendental, based on personal meanings and experiences (Silveira et. al. 2012).

The methodological choice of the present research is justified by the intention of understanding individual perceptions about performance, observing if his/her essential thoughts are related to performance and determinant to proactivity. Phenomenology is the study of the essences, and all problems through this perspective are about defining essences. In the empirical context, the object of analysis is always a part of the world that belongs to the other. The attempt

to understand this part leads the researcher to obtain reports about the experiences lived by the other to reach the phenomenon, that is, the "thing in itself" (Siani et. al. 2016).

Phenomenology forms the basis of our beliefs in a world that is outwardly established, and that is also well established for our *being-in-the-world*. It is the basis of human's most deep characteristics, the primary comprehension, besides from being an aspect to be continuously understood. Phenomenology is, through a well-structured process, a reflection turned to back in time in the process of identifying how the real meaning of stuff and events in our lives has been defined. It is also an enlightenment about the structure of meaning, making it possible to understand complexities, and the richness that lies in human interactions (Sages, 2003).

Moreira (2002) affirms that the topics covered by the phenomenological approach include those that are central to human beings' life experiences: joy or fear, being present, being involved, being a manager or leader, or the meaning of an experience to determined people in a specific environment (people at an institution, for instance).

The several interactions that an individual have in life carry a multiplicity of information, stimuli, perceptions about the lifeworld, partially individually and partially shared with others who belong to the same cultural contexts, leading and creating different interpretations, expectations, memories, and so on. Every lived experience belongs to the lifeworld and has within itself a group of different parts of the meaning experiences surrounding the intentional object. In this way, the experiences carry along a condensed report of the life of an individual in relation to the environment he/she lives in (Sages, 2003).

3.2 Introduction to the phenomenological thought

The Phenomenology forms the basis of our belief in an outwardly established and well-established world for our being-in-the-world. It is the basis of what is most characteristic of being human, the primary understanding, plus a continuously understood aspect. It is, by a well-structured process, a backward-looking reflection on the process of how the real meaning of things and events in our world of life was constituted. It is a clarification about the structure of meaning, giving the possibility to understand the complexities, but also the possible wealth that resides in human interactions (Sages, 2003).

Phenomenology seeks to understand how reality is constructed through the experiences of people involved in certain situation or phenomenon. It also aims to interpret the phenomenon,

investigating the meaning, the experiences, and what is behind the significances. The analysis is intentional. The reality is subjective and multiple. The theory is composed by intersubjectivity, reduction, and constitution (Mello, 2014).

Moreira (2002) affirms that topics appropriate to the phenomenological method include those that are central to the life experience of human beings: joy or fear, being present, being involved, being a manager or a leader, or the sense of some kind of experience for people in an environment (people in an institution, for example).

The various interactions that an individual has throughout life brings a multiplicity of information, stimuli, perceptions in the world of life, partially individual and partially shared with people from the same cultural contexts, leading and creating multiple interpretations, expectations, memories. Every lived experience is an experience in the world of life and contains within itself a grouping of different parts of the experiences of meaning that surround the intentional object. In this way, it contains a concentrated summary of the individual's life history in relation to their environment (Sages, 2003).

Phenomenology is a search for meaning, its origin and its constitution. The man is seen as a being through whom the "meaning" is present in the world. The function of the meaning is allow the man to "dwell" in the world. Therefore, meaning is primary, that is, it comes before the fact. The meaning makes it possible to interpret the facts as this, in their pure meaning. However, the meaning is not static; on the contrary, it is in a constant change, being nothing but the expression of the experiences of the man. These experiences are in a process of continuous change and development. In this way the horizon of the action is designed. Its origin is found the world of life (Boski; Vijver&Chodynicka, 2002).

In the humanities, one deals with individuals, groups and various forms of interactions and relations with their respective (or partially common) respective unattended. Feelings, thoughts, ideas, associations, and experiences from individuals are our objective of study, our scientific interest. There are two alternative forms of looking at them. It is possible to consider them facts or meanings. The fundamental thought in phenomenology is that the way that an object is given to the consciousness contains the main categorical characterization of its meaning (Bayard et. al. 2012).

The most conspicuous aspect of the apprehension of a "human" as an object of perception is that its true meaning is not given directly. The meaning results of its apprehension as "oneself",

a fundamental identity of essence between the perceiver and the perceived, what does not happen in any other case of perception of an object. In this way, will, affectivity, emotion, are now seen as integral and constituent parts of the total essence of what is called "human" (Bayard et. al. 2012).

Moreover, the social location of an individual, being them not just "someone", but a member of a community in a particular environment and seen as an essential part of it. There are common aspects, such as will, thought, and affection, and these aspects are comprehensible just as being significant, full of meaning. "To mean" in phenomenology is to be oriented to, to look at, to fight, to feel, to feel in face of, this is, being intentionally oriented towards an "object", regardless of the object type, or of how we define it (Bayard et. al. 2012).

The meaning we grasp in an object is nothing more than the way the object appears to us and is interpreted by us at the time of its appearance. It is possible to conclude that is the meaning, not causality, what is experienced as a fundamental aspect, a definer of essences of what we call "human" object. This situation, very special and peculiar of the man, who is subject, object, and both at the same time, has important implications in relation to the appropriate choice of method in the human sciences (Bayard et. al. 2012).

The specific object of the study must be cautiously analyzed regarding its meaning and its implications. A qualitative approach becomes the condition *sine qua non* in this vision for the reasons cited from now on. The origin of the meaning is, by definition, in the individual subjectivity, that is, the subjectivity of the individual. In phenomenology, "subjectivity" and "meaning construction" are very similar terms. The individual is what constitutes meaning by means of their daily life activities; he or she is then the only source of meaning (Bayard et. al. 2012).

Just a careful analysis of the meaning, as it is constituted by the individual subject, might provide us indications for possible generalizations and formulations of typologies and classifications above the individual level. The individual should always be able to express himself freely, in his own terms and conditions. Consciousness is intentional. This means that it is always directed to an object. Being conscious is to invest in an object. The word "object" here refers to anything comprehended by consciousness. An object might be something external to our perception, such as a tree or a house in front of us. It could also be a memory, something desired, or the state of things (Bayard et. al. 2012).

3.3 Meaning of constitution analysis - method description

A phenomenological analysis always starts with the application of the *epoché-* which refers to the suspension of all types of prejudice, regardless of its origins, in the daily life or in the scientific theories - in order to obtain a pure vision, as free as possible from outside judgments. Therefore, the perception of being immersed in a natural attitude is the main motivating factor to use the *epoché*. It is just then that we have the possibility of reaching the pure domain of the meaning (Shulamith&Tomáŝ, 2014).

This status has direct impact on the formulation of the method. The first standard step is usually described with a careful reading of the text, and, based on this first careful reading, a first description of the global meaning. This becomes, phenomenologically, a confirmation (Shulamith&Tomáŝ, 2014).

The method comes from a self-report. Other ways of obtaining written texts, directly or not, may also be used. It is asked to a person to answer a question carefully formulated about an important topic to them, a topic that also raises scientific interest. The question should be formulated in a way that the person can express himself/herself freely, without any restrictions, that is, the person should be able to associate himself/herself around the question. The manner of formulating a question may vary a lot. The report can be based on a text written by the person or on a transcript of the person's oral account. A text may also be a transcript of an interview, a conversation between two or more people, or even a policy document of a company, union, local or central authority or some other organization (Shulamith&tomáŝ, 2014).

The method seeks to identify smaller meaning units as a result of this time conception. This is done for three reasons:

1) A more clearly defined division of a person's report implies less space to uncontrolled interpretations;

2) Smaller meaning units increase the veracity and the possibilities of validating the analysis, in the sense that other researchers will be easily able to compare their results, set by step, and to identify differences, mistakes, or omissions that can occur;

3) Inside each meaning unit, different partial intentions (together forming the complex meaning of the intended object) might be structured in a very detailed way, which will make clear how an individual constructs the meaning (Shulamith&tomáŝ, 2014).

The text is divided in meaning units. These do not need to be defined syntactically or grammatically in the original text. It is essential that, in every situation that the researcher observes even a slight change in the meaning in the text, it should be interrupted. Therefore, the meaning units are usually short, which increases the accuracy of the analysis. Each meaning unit should be numbered, to make the future steps of the analysis, such as comparative studies and validation, easier (Shulamith&Tomáŝ, 2014).

The validation of the intentional object of the study has important characteristics that, taken together, form the essential parts of its complete meaning structure. The modalities of its application, including the way that its objectives are stated, the "public" to whom it is destined, the comprehension of the ethical implications it sustains, are very important criteria (Boski; Vijver&Chodynicka, 2002).

Validating according to those criteria means tracking and evaluating step by step the systematic sequence followed and observed throughout the research. This demands a prior and intersubjective agreement on the research procedure and a requirement for maximum transparency by the researcher. Which means that different types of research, formulated and articulated according to a primary evidence of the "thing in itself", the intentional object of the researcher, are not necessarily going to be judged according to the same pattern (Boski; Vijver&Chodynicka, 2002).

3.4 Population

As mentioned before, the aim is to investigate the universe of managers in a financial institution. In this context, it has been chosen, on purpose, some individuals with high-performances, and other ones with low-performances, all of that according to the working model pre-existent in the chosen organization.

The entire population, in a national level, has about 4500 people, from whom 65% are women, 35% are men, 46% of generation X, 44% of generation Y, and 10% of Baby Boomers generation. The amount of time each person is in a management position within the organization varies; there are some recently hired and others who have been in the position for over 30 years. This population has a well-defined objectives program that they need to achieve monthly; the annual performance evaluation happens based on the monthly deliveries.

3.5 Sample

The sample chosen for this qualitative research is conveniently considered non-probabilistic, due to the researchers' specific focus. The researcher selects the elements to which he/she has access, admitting that these may represent the universe. This type of sampling is applied in exploratory or qualitative studies in which a high level of precision is not required (Gil, 2008).

The chosen sample will be divided in two groups: the first group will contemplate individuals with high-performance in the last two annual results; while the second group will include individuals with low-performance in the last two annual results. The choice of these individuals will be restricted to the state of Minas Gerais. It is possible to see below the detailed sample:

Figure 1 –Group considered in 'High-performance' in the last two annual results:

Professional Position	Women Baby B	Women generation X	Women generation Y	Men Baby B	Men Generation X	Men Generation Y	Total
Manager	3	3	3	3	3	3	**18**

Source: Personal collection

Figure 2 –Group considered in 'Low-performance' in the last two annual results:

Professional Position	Women Baby B	Women generation X	Women generation Y	Men Baby B	Men Generation X	Men Generation Y	Total
manager	3	3	3	3	3	3	**18**

Source: Personal collection

3.6 Instrument and Data Collection Techniques

In this step each individual will receive two questions referring to what in intended to be studied in this work. The question suggest that the participants write freely about their ideas, emotions, and deliveries at work. In another page, there is a second question about each individuals' perception on what is proactivity. After answering, the interviewees will deliver an unidentified envelope with the answers to the expedition that will forward it to another address. In the studies of the essences, there is a need for investigating the phenomenon deeply, and this requires anonymity to grant the participant total freedom to report thoughts, feelings, and ideas (Moreira, 2002). The questions are in this work's attachments.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The reports' analysis will benefit from a software named MCA-Minerva, better explained next. The objective is to analyze the reports seeking to obtain the essence of each individual's thoughts, and to relate the reports according to the groups, definitions, and objectives presented previously.

3.8 MCA - Meaning Constitution Analysis

Meaning Constitution Analysis (MCA) is an empirical approach to research in human and social sciences, developed from phenomenological thinking. It is a bottom-up approach, based on local, non-global considerations, with the aim of revealing the inner richness of the individual and his/her development possibilities. By using this approach it is also possible to see differences and similarities from individuals of different sociocultural contexts. A software, the MCA-Minerva, was developed to analyze texts in the phenomenological field (Sages&Sihong, 2015).

Understanding quality in the working life, in the process of aging, in child development, in cooperation and mutual understanding, and achieving any kind of improvement in all the various forms of interaction with others, may seem an impossible task without a careful analysis of the meaning. All these aspects may have a reason for each individual. Besides that, it is fundamental that these meanings isolated or in groups, come from the individuals' words and

other means of expression. The researcher's expectations and prejudices determine which type of questionings will appear, and also how they will be constructed. These questions refer to the inner life of the individual, and are different from his/her life experiences, eliminating any type of questionnaire and structured interview. This method was developed based on Edmund Husserl phenomenological psychology, a scientific approach to empirical research and all aspects of scientific activities MCA (Meaning Constitution Analysis), as well as a rigorous method of text analysis supported by software, the MCA-Minerva.

While analyzing texts freely produced by individuals, the purpose of the software is to assist in understanding how the individual makes sense in his work and life, based on his/her own subjective experiences. Subjective should not be seen as a step behind objectivity, rather it should be interpreted as the most appropriate way of staying as close as possible to one's own life experience. While investigating people and/or situations from different cultures it is important to avoid evaluations and biases that are grounded in the culture of the researchers. Phenomenological approach makes it possible.

3.9 Analysis steps

The first step is the application of the *epoché*. The text is divided into units of meaning. These do not need to be defined syntactically or grammatically in the original text. It is essential that, in all situations of the text in which the researcher sees the slightest change in meaning, the text should be interrupted. Therefore, the units of meaning are usually short, which enhances the accuracy of the analysis. Each unit of meaning should be numbered, which makes things easier, also in the next steps analysis, as in corporate studies and validation. A following application of *epoché* is done in the resulting units of meaning. As a result, each one is divided in two parts: bare and expressed meaning and its forms of being expressed, that is, the modalities.

The second step involves placing the noticeable unit of meaning in brackets. One of the objectives is to free oneself from all previous knowledge, both based on science or cultural/traditional thinking, and open the mind to the new knowledge presented by the text. This is the phenomenological attitude. One must also allow the separation of pure meaning from its modes of expression. The modes and pure meanings that raise as results from the application of the *epoché* follow specific units of meaning. The modes should provide and understanding of a

person's experience, being the way in which the acts of consciousness depict the structure of meaning of the intended object and, as such, belong to the deeper parts of subjectivity. In the intentional analysis, the researcher tries to find all partial intentions that together lead to the constructed meaning. This focus on obtaining the structure of meaning configured by the set of passive syntheses is also unique to this method. The objective is to analyze singularly and rigorously, so that all components of the meaning, general and specific, are enlightened.

The third step is the phenomenological reduction, which consists on the intentional analysis, which is the analysis of the content of meaning obtained by the *epoché*. After the steps are followed, it is the end of the first stage of the analysis. In this moment, all partial intention should come from the pure meaning derived by the *epoché*, and to be enlightened as concisely as it is possible in all its aspects, general and individual.

The fourth step is to distinguish which entities form the units of meaning of the object. These are found in an intentional analysis research. An entity is something that appears as a meaning for the individual that experiences the lifeworld. From now on, everything related to an entity is accounted in all variations found. The words and expressions used to refer to the entities, the predicates, are connected to their entities and outstand their meanings as experienced by the individual.

Henceforth, a summary is made from the analysis, which allows highlighting the horizons of understanding, what they contain, and what it is possible to see through them. A formulation of the modes of expressions and the nucleus that becomes visible through a combined consideration complements the analysis, that is, an attempt is made to obtain the insights from the person' lifeworld. This attempt aims to understand the temporal structure of the individual's experience.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this part of the paper, the results of the analysis of the collected reports will be presented. By using the MCA software it was possible to understand part of the world of meaning in relation to people's work, considering their generations and genders. A total amount of 288 meaning units were divided and analyzed. It was possible to learn more about feelings and thoughts in relation to deliveries, constituting the meaning that the people in the study attribute to their tasks and the job. In each group it is found what the people understand about the concept of proactivity.

Through MCA software the reports were divided in meaning units, so that it was possible to divide them according the modalities of *belief*, *function*, *time*, *affects*, *will*, *property*, and *subject*. Then, the idea was to extract the partial intention from the reports and separate them in entities, which is the center of what you wish to express. After that, it was attempted to separate the entities in predicates that described the meaning that an individual attributes to what he/she wishes to express. The *affection* modality showed more significant revelations, exhibiting several aspects present in the lifeworld of different generations and genders.

4.1 Description of meaning units

In the *belief* modality, it was sought to interpret the individuals' intentions about their reports, observing if the meaning revealed *affirmation*, *negation*, *probability*, *possibility*, or *question*. *Affirmations* are present in 93,66% of the reports, *negations* in 2,67%, *possibility* in 1,69%, *probability* in 0,37%, and *questions* in 0,90%.

Starting from the *affirmation belief*, that received a significant percentage, it can be stated that, because of the scope and the intentions of the research, when asked about their feelings and thoughts about their deliveries, the participants brought to their narratives categorical statements about how they perceive themselves in the work environment and how they see their deliveries. The participants profile and the research intent helped to achieve such results, considering that the participants are managers who need to practice daily conducts of certainty and definition.

Frequency Meaning Unit: Belief							
GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	DOXA-AFFIRMATION	DOXA-NEGATION	PROBABILITY	POSSIBILITY	QUESTION
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB	92,31%				7,69%
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	95,45%	4,50%			
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y	100,00%				
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			95,92%	4,50%	0,00%	0,00%	7,69%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	94,44%				5,56%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X	86,96%	4,35%	4,35%	4,35%	
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y	100,00%				
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			93,80%	4,35%	0,00%	0,00%	5,56%
TOTAL AVERAGE			95%	4%	4%	4%	7%
LOW PERF	MEN	BB	100,00%				
LOW PERF	MEN	X	93,33%	6,67%			
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	100,00%				
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			97,78%	6,67%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB	85,72%	7,14%		7,14%	
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X	86,96%	4,35%		8,70%	
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y	89,48%	5,26%			5,26%
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			87,39%	5,58%	0,00%	7,92%	5,26%
TOTAL AVERAGE			93%	6%	0%	8%	5%

Table 1. Frequency Meaning Unit: Belief
Note. Source: Personal collection

In the *function* modality, the meaning units were analyzed having in mind if the intentions pointed to *perceptive*, *imaginative*, *significative*, or to an interrelation between them. Both the high-performance and the low-performance groups presented higher frequencies in the function *perception*, 41,79% and 42,23%, and *perception/significative*, 44,16% and 36,19%. A finding in this modality is that the low-performance group showed greater presence in the imagination category, that is, they reported their thoughts along with the idealization of what they would like to be. Some units of meaning have revealed positive feelings and thoughts about deliveries that are not satisfactory, as if they were satisfactory.

Frequency Meaning Unit: Function							
GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	PERCEPTIVE	SIGNITIVE	PERC/SIGN	PERC/IMAG	IMAGINATIVE
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB	38,46%	0,00%	61,54%	0,00%	0,00%
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	36,36%	18,19%	36,36%		9,09%
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y	44,83%	24,14%	31,03%		
\multicolumn{3}{c|}{TOTAL AVERAGE MEN}	39,88%	14,11%	42,98%	0,00%	4,55%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	50,00%	11,11%	33,33%	5,56%	
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X	39,13%	8,70%	47,83%	4,35%	
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y	41,94%	3,23%	54,84%		
\multicolumn{3}{c|}{TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN}	43,69%	7,68%	45,33%	4,96%	0,00%
\multicolumn{3}{c|}{TOTAL AVERAGE}	42%	11%	44%	3%	5%
LOW PERF	MEN	BB	60,00%	4,00%	36,00%		
LOW PERF	MEN	X	43,33%	10,00%	36,67%	6,67%	3,33%
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	34,62%	30,77%	34,62%		
\multicolumn{3}{c|}{TOTAL AVERAGE MEN}	45,98%	14,92%	35,76%	6,67%	3,33%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB	42,86%	0,00%	35,71%	14,29%	7,14%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X	30,43%	21,74%	47,83%		
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y	42,11%	5,26%	26,32%		26,32%
\multicolumn{3}{c|}{TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN}	38,47%	9,00%	36,62%	14,29%	0,00%
\multicolumn{3}{c|}{TOTAL AVERAGE}	42%	12%	36%	10%	12%

Table 2. Frequency Meaning Unit: Function
Note. Source: Personal collection

The *property* modality revealed predominantly first person reports, from both high-performance and low-performance groups, more than 50% of the groups. This result is a consequence of the model of this research, that asked the participants to discuss their deliveries. As a consequence, more than half of the reports bring property meaning in the first person, by writing "mine". About 25% of the reports did not present a state of property, that is, these reports do not have a direct interference in its subjects. The 25% left are distributed between the properties of *our*, *their*, and *others*.

Frequency Meaning Unit: Property							
GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	MY	NOT STATED	OTHERS	OUR	THEIR
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB	31%	35%	31%	4%	
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	23%	36%		27%	14%
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y	48%	41%	3%	3%	3%
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			33,93%	37,45%	17,11%	11,52%	8,55%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	94%	6%			
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X	70%	22%	4%	4%	
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y	65%	13%	3%	10%	10%
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			76,18%	13,40%	3,79%	7,02%	9,68%
TOTAL AVERAGE			55%	25%	10%	10%	9%
LOW PERF	MEN	BB	60%	24%	4%	8%	4%
LOW PERF	MEN	X	77%	13%	3%	3%	3%
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	77%	8%	12%		4%
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			71,20%	15,01%	6,29%	5,67%	3,73%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB	57%	36%	7%		
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X	26%	35%	9%	22%	9%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y	53%	26%	21%		
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			45,29%	32,27%	12,30%	21,74%	8,79%
TOTAL AVERAGE			58%	24%	9%	11%	5%

Table 3. Frequency Meaning Unit: Property
Note. Source: Personal collection

In accordance with the *property* modality, the *subject* modality also presented a predominance of first person reports, that is, a considerable presence of the word *I*. This was repeated in both high-performance and low-performance groups. *Unspecified* reports appeared with about 20% of frequency. The low-performance group presented twice as many reports containing the person *we*, when compared to high-performance group. A possibility seen in this observation is that the figure of the leader that guarantees the result may lose itself when, instead of influencing, leading and directing, the leader puts him/herself in the same position of his/her team, and with this, he/she is lost in the conduction of the deliveries.

Frequency Meaning Unit: Subject						
GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	I	WE	ONE-ALL	UNSPECIFIED
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB	31%	4%	31%	35%
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	32%	32%	14%	23%
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y	48%	3%	7%	41%
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			36,96%	13,04%	17,10%	32,91%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	94%			6%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X	70%	4%	9%	17%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y	68%	6%	13%	13%
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			77,25%	5,41%	10,80%	11,95%
TOTAL AVERAGE			57%	10%	15%	22%
LOW PERF	MEN	BB	56%	12%	8%	24%
LOW PERF	MEN	X	80%	3%	10%	7%
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	77%	15%	4%	4%
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			70,97%	10,24%	7,28%	11,51%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB	57%	7%		36%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X	22%	48%	13%	17%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y	63%	11%	26%	
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			47,35%	21,84%	19,68%	26,55%
TOTAL AVERAGE			59%	16%	12%	18%

Table 4. Frequency Meaning Unit: Subject
Note. Source: Personal collection

In the *time* modality, the low-performance group exhibited a dominant frequency of the *present* time, 66,13%, followed by the *past* time with 18,65%. The high-performance group also exhibited a higher frequency of the *present* time, 35,53%. However, the *present-future* time in this group was also significant, with a frequency of 25,77%. The affirmations of *always recurrent* were also present with an important frequency, 23,86%, against 9,29% from the low-performance group. These findings show that the high-performance group lives, plans, and sees future in the organization more clearly than the other group. High-performance women of generation X show higher frequency of feelings and thoughts towards *present-future*, with 56,52%.

Frequency Meaning Unit: Time									
GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE	PRES-PAST	PRES-FUT	ALWAYS RECURRENT	EMPTY
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB		38%		19%	35%	8%	
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	9%	27%	5%		9%	50%	
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y		52%		7%	21%	21%	
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			9,09%	39,15%	4,55%	13,07%	21,47%	26,13%	0,00%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	6%	33%		17%	11%	33%	
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X		4%		17%	57%	22%	
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y		58%		10%	23%	10%	
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			5,56%	31,91%	0,00%	14,58%	30,07%	21,58%	0,00%
TOTAL AVERAGE			7%	36%	5%	14%	26%	24%	
LOW PERF	MEN	BB		64%		20%	8%	8%	
LOW PERF	MEN	X	10,00%	50,00%		23,33%	16,67%		
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	7,69%	53,85%		26,92%	11,54%		
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			8,85%	55,95%	0,00%	23,42%	12,07%	8,00%	0,00%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB	7,14%	78,57%				14,29%	
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X		60,87%		4,35%	21,74%	4,35%	8,70%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y		89,47%				10,53%	
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			7,14%	76,30%	0,00%	4,35%	21,74%	9,72%	8,70%
TOTAL AVERAGE			8%	66%	0%	19%	14%	9%	9%

Table 5. Frequency Meaning Unit: Time
Note. Source: Personal collection

The *will* modality revealed that the low-performance group has *positive-wish* feelings towards its work, 47,92%. However, its *engagement* has revealed itself as discreet, 11,25% only. The *negative-wish* in relation to work was 14,12%. This finding indicates that *positive-wish* in relation to work does not guarantee *engagement*, since, despite having almost half of the meaning units in this frequency, *engagement* was discovered to be low, and the results of the people were under the expected.

An important conclusion in this modality is that generation Y low-performance men presented 61,54% meaning units for *positive-wish*. In the reports there were excerpts in which the people of this group related not feeling difficulties to deliver - even though their deliveries are below what is expected. This shows that there is in this group an illusion, they might think about and experience a nonexistent reality. The *negative-wish* of this group was the lowest from the entire research, only 3,45%. These thoughts and feelings do no lead to engagement, because living "outside" reality makes it difficult to seek continuous improvement.

The high-performance group demonstrated a similar frequency between *positive-wish* and *negative-wish*, 33,03% and 30,46%, respectively. On the other hand, their *engagement* was

higher than in the other group, 19,23%. These findings show that the high-performance group has a stronger relation with its deliveries. Even though this group presents *engagement* and *positive-wish*, it does not fail to mention the difficulties and bad feelings that appear in everyday life. Maybe engagement can bring with it bad feelings, but it does not impact delivery.

Frequency Meaning Unit: Will								
GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	ENGAJAMENT	WISH-POSITIVE	WISH-NEGATIVE	ASPIRATION	UNENGAJAMENT	NONE
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB	11,54	34,62	38,46			15,38
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	18,18	13,64		13,64		54,55
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y	13,79	51,72	3,45			31,04
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	11,11	38,89	44,44	5,56		
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X	47,83	17,39		4,35		30,43
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y	12,9	41,94	35,48			9,68
TOTAL AVERAGE			19,23	33,03	30,46	7,85	0,00	28,22
LOW PERF	MEN	BB	4	48	12			36
LOW PERF	MEN	X	6,67	43,33	26,67			23,33
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	23,08	61,54	3,85			11,54
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB		42,86	14,29			42,86
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X		39,13	17,39			43,48
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y		52,63	10,53			36,84
TOTAL AVERAGE			11,25	47,92	14,12	0,00	0,00	32,34

Table 6. Frequency Meaning Unit: Will
Note. Source: Personal collection

The *affection* modality will be described next, exploring the following categories: *negative-retrospective*, *negative-prospective*, *positive-prospective*, *positive-retrospective*, and *neutral*. These findings were the most relevant to explain the relation between deliveries at work and proactivity. The MCA methodology is validated and published in more than four books, as it is possible to see in the Methodology and References of this work.

4.2 Delivery perception of low-performance women of Baby Boomer generation

Women of Baby Boomer generation define proactivity as someone's ability to anticipate himself/herself in front of a situation. They say a proactive person is a focused employee, committed to change his/her environment for the best. These women also say that a proactive one makes decisions as if were the business owner, and that he/she has the ability of solving potential problems that will come up.

This group presented *negative-retrospective* affect with a higher frequency, 50%. They reported that negative deliveries bring pain, and that they try to connect rational and emotional aspects to overcome difficulties. Another saying is that, potential problems interfere in the fulfilment of the objective proposed; consequently, suffering appears due to non-delivery. These women cite that they think about what to do in order to overcome challenges, that they think a lot about work, and that they know something must be done to improve their wok. They also say that they demand very much from themselves and that they try to achieve the goals proposed.

Positive-retrospective affect and *positive-prospective* affect appeared tied in this group, with 21.43% of frequency. In relation to the future, they argue that they seek to make changes in order to obtain better results. Low-performance women of Baby Boomer generation say they look for improvements, like their company, their team, and to support their clients. Positive feelings related to enjoying the job were very much present in the reports. *Positive-retrospective* showed how negative results end up bringing lessons and how much positive outcomes bring joy, a participative team, and good actions. *Neutral* affect had a frequency of 7,14%.

4.3 Delivery perception of high-performance women of Baby Boomer generation

For this group, being proactive is to do something before being requested to do it. That is, anticipating problems, being ahead of things, thinking and acting in advance. These women also consider that the proactive one knows how to listen and enjoy experiences. They still say that being proactive means not having the necessity of a leader asking what should be done. For them, proactivity implies a critical vision and the knowledge of the one's own opportunities at work.

This group presented equal rates between *positive-prospective* affect and *negative-retrospective* affect, both with 38.89%. *Positive-prospective* affect exhibits reports of positive thinking and feelings of guarantee of delivering what was proposed. They report happiness because of the deliveries, and argue that they feel good when face challenges. They consider the role of management in deliveries, and the desire for delivery strategy, to be very important.

In the *negative-retrospective*, which showed the same frequency, the group reports a feeling of anxiety before the goals. These people say that they had feelings and thoughts that they would not achieve something, and, consequently, they were frustrated. They recognized that a

long career path is not made solely of victories, and they mentioned the psychological pressure they have felt sometimes, besides the feeling of being excluded.

In relation to the future, 11,11% reported some sort of negative feeling. Feelings of suffering before the huge goals, doubts if they will be achieved in the future, and also the feeling that challenge sometimes seems too much, were also present. The *neutral* affect presented 5,56% of frequency, when people talked about observing results in a detailed way, but it did not bring any feelings or thoughts connected to it.

4.4 Delivery perception of low-performance men of Baby Boomer generation

Proactivity is defined by this group as the ability of doing what was arranged without needing anyone to be asking or charging. For them, it also means being able to anticipate demands, not to be accommodated, and to take initiative. These men also describe that proactive people might anticipate problems at work, that proactive people are motivated and like where they work. Here, they argue that no one is born proactive. In their opinion, proactivity should be encouraged by the companies, which should take care that punishments arising from errors do not generate insecurity and block proactivity.

Positive-retrospective presented higher frequency in the meaning units, 36%. This group reported positive feelings in relation to past deliveries; they say were always there, constant. These men believe that they deliver more than demanded, and that they possess the quality of taking special care of the clients and the team. They consider their deliveries consistent, and they believe that hand in to the company much more than what was proposed. They find results to be important and mentioned to be very happy when they deliver.

Positive-prospective appeared in the meaning units with a frequency of 24%. This group believes that its main role is motivating the team. Men from this group argue that they look for reinventing themselves, and guarantee that they do their work daily. They reported that they try to overcome turbulent moments, and consider the responsibilities among themselves. They seek the best for the company and for their teams. These men consider the delivery relationship with the company satisfactory.

Negative-retrospective affect displayed a frequency of 16%. The men from this group cited the negative feelings that hinder professional development, and that they have troubled not

thinking about work, even outside of the working environment. *Neutral* affect appeared with 16% of frequency. The group mentioned the importance of a good evaluation form. They also said that the challenges are constant, and that the goals are challenging, but they did not report any feelings or thoughts towards that.

This group exhibited a *negative-prospective* affect of 8%. They reported that some feelings, such as, rage, fear, anxiety, sadness, and mental trouble, might interfere negatively in the future. In the same way that they cited positive feelings, such as, satisfaction, relief, and calmness, that might come when they deliver what they are asked.

4.5 Delivery perception of high-performance men of Baby Boomer generation

This group defined proactivity as the ability of understanding what is proposed at work and achieving it by means of being creative, collaborative, and optimistic. For them, the proactive person has a view of the whole, performing beyond what is demanded, and seeking constant evolution. Men from this group consider that being proactive is modifying responsibly the situations around you, guiding ways, and maintaining harmony. As leaders, they consider proactivity at work something positive.

Positive-prospective affect and *negative-retrospective* affect presented the same frequencies, 42.31%. In the *positive-prospective* affect, the group often reported on the abilities they possess for delivering, the satisfaction they feel when serving people well, and the hard work they face in the company. They also cited challenges as an opportunity to succeed, their abilities to define paths, and the success they achieve. The reports of this affection modality were very much repeated around goals, challenges, people, team, and leadership.

In the *negative-retrospective* affect, they brought discomforts related to the feelings of hostility that they perceived recently. They cited the consequences of living in such an environment, for example, psychological and emotional damage. These men believe that the people who stay in the business these days are people who get promoted quickly.

The *negative-prospective* and the *positive-retrospective* affects also appeared with the same frequency, 7.69%. In the *negative-prospective* affect, they compared the organizational behavior towards people with the conduct of a high performance athlete that reaches its maximum level and cannot keep up because it runs out. In the sequence, still in the comparison, a

new athlete appears to go even further, because he is younger and has more disposition. They linked past affection to suffering.

In the *positive-retrospective* affect, this group considers that it delivers what is proposed. These men consider that they have strategies, which they have already been recognized for, and they believe that the merit of success lies in strategy. They have the feeling of having already achieved different performances.

4.6 Delivery perception of high-performance men of generation X

The group of high-performance men of generation X understands proactivity as a personal investment, that is, seeking training and continuous development. They consider proactive people to be able to overcome everyday obstacles, perform important tasks, and have autonomy. The proactive one in the vision of this group absorbs knowledge and focus on the future, seeking anticipation in all life areas. This group believes that proactive people increase productivity, as they assume more responsibilities.

In relation to their deliveries at work, 54,55% of this group presented *positive-prospective*. These men see importance in personal growth, and believe that there is excellence in what they do. They face chain charging positively, and cite the significance of maintaining balance in face of challenges. High-performance men of generation X consider that they deliver what is demanded, and that they occupy or have occupied a distinguished position because of their deliveries. They agree with aggressive goals, and understand that they work in a complex, dynamic environment.

The second highest frequency present in the meaning units of this group is the *negative-retrospective* affect, which obtained 31.82%. They reported thoughts and feelings of intense sacrifice during deliveries. They have also reported that proposals at work sometimes exceed the aggressiveness, and that at some point of their pasts, they have striven but were not recognized. These men also cite feelings of frustration because of undeliverable results. They also say that there are unnecessary tasks that can hinder delivering the proposed goal. The aggressiveness of proposals and goals were the most recurring words in the meaning units for this group.

Negative-prospective affect had 4.55% frequency. Some meaning units exhibit a future perspective that the results that are currently delivered may shrink in the future. The men

associate this thought with the aggressiveness and the style of some managers. *Neutral* affection was present in 9.09% of the reports. The group mentioned that the job market and organizations look for complete people, but the group members did not report any thoughts or feelings about it.

4.7 Delivery perception of low-performance men of generation X

This group defined proactivity as bringing responsibility for the interests of the company to oneself, besides that, to anticipate, to make things happen, and to think collectively. A proactive one turns crisis into opportunities and is not discouraged by them. They see proactive people as resilient, that believe in the impossible, and never get discouraged, even if they do not achieve some purpose. They consider proactivity as one of the most praised skills, since people with this behavior can bring solutions and new ways of acting.

This group had a *positive-prospective* affect with a frequency of 40% in the reports. They wrote about coherence, and about regaining a space that has already been lost. They cite how much they like to deal with clients, that they prioritize coherence, and that the deliveries at work depend of the team, rather than of themselves. They reported on the importance of the team being aligned to ensure delivery, and said that, without the aligned team, it is not possible to deliver a good job, in addition to the environment becoming stressful. The importance of respecting people and the importance of having good tools often comes up in reports.

The *negative-retrospective* affect often appeared in the meaning units, with a frequency of 30%. Men from this group reported thoughts about the difficulties they faced in the past while trying to deliver results, and how much it shakes someone emotionally. They feel that they no longer have the same energy as before, and that they live with difficulty this reality of not being recognized as good performance professionals. In the perception of this group, they try to return to the best levels of delivery, although they recognize it demands a lot of effort to achieve that.

Negative-prospective affect appeared on 3.33%. The reports were about the difficulty of depending on the team to deliver a result. *Neutral* affect presented 13.33% of frequency. This group mentioned the importance of customer satisfaction, digital transformation, besides major changes in the work environment, but did not express feelings or thoughts about these scenarios.

4.8 Delivery perception of high-performance women of generation X

This group defines proactivity as interest in work, anticipatory behavior, and a journey to do the best at all times. They consider proactivity a natural competence related to behavior. That is, a proactive one adapts himself/herself to changes, and leaves the comfort zone often. For them, proactivity is having the ability to reinvent oneself to seek solutions and results. They believe it is possible for leadership to develop proactive behavior in the team, but at the same time, they affirm that this form of action comes from within each one. They state that only proactive people are promoted in the company.

Women from this group had *positive-prospective* affect with a frequency of 65.22%. They relate their thoughts and feelings showing a lot of strength, and guarantee to achieve the results proposed. They consider it necessary to achieve the objectives; they value relations of trust and transparency. These women are not be intimidated by challenges, they cite will and wish to reach results. They do not allow negative feelings to remain and seek to overcome them through self-motivation. They report the importance of having a strategic look and do not admit delivery below the proposed.

The *negative-retrospective* affect presented 13,04% of frequency. This group cited moments of uncertainty and disappointments that should always be overcame, but did not report feelings and thoughts about it. They also reported that one should not feed bad feelings, but do not mention if they have felt it at some point. *Neutral* affection presented a frequency of 21.74%. The women reported the importance of a sustainable outcome and the existence of factors that influence the outcome, but did not mention their feelings and thoughts about these variables. This group did not present frequency in *negative-retrospective* affect, nor *negative-prospective* affect meaning units.

4.9 Delivery perception of low-performance women of generation X

This group defines proactivity as the capacity of perceiving the environment and doing what needs to be done. For them, proactivity means to take control, to anticipate future needs, problems, or changes. They consider that proactive people perform just one activity at a time, concentrating on doing each activity well. They cite that the proactive must see others' needs and

help them. According to these women, being proactive also implies being a good example to others.

Negative-retrospective affect was predominant in this group, presenting a frequency of 43.48%. They reported that challenges touch emotions, values and the whole body. That is, an emotional charge exists, and, if not taken seriously, it can affect the performance and delivery of your tasks. Failing to meet the goal, from the perspective of this group, brings feelings of incompetence that can cause depression. They also cite that achieving a goal by means of lack of ethics, that is, focusing solely on the goal, is not correct. In these reports, the subjects' emotional load, emotional state and lack of ethics were very much repeated. Another point present in the reports is that these people do not work only for money. They still mentioned that sometimes they have the feeling of giving up even before trying to fulfill what was proposed.

The second highest frequency was the *positive-prospective* affect, with 34.78%. They consider it important to have a goal, and say that being emotionally well helps to deliver the proposal. They reported that they seek to train people, do quality work and find opportunities during difficulties. These women also mention their satisfaction with the work they do, and that they seek to improve their knowledge and skills. Exposing the customer to the best options and working with quality were things repeatedly described in this group.

4.10 Delivery perception of low-performance women of generation Y

This group defined proactive people as the ones who are authors of their own history, who do more than the company expects from them, who are able to think ahead of situations. They also defined a proactive person as one capable of reinventing himself/herself, innovating, seeking solutions and constant development. There were some repetitions in the definitions, for example, characterizing a proactive person as someone with the ability of anticipation was quite frequent in the reports. The capacity of doing more than expected also displayed significant frequency.

Regarding their deliveries at work, 47.37% of the reports fragments show *positive-prospective* affect, while *neutral* frequencies and *positive-retrospective* affect had 21.05%. *Negative-retrospective* affect displayed a frequency of 10.53%. This group of low-performance women of generation Y - people that showed performance under the expected for the last two years - presented in the report of *neutral* affection more evident feelings and thoughts in relation

to the external world. The partial intention of the reports was stronger in the desire to describe factors of the external world that influence their deliveries at work, less reported the inner world. It was also evident the feeling of seeking, trying to deliver the proposed. They reported on developing and valuing the team, learning from their own mistakes and how much delivery brings satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment.

In the category of *negative-retrospective,* women have mentioned immense sadness and feelings of inability when they do not deliver. They described feelings of doubt, and presented desire to keep their jobs, in spite of the difficulties they might face. They feel that something is missing in order to guarantee the deliveries, but at times they do not know what it is. They feel that they do not agree with what the company expects, but that they strive to reach that level. In the category of *positive-prospective* affect, they presented feelings and thoughts about their desires to reach the goals. These people feel that they are able to overcome their limits. They discussed the behavior of the leader who influences the team on delivering, so that the employees will desire and feel enthusiasm to deliver. In this group the feeling of effective deliveries appeared less, but they showed more clearly the desire to be at this level.

In the category of *positive-retrospective* affect, the people reported helping and receiving help. These women also mentioned that delivering what is proposed brings a sense of fulfilled duty and recognition. They reported how much the delivery brings a sense of professionalism and growth, and cited effort and efficiency as factors that drive delivery.

4.11 Delivery perception of high-performance women of generation Y

This group understands as proactive a person who possesses constructive indignation, who is always on the move to improve, who reads between the lines without waiting for someone to ask something to be done. They see proactive people as facilitators in the team, who add more value to the task than people who act exclusively according to what was demanded. These women consider the proactive one as a differential in the team, since people with this behavior tend to assume more responsibilities, and thus influence towards better deliveries. The most repeated definitions in the report were to think ahead, take initiative and do more than expected.

Regarding their deliveries at work, 45.16% of the reports' fragments presented *positive-prospective*, 35.48% presented *negative-retrospective*, 16.13% presented *positive-retrospective*

and 3% presented *neutral* affection. This group presented in the *positive-prospective* affect, feelings and thoughts indicating that feel comfortable with the existing charging relationship. They feel comfortable when they receive a request, because it satisfies them as professionals. They reported some personal beliefs, such as, not giving up, regardless of the challenge, and always giving the best of themselves. These women mentioned the importance of motivating the team, that should always be willing to do whatever it takes, including doing an activity again if some goal is not achieved. They value relationships at work in order to ensure delivery. The difficulties mentioned were not predominant in the speech, and did not bring any perception that indicated disturb in the process. The most used terms in the meaning units of this report were challenge, deliveries and task.

In the modality of *negative-retrospective* affect, the group reported feelings and thoughts of frustration when the proposed delivery does not occur. However, they bring in the reports a protagonist role, even blaming themselves because of an undelivered result. They suggest that there should be a bigger concern from the leader, because they feel that they are not valued as they should be. They perceive that the company is more concerned with deliveries than with those who deliver, and that sometimes the leader delivers what was proposed to the detriment of himself/herself. The most used terms in these meaning units were sentiment, leader and delivery.

In the modality of *positive-retrospective* affect, the meaning units stand out for the satisfaction that arise from the deliveries of the past. People from this group showed feelings of pride and accomplishment for delivering what is proposed. They also reported feeling safe, even in the presence of their boss. The most present terms were satisfaction, extraordinary result, joy, satisfactory delivery, good performance. The modality of *neutral* affect was present in 3% of the reports, in which the group discussed about possibilities of the future that may or may not exist. They have not shown feelings or thoughts about their deliveries in these meaning units.

4.12 Delivery perception of low-performance men of generation Y

This group understands proactive behavior as growing productivity, easy adaptation to tasks, and offering help in extra tasks. According to them, the proactive person is someone you can count on when you need. They reported proactivity as something that goes beyond anticipating, it is taking responsibility for the tasks assumed, assisting in training people without

the fear of losing their position. It is to be willing to do what you already know and learn something new, to make partnerships and to seek new functions within the company.

Regarding their deliveries at work, 42.31% of the meaning units analyzed showed *positive-retrospective*, highlighting the importance of delivery and goals. People from this group expressed feelings and thoughts of trust in what was already built, feel happy and fulfilled at work. They seek to be an example to the team and feel more motivated when they actually reach the goal. *Positive-prospective* affect presented 38.46%. The people reported pride in being part of the company, stating that they wish better results. They understand that they work not only to accomplish tasks, they argue to see work as something broader. They express love for work and cite ethics and transparency as important guides to achieve results.

In relation to the *negative-retrospective* affect, the reports represent 15.38% of the analyzed units. Outstanding in this category are the charges for being still better, the feeling of frustration, and how much work causes good and bad feelings. The people highlighted how much the results still need to be improved, that when they do not reach the goals they try to learn from the mistakes. They also reported that, even with all the necessary conditions, they still cannot deliver in some moments and do not understand why. The meaning units in the category of *neutral* affect add up to 3% and report predominantly future perspectives, without expressing feelings and thoughts regarding deliveries at work.

4.13 Delivery perception of high-performance men of generation Y

The group of low-performance men of generation Y defines proactivity as the ability to anticipate situations that may influence the work. They consider a proactive individual the one who can soothe risks, who is able to change the environment and have disposition in front of daily life tasks. This group associated the definition of proactivity as the individual's ability to go beyond, break paradigms, bring the new and the expected to the work environment. Being participatory and collaborative were also definitions presented by this group.

Regarding work deliveries, the high-performance men of generation Y presented the highest frequency in the *positive-prospective* category, 65.52%. The most frequent entities were professional and personal fulfillment, challenge, delivery, and direction. They expressed feelings of seeking development, desire to have financial gains, and intention to be a reference. The desire

to stay in the organization was also evident, they feel that they can involve people and accompany them to ensure delivery.

    Positive-retrospective affect presented itself in this category with 6.90%. The reports show a person who remembers happily about the performances he has accomplished and the achievements that have taken place. The people also cited other factors that interfere with achievement and how much they are relieved by deliveries already made. The *neutral* category of affect is represented by 17% of the meaning units. In this account they brought a little of the world view they have without expressing their feelings and thoughts, they recognize that there is a challenging corporate world and that the way to face the goal is very important to guarantee its delivery.

    The category of *negative-retrospective* affect was represented in 10.34% of the reports. This group reported the difficulties that exist, the goals that should be delivered in the short term and that sometimes are not delivered, and the importance of uniformity in the team that sometimes does not happen. They have idealized that the goal should be the whole and not just the short term, as it happens most of the time.

GRUP	GENDER	GENERATION	negative-retrospective	negative-prospective	positive-prospective	postitive-retropective	neutral
			Frequency Meaning Unit: Affect				
HIGH PERF	MEN	BB	42,31%	7,69%	42,31%	7,69%	0,00%
HIGH PERF	MEN	X	31,82%	4,55%	54,55%	0,00%	9,09%
HIGH PERF	MEN	Y	10,34%	0,00%	65,52%	6,90%	17,24%
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			28,16%	4,08%	54,13%	4,86%	8,78%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	BB	38,89%	11,11%	38,89%	5,56%	5,56%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	X	13,04%	0,00%	65,22%	0,00%	21,74%
HIGH PERF	WOMEN	Y	35,48%	0,00%	45,16%	16,13%	3,23%
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			29,14%	3,70%	49,76%	7,23%	10,18%
TOTAL AVERAGE			29%	4%	52%	6%	9%
LOW PERF	MEN	BB	16,00%	8,00%	24,00%	36,00%	16,00%
LOW PERF	MEN	X	30,00%	3,33%	40,00%	13,33%	13,33%
LOW PERF	MEN	Y	15,38%	0,00%	38,46%	42,31%	3,85%
TOTAL AVERAGE MEN			20,46%	3,78%	34,15%	30,55%	11,06%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	BB	50,00%	0,00%	21,43%	21,43%	7,14%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	X	43,48%	0,00%	34,78%	8,70%	13,04%
LOW PERF	WOMEN	Y	10,53%	0,00%	47,37%	21,05%	21,05%
TOTAL AVERAGE WOMEN			34,67%	0,00%	34,53%	17,06%	13,74%
TOTAL AVERAGE			28%	2%	34%	24%	12%

Table7. Meaning Unit: Affects
Note. Source: Personal collection

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter will present the results of this work. It is intended to answer the specific objectives that lead to the general objective, and, therefore, to answer the problem of this research. The overall objective of this research was to understand better how proactivity relates to the performance of an individual considering generations and genders present in a financial institution.

The financial institution studied has a model of proposed targets. Based on this model, people are assessed annually, revealing whether or not they have met the challenges proposed at the beginning of the year. These challenges have partial monthly information for employees on compliance, but people are assessed only after the year's full closure. The sample presented here was non-probabilistic by convenience, taking into account the research intent. Thirty-six people partially randomly selected. In total, 18 high-performance people and 18 low-performance, assessed in the last 2 years. The concepts of according to expected performance and below-expected performance considered the evaluation model used by the institution, as previously mentioned in the Methodology chapter.

5.1 The relationship between proactivity and performance of the Baby Boomer generation

The low-performance women of this generation demonstrated through their reports few elements of proactive behavior. The studies of Slatten et. al. (2013) show that most proactive individuals do not want to stay in a single position throughout their lives. Instead, they tend to change their jobs or tasks, perhaps changing companies many times during their working life in order to further their own career. Essentially, they are borderless, and are not tied to organizations. In this group one can observe little desire for bigger challenges, it is a career built practically in a single company. When challenges are mentioned in the reports, they reveal in the meaning units the emotional impacts they undergo in an attempt to achieve the expected results.

Huang (2017) mentions the importance of having managers in the workplace who promote the psychological empowerment of employees, and use their self-confidence to promote the proactive behavior of employees. This practice implies giving power, relying on the ability to execute and deliver. The group of low-performance women managers of the Baby Boomer

generation in this study did not present sufficient meaning units that promote psychological empowerment. They have demonstrated a role of effort in the fulfillment of the objectives, they understand well what role they must play, but they do not demonstrate feelings of power to guarantee or turn a bad result into a good one. Their reports are loaded with "I try", "I seek", the reports of the groups that perform have many units of meaning "I do", "I deliver".

The high-performance men of this generation also presented few elements of proactive behavior. Although performing, this group brought the perception of an environment that is more hostile. This group does not believe that a professional can build a long career in the institution if it is not quickly promoted. In relation to the elements of proactive behavior, a protagonist role was noticed discreetly, as reported by Silva (2000), that people of proactive behavior are protagonists of their careers.

Underperforming women of the Baby Boomer generation demonstrate effort in accomplishing the tasks to fulfill the proposed, but bring in their reports little information about the role of transformation they believe to be capable of. High-performance women of this generation report overwhelmingly, intense fear of the challenges. The elements of proactivity were also discreetly noticed when compared to the other generations. This finding indicates that proactive behavior can be dynamic throughout life. It could be said that at some point in the past, to be promoted to a manager position, there was in these people ownership and mobilization profile, characteristics associated with proactive behavior. In the meaning units analyzed, few elements were found and no meaning of transformation.

Sonnetang and Sphychala (2012) cite in their study that time pressure to perform a task seems to promote proactive behavior. However, it can be observed in these results that the duration of this pressure in time must be observed, and also the generation observed, since the Baby Boomer generation analyzed in this work, even presenting performance, denotes few elements of proactive behavior.

Unlike other generations and genders, this generation shows a high degree of love for work, reports of their feelings and thoughts about the company are positive. However, the mobilization and transformation capacity is discrete even in the group that performs. The two groups show, through the analysis of the meaning units, a greater frequency of positive feeling in relation to the past. None of the groups of this generation had a higher frequency of positivity in relation to the future.

The essence of this generation's experience with its deliverables and proactive behavior is positively related when looking at the past that these people have built. The relation of the thoughts and feelings of this generation with the elements of the proactive behavior was discreet in the group that performs within the expected and almost absent in the low-performance group. In both the men's group and the women's group, the role of adaptive, autonomous, creative learners who are able to change the environment in which they work to advance their careers is poor, as Huang (2017) puts it in describing proactive behavior.

5.2 The generation X relationship between proactivity and performance

The low-performance women and men of this generation have revealed through the analysis of the meaning units, important elements of proactive behavior. Li et. al. (2014) cites an important difference between proactive and non-proactive individuals, where proactive ones increase engagement at work and end up conquering more social support. The less proactive individuals have a stronger purpose in maintaining their status quo, that is, the engagement of others is not seen by this group as something of value.

In this sense, one can see the role of engagement in excerpts from the narrative as "delivery cannot be below the proposed", "I do not intimidate myself in the face of challenges", "discouragement cannot exist", and "I agree with aggressive goals". Comparing the literature with the feelings and thoughts of generation X, one perceives an important inclination for transformation and a sense of ownership of one's own path. The entity "I" was present in the meaning units, which demonstrates the role of present protagonist, as Silva (2000) cites in his study.

Low-performance men of this generation reported largely feelings of stress in deliveries. They attributed high performance to external factors, as if they did not have management over them, such as the team. "The team needs to be well aligned to deliver", "an unaligned team can make the month very stressful". They reported that they seek commitment in deliveries, but do not consider the factors that negatively influence the outcome responsibility of themselves. The elements of proactive behavior undergo strong transformation roles. Taken this into account, it can be considered that this group has few characteristics of proactive behavior and that they have an impact on their performances.

The low-performance women of this generation showed a greater negative affection in relation to the past, surpassing the positive affection towards the future. They presented intense reports about emotional load that interfered with and were more adrift of what happens to them than properly owners of their own careers.

Although three of the four analyzed groups of this generation demonstrate *positive-prospective* affect about work, elements of proactive behavior were found only in the group that performed well. The group of low-performance men are willing to perform, and demonstrate positivity when they look at the future. But their reports convey a meaning that, in their perception, they cannot change external factors, when, in fact, they can, and they should.

5.3 The generation Y relationship between proactivity and performance

The high-performance men of this generation presented elements of the proactive behavior regarding the development of the team. This group brought in the units of meaning the speech of the people turned to the result. Sonnentag and Sphychala (2012) mention the importance of managers encouraging employees to be proactive, as this incentive is a predictor of self-confidence. They believe in the good work they do and bring the unique responsibility of what they deliver. It was the group with the greatest positive affect on the future of the 12 groups surveyed.

The high-performance women of this generation bring an observation about the companies are demonstrate concern for the well-being of the leaderships. Some of the units of meaning bring the delivery of the result to the detriment of the well-being of the leadership. This finding is in agreement with the study of Schmitt et. al. (2016) where the authors state that proactive behavior occurs in the working environment through controlled tension. Despite the emotional tension described, this group was the most recurrent in mentioning results and deliveries by developing people. They feel comfortable in the face of a great challenge. Just as they work close to the team, in the meaning units it was possible to realize that this generation tends to share emotions and feelings with the team.

A counterpoint to the theory found in these results shows that even presenting elements of proactive behavior, leaders may not cope well with the ability to overcome problems. Huang

(2017) states in his study that proactive ones deal best with high uncertainty and that this would be a predictor of proactive behavior.

The low-performance women of this generation demonstrated through the analysis of meaning some elements of proactive behavior. They bring in the story the active role in building the outcome, but as leaders they do not report thoughts and feelings of being the protagonists of the story. They demonstrate confidence in improved delivery and believe in the reward for a job well done, but they do not make it clear that they formulate strategies.

The low-performance men of this generation were among the groups that most cited ethics and transparency in the units of analysis. They have shown meaning in what they do; they have mentioned the feelings and thoughts of frustration when they do not deliver. Few elements of proactive behavior were identified, but a sense of playfulness in relation to reality stood out in this analysis. The evaluations of the institution in question are clear and recorded for each individual in relation to what is expected. However, some units of analysis appeared with delivery claims within the expected and that these deliveries were easy to deliver.

The literature states that self-confidence is an important predictor of proactivity and that psychological factors have important influence in this context. In the analysis of this group, many meaning units that denote different focuses in the search for the result are perceived which can be a factor that hinders the evolution of performance.

5.4 Elements of proactive behavior and performance

In the analyzed meaning units of each generation and each genre, it can be noted that proactive behavior is related to performance. However, this relationship may not be permanent. Generation Y women demonstrated elements of proactive behavior in the reports, but because of some misunderstanding of strategy and leadership, they have not yet been able to reverse their results below expectations.

Performing women of generation Y deliver what is proposed, but report some sense of distress for deliveries. This finding contrasts the work of Nguyen (2016) in which elements were found to affirm that the proactive personality translates into the work environment in resilience and optimism. By understanding the lifeworld through phenomenology, it can be emphasized that

there is a duality between delivering what is proposed and maintaining a feeling of optimism, that is, not always the proactive one is resilient and optimistic.

In the units of meaning it can be verified that the group that has superior performance presents more reports of the self as transforming agent and facilitator. In the group that presented inferior performance, many descriptions of external factors that in the perception of the group were found to hinder delivery. However, this group also presented elements of proactive behavior.

In the group that performs as expected, the Baby Boomer generation presents higher percentages in the meaning units in both *negative-retrospective* and *negative-prospective* affects. Generation Y presents the highest levels of *positive-prospective* and *positive-retrospective*, followed by generation X.

The low-performance group of generation X presented the highest percentages in the meaning units in *negative-retrospective* affects, followed by the Baby Boomer generation. *Negative-prospective* affection was discreet in the Baby Boomer and X generations. The *positive-prospective* and *positive-retrospective* affects presented higher percentages in the generation Y.

These findings show that the relationship between proactivity and performance is positive, but proactivity is not zero in those who do not perform. The low-performance group presents less elements of proactive behavior when compared to the group that performs. The feelings and thoughts of the two groups differ mainly in the meaning they attribute to the difficulties of everyday life. The group that reports expresses thoughts and feelings of difficulty in relation to delivery, but they have the intrinsic truth that they are the true responsible for the performance they have. The low-performance group reports thoughts and feelings of difficulty and attributes to these difficulties the reason for non-delivery.
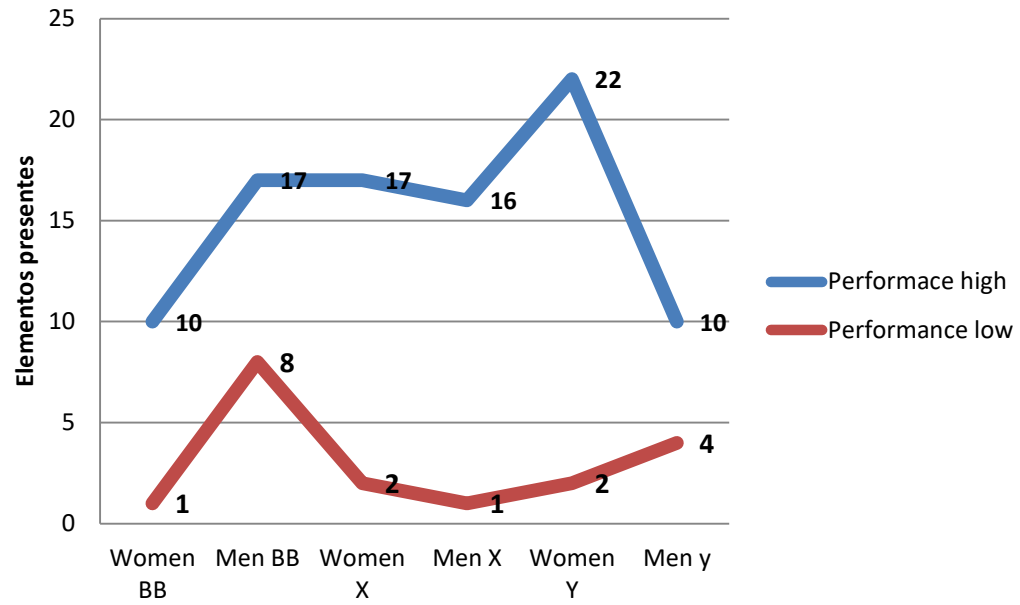
Figure 3 – *Positive-prospective* affect
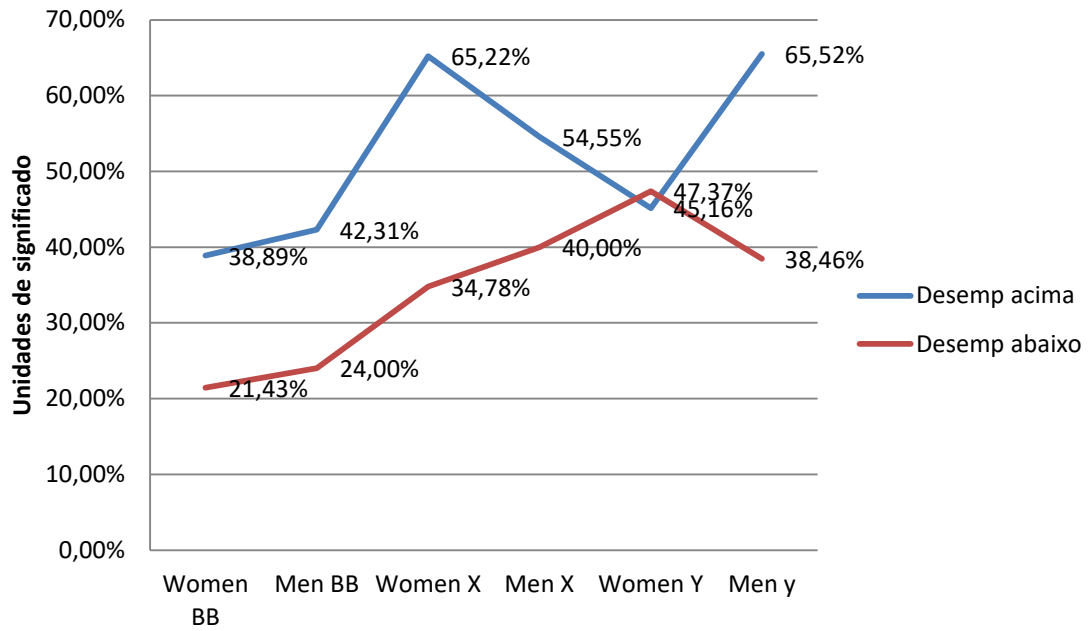
Source: Personal collection

Figure 4 – *Positive-retrospective* affect
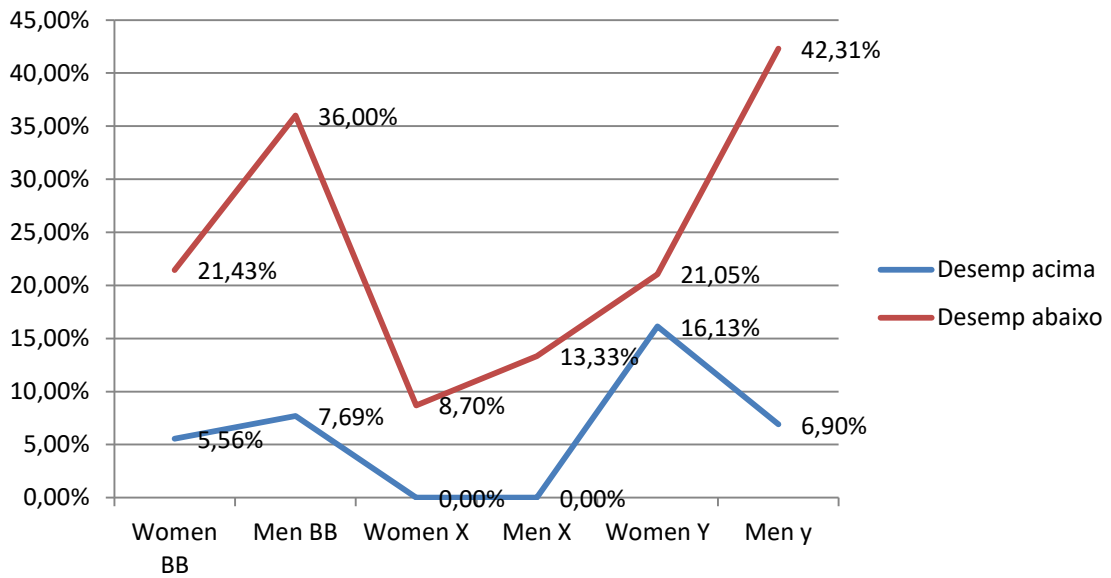
Source: Personal collection

Figure 5 – Proactive elements x generation and gender

Source: Personal collection

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present research aimed to investigate how proactivity is related to the performance of the individual considering generations and genders present in a financial institution. We used phenomenology as a methodology. Phenomenology is the study of the essences, of the meaning, and the lifeworld of each person. The main intention in using this methodology was to understand what was behind the meanings of the reports obtained. We used a sample of managers of a financial institution considering generations Baby Boomer, X and Y, and also considering male and female genders.

Through the MCA software the reports were analyzed in detail separating their meaning units, considering the variables of generation and gender separately. Low-performing groups have brought strong quality, customer, and ethics issues to the table, suggesting that they prioritize compliance with the principles followed. It can be perceived through the analysis of each meaning unit, that there is an attempt to justify, through these principles, a low performance. However, these difficulties are also present in the group that performs.

An important difference found in the two groups of generations is that, the group that performs, reports their thoughts and feelings as owners of their own history, bring strong the protagonist and transforming self. The low-performance group brings the external interferences, as the great cause of a result being lower than expected. However, we can find elements of proactive behavior in both groups.

In the analyses made, it is possible to perceive an important percentage of negative affection in relation to deliveries. Taken this into account, some counterpoints stand up to the theories studied, for example, Fay & Sonnentang (2012) affirm that individuals with proactive behavior can influence others to stay motivated and feel competent at work. Nevertheless, this research showed through phenomenology that proactivity did not present a consistent relationship with influence and resilience, as can be found in the literature. Only generation X brings this meaning with more understanding.

It has not been confirmed that an individual's proactive personality is enduring, or perhaps it may be necessary to further study this variable to understand what can be considered to be enduring. In the Baby Boomer generation this behavior may have been present in the past, after all they are long careers in the same institution. Notwithstanding, in both the high and low-

performance groups, this generation had few elements of proactive behavior when compared to other generations.

We conclude that proactivity is positively related to performance and plays an important role in the construction of individual behavior for deliveries. However, the same person regardless of gender and generation may have proactive behavior more frequently or less frequently; it will depend on the moment of their life. In the literature, proactivity is defined and understood only in 2 blocks, as proactive people and non-proactive people. On the other hand, in this work, a uniformity was not found, that is, we cannot affirm that a particular generation or genre has more proactive behavior. We can state in this research that the group that performs has more frequency of proactive behavior, when compared to the group with performance below expectations.

The analyzed generations demonstrated different meanings within the same universe, the performance. It is suggested to extend studies in this area so that, with a better understanding of the world of life of individuals within the same group, new development tools can be elaborated in order to assist in better performance. It is also suggested that quantitative models can be applied based on this research, in order to confirm in large masses the new concepts acquired here.

The present research was limited to investigate only the position of managers, taking into account the detailed investigation that the method used demands. We also limit our understanding of male and female genders alone. Considering the diversity of genres that has arisen over time, it is suggested to apply this type of research also in other genres.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Collected Results

Baby boomer generation – women – low performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-prospective		2	8.00%
	negative-retrospective		4	16.00%
	neutral		4	16.00%
	positive-prospective		6	24.00%
	positive-retrospective		9	36.00%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		25	100.00%
	perc/sign		9	36.00%
Function	perceptive		15	60.00%
	signitive		1	4.00%
	my		15	60.00%
	not stated		6	24.00%
Property	others		1	4.00%
	our		2	8.00%
	their		1	4.00%
	I		14	56.00%
Subject	one-all		2	8.00%
	unspecified		6	24.00%
	we		3	12.00%
	always-recurrent		2	8.00%
Time	pres = fut		2	8.00%
	pres = pas		5	20.00%
	present		16	64.00%
	engagement		1	4.00%
Will	none		9	36.00%
	wish-negative		3	12.00%
	wish-positive		12	48.00%

Generation X – Men - low performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-prospective		1	3.33%
	negative-retrospective		9	30.00%
	neutral		4	13.33%
	positive-prospective		12	40.00%
	positive-retrospective		4	13.33%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		28	93.33%
	doxa-negation		2	6.67%
	imaginative		1	3.33%
	perc/imag		2	6.67%
Function	perc/sign		11	36.67%
	perceptive		13	43.33%
	signitive		3	10.00%
	my		23	76.67%
	not stated		4	13.33%
Property	others		1	3.33%
	our		1	3.33%
	their		1	3.33%
	I		24	80.00%
Subject	one-all		3	10.00%
	unspecified		2	6.67%
	we		1	3.33%
	past		3	10.00%
Time	pres – fut		5	16.67%
	pres – pas		7	23.33%
	present		15	50.00%
	engagement		2	6.67%
Will	none		7	23.33%
	wish-negative		8	26.67%
	wish-positive		13	43.33%

Generation Y – Men – Low performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-retrospective		4	15,38%
	neutral		1	3,85%
	positive-prospective		10	38,46%
	positive-retrospective		11	42,31%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		26	100,00%
Function	perc/sign		9	34,62%
	perceptive		9	34,62%
	signitive		8	30,77%
Property	my		20	76,92%
	not stated		2	7,69%
	our		3	11,54%
	their		1	3,85%
Subject	I		20	76,92%
	one-all		1	3,85%
	unspecified		1	3,85%
	we		4	15,38%
Time	always-recurrent		2	7,69%
	pres -> fut		3	11,54%
	pres -> pas		7	26,92%
	present		14	53,85%
Will	engagement		6	23,08%
	none		3	11,54%
	wish-negative		1	3,85%
	wish-positive		16	61,54%

Baby Boomer generation – Women – Low performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-retrospective		7	50,00%
	neutral		1	7,14%
	positive-prospective		3	21,43%
	positive-retrospective		3	21,43%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		12	85,71%
	doxa-negation		1	7,14%
	possibility		1	7,14%
Function	imaginative		1	7,14%
	perc/imag		2	14,29%
	perc/sign		5	35,71%
	perceptive		6	42,86%
Property	my		8	57,14%
	not stated		5	35,71%
	our		1	7,14%
Subject	I		8	57,14%
	unspecified		5	35,71%
	we		1	7,14%
Time	always-recurrent		2	14,29%
	past		1	7,14%
	present		11	78,57%
Will	none		6	42,86%
	wish-negative		2	14,29%
	wish-positive		6	42,86%

Generation X – Women – Low performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-retrospective		10	43,48%
	neutral		3	13,04%
	positive-prospective		8	34,78%
	positive-retrospective		2	8,70%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		20	86,96%
	doxa-negation		1	4,35%
	possibility		2	8,70%
Function	perc/sign		11	47,83%
	perceptive		7	30,43%
	signitive		5	21,74%
Property	my		6	26,09%
	not stated		8	34,78%
	others		2	8,70%
	our		5	21,74%
	their		2	8,70%
Subject	I		5	21,74%
	one-all		11	47,83%
	unspecified		4	17,39%
	we		3	13,04%
Time	always-recurrent		1	4,35%
	empty		2	8,70%
	pres -> fut		5	21,74%
	pres -> pas		1	4,35%
	present		14	60,87%
Will	none		10	43,48%
	wish-negative		4	17,39%
	wish-positive		9	39,13%

Generation Y – Women – Low performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-retrospective		2	10.53%
	neutral		4	21.05%
	positive-prospective		9	47.37%
	positive-retrospective		4	21.05%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		17	89.47%
	doxa-negation		1	5.26%
	question		1	5.26%
Function	imaginative		5	26.32%
	perc/sign		5	26.32%
	perceptive		8	42.11%
	signitive		1	5.26%
Property	my		10	52.63%
	not stated		5	26.32%
	our		4	21.05%
Subject	I		12	63.16%
	one-all		5	26.32%
	we		2	10.53%
Time	always-recurrent		2	10.53%
	present		17	89.47%
	none		7	36.84%
Will	wish-negative		2	10.53%
	wish-positive		10	52.63%

Baby Boomer generation – Men – High performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-prospective		2	7.69%
	negative-retrospective		11	42.31%
	positive-prospective		11	42.31%
	positive-retrospective		2	7.69%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		24	92.31%
	question		2	7.69%
Function	perc/sign		16	61.54%
	perceptive		10	38.46%
Property	my		8	30.77%
	not stated		9	34.62%
	others		8	30.77%
	our		1	3.85%
Subject	I		8	30.77%
	one-all		8	30.77%
	unspecified		9	34.62%
	we		1	3.85%
Time	always-recurrent		2	7.69%
	pres → fut		9	34.62%
	pres > pres		5	19.23%
	present		10	38.46%
Will	engagement		3	11.54%
	none		4	15.38%
	wish-negative		10	38.46%
	wish-positive		9	34.62%

Generation X – Men – High performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-prospective		1	4.55%
	negative-retrospective		7	31.82%
	neutral		2	9.09%
	positive-prospective		12	54.55%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		21	95.45%
	doxa-negation		1	4.55%
Function	imaginative		2	9.09%
	perc/sign		8	36.36%
	perceptive		8	36.36%
	signitive		4	18.18%
Property	my		5	22.73%
	not stated		8	36.36%
	our		6	27.27%
	their		3	13.64%
Subject	I		7	31.82%
	one-all		3	13.64%
	unspecified		5	22.73%
	we		7	31.82%
Time	always-recurrent		11	50.00%
	future		1	4.55%
	past		2	9.09%
	pres → fut		2	9.09%
	present		6	27.27%
Will	aspiration		3	13.64%
	engagement		4	18.18%
	none		12	54.55%
	wish-positive		3	13.64%

Generation Y – Men – High performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
	negative-retrospective		3	10,34%
Affects	neutral		5	17,24%
	positive-prospective		19	65,52%
	positive-retrospective		2	6,90%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		29	100,00%
	perc/sign		9	31,03%
Function	perceptive		13	44,83%
	signitive		7	24,14%
	my		14	48,28%
	not stated		12	41,38%
Property	others		1	3,45%
	our		1	3,45%
	their		1	3,45%
			1	3,45%
	I		14	48,28%
Subject	one-all		1	3,45%
	unspecified		12	41,38%
	we		1	3,45%
	always-recurrent		6	20,69%
Time	pres -> fut		6	20,69%
	pres -> pas		2	6,90%
	present		15	51,72%
	engagement		4	13,79%
Will	none		9	31,03%
	wish-negative		1	3,45%
	wish-positive		15	51,72%

Baby Boomer generation – Women – High performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
	negative-prospective		2	11,11%
	negative-retrospective		7	38,89%
Affects	neutral		1	5,56%
	positive-prospective		7	38,89%
	positive-retrospective		1	5,56%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		17	94,44%
	question		1	5,56%
	perc/imag		1	5,56%
Function	perc/sign		6	33,33%
	perceptive		9	50,00%
	signitive		2	11,11%
Property	my		17	94,44%
	not stated		1	5,56%
Subject	I		17	94,44%
	unspecified		1	5,56%
	always-recurrent		6	33,33%
	past		1	5,56%
Time	pres -> fut		2	11,11%
	pres -> pas		3	16,67%
	present		6	33,33%
	aspiration		1	5,56%
	engagement		2	11,11%
Will	wish-negative		8	44,44%
	wish-positive		7	38,89%

Generation X – Women – High performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
	negative-retrospective		3	13,04%
Affects	neutral		5	21,74%
	positive-prospective		15	65,22%
	doxa-affirmation		20	86,96%
	doxa-negation		1	4,35%
Belief	possibility		1	4,35%
	probability		1	4,35%
	perc/imag		1	4,35%
Function	perc/sign		11	47,83%
	perceptive		9	39,13%
	signitive		2	8,70%
	my		16	69,57%
	not stated		5	21,74%
Property	others		1	4,35%
	our		1	4,35%
	I		16	69,57%
Subject	one-all		2	8,70%
	unspecified		4	17,39%
	we		1	4,35%
	always-recurrent		5	21,74%
Time	pres -> fut		13	56,52%
	pres -> pas		4	17,39%
	present		1	4,35%
	aspiration		1	4,35%
	engagement		11	47,83%
Will	none		7	30,43%
	wish-positive		4	17,39%

Generation Y – Women – High performance

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
	negative-retrospective		11	35,48%
Affects	neutral		1	3,23%
	positive-prospective		14	45,16%
	positive-retrospective		5	16,13%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		31	100,00%
	perc/sign		17	54,84%
Function	perceptive		13	41,94%
	signitive		1	3,23%
	my		20	64,52%
	not stated		4	12,90%
Property	others		1	3,23%
	our		3	9,68%
	their		3	9,68%
	I		21	67,74%
Subject	one-all		4	12,90%
	unspecified		4	12,90%
	we		2	6,45%
	always-recurrent		3	9,68%
Time	pres → fut		7	22,58%
	pres → pas		3	9,68%
	present		18	58,06%
	engagement		4	12,90%
Will	none		3	9,68%
	wish-negative		11	35,48%
	wish-positive		13	41,94%