GEERT HOFSTEDE'S MASCULINITY-FEMININITY PLATFORM IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF THE TOURIST COMPANIES OF BAHÍAS DE HUATULCO, OAXACA

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— Abstract—

This paper exposes the results of a study of organizational culture carried out in the tourism destination Bahías de Huatulco (Oaxaca, México). After a brief introduction, it begins by presenting the conceptual framework of organizational differentiated by this author the one referring to masculinity - femininity. Subsequently, after making reference to the methodology, the results of the study are shown. Thus, the masculine dimensions of the platform (objectivity, critical thinking and efficiency) are exposed in the first place and in second place the feminine ones (humility, subjectivity and friendship). The article closes with some reflections, in which the predominance of masculine dimensions is established and, on the other hand, it attempts to link the results with gender equity.

Keywords

Organizational culture, Geert Hofstede, Bahías de Huatulco, tourism, masculinity-femininity.

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The hotel companies in Bahías de Huatulco represent a complex sector in which the chains', usually foreign, business culture coexists with local cultures. In this environment, studying masculinity-femininity (and in general the five dimensions of the organizational culture pointed out by Hofstede) becomes an objective that can have a strategic value to improve the work environment, the effectiveness of the work, and in general the competitiveness of destinations, taking into account the importance of intangible factors for this.

Hofstede (1984) conducted a study of organizational culture during two periods 1968 and 1972, through 72 IBM affiliates in 53 different countries, with the idea of obtaining a possible improvement of human relations from a global perspective. This author points out that culture is an invisible part (of an organization) that is integrated by values shared by the majority of its members. Converted into norms of coexistence, they determine to a great extent the political and organizational solutions that are observed in a macro and micro way in each country. Thus, Hofstede (1984: 15) mentions that collective mental programs consist of certain stable patterns of thought, feeling and action, which makes possible to distinguish one social group from another.

In order to better understand what the author proposes, it is first of all necessary to specify the concept of organizational culture, differentiating it from general points of view about culture, such as the sociological definition provided by Vera and Rodríguez (2009)[1]. Later, the study of the masculine-feminine platform will be approached, that will help to identify if the people who conform the organizations are more inclined by some or other characteristics. In order to carry out this analysis, it was necessary to identify each of the characteristics of both sides of the platform, that is, the masculine and the feminine, then constructing a survey, which served to carry out the measurement. It is necessary to mention that this characterization could be questioned from a gender perspective; however, for the purposes of this

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1   One of these points of view would be the sociological definition of culture contributed by Vera and Rodríguez (2009), for whom it is a system of interrelationships between the individual ontogenetic processes, the social and historical ones of collective behavior in a time cut and the anthropological and historical ones that make possible the cultural products, including the artistic, daily, scientific, technological and folkloric manifestations. Viladot (2012) also offers an interesting conceptualization of the culture, as well as the different intellectual approaches with which it has been approached.

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research, it was tried to maintain the original nomenclature of Hofstede, but bearing in mind that this "traditional" consideration of masculine and feminine is completely overcome.

After the development of the field work, the information obtained was analyzed under descriptive statistics. The results of this investigation will be presented below; however, firstly, a series of conceptual aspects about the masculine-feminine platform and also the organizational culture itself will be explained.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Organizational culture

In the early 1980s, when the differences between the North American business management model and the Japanese industrial model were becoming more evident, the study of organizational culture began: Rodríguez (2009) mentions that Japan's leadership, in regards to quality and functionality of its products, was attributed to the characteristics of its culture, which led many researchers to study it.

This new perspective of the organizational culture developed by the aforementioned authors brings new research characteristics. Echeverría (2005) mentions that the organizational culture rejects the "schematic and excessively rational vision and assumes the thesis that organizational decisions and behavior are predetermined by basic assumption patterns, which underlie decision making and are maintained by members of the organization." The repetition of these patterns, and their unconscious assumption on their behalf, causes that the behaviors influence in the decision making.

In this way, the concept of organizational culture has evolved over time; with a view to an adequate contextualization of the same, two characterizations will be presented:

- Peters and Waterman (1984) quoted by Pérez (2009: 46) mention that "organizational culture is a dominant and coherent set of shared values transmitted by symbolic meanings such as stories, myths, legends, slogans and anecdotes".
- Díaz (2006) mentions that the organizational culture ate the "beliefs, whether they are invented, developed or discovered, that the groups judge as valid and allow them to adapt to the environment and integrate internally, as well as being taught the right way to perceive , think and feel your problems."

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Having reviewed the previous definitions of organizational culture, it can be understood adequately for the purposes of this work as the set of values, ideas, beliefs and myths that occur within organizations based on the interaction of collaborators, who legitimize themselves and they are transmitted through the years, often unconsciously.

1.2 Masculinity-femininity according to Hofstede

The study carried out by Hofstede establishes five categories to identify the organizational culture, one of them is the aforementioned, masculinity-femininity, which, for Thevenet (2008), does not speak in a strict sense of who holds the authority, men or women according to the case, but of those societies in which certain values that traditionally have been considered masculine (affirmation of self, acquisition of goods, etc.) predominate, in contrast to other societies in which values such as concern for others or attention to the quality of life, which have been considered feminine.

In this way, Hofstede (1984) considers that the societies he calls 'masculine' are those that care about success and money, and in general about material aspects. These are competitive and aggressive cultures in the labor field, in which economic gains, recognition and status play a fundamental role. These cultures focus on individual achievement and accomplishment of tasks, while reinforcing differences between the sexes (Hofstede, 1991: 138). Hofstede (1991) asks why some cultures are more feminine or masculine, suggesting that this may be due to cultural heritage, that is, to the cultures that historically preceded it and to its more or less cooperative or warrior character. In a later text, Hofstede (2011) states that in societies considered male, there is usually a taboo about this dimension, taboo that in his opinion shows that it touches deep and often unconscious values, "too painful to be discussed explicitly".

On the other hand, Gilmore (quoted in Páez and Fernández, 2002), mentions that male cultures "value performance and competitiveness, as well as a classic virile image and therefore cultural masculinity could be associated with a greater "macho" culture, since men must show their excellence in acting."

The studies of Yogo and Onue (quoted in Moya *et al.*, 2002) on masculinity and femininity, conducted in Japan (considered a male culture by Hofstede) reveal that subjects speak "less of their emotions of sadness, shame and guilt. with their parents, relatives and couples, avoiding emotional problems. They talk even less about positive emotions such as love, confirming that they avoid

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talking about emotions in general." Some countries that according to Hofstede fall into this classification are Japan, Hungary, Venezuela and the United States.

On the other hand, those societies that are characterized by having harmony within their organizations, in which they work as a group, the decisions are taken together regularly and not individually and the affective relationships within the organizations are common, considered feminine.

"The feminine cultures do not emphasize the differences of gender role, they are not competitive and they value the cooperation and the care of the weak" (Viladot, 2012). "The feminine cultures are more permissive, they value the quality of life more and they accept the complementarity of the sexes. Men suffer less from the anxiety to fulfill their role, being able to manifest more modesty and communicate more with women. Emotional well-being is higher in developed female cultures" (Arrindell quoted in Paéz and Fernández, 2016). Feminine cultures do not emphasize stereotypical gender behaviors, in addition to emphasizing interpersonal harmony and communal relations (Hofstede, 1991). Some countries considered female are Costa Rica, Chile and Guatemala.

Trying to show the differences between masculine and feminine cultures, Paéz and Fernández (2002) made a comparison, which is shown in the following table.

Table 1. Cultural differences

	High Masculinity	High Femininity
Values and attitudes	Material success. Money and material possessions are important	Take care of others. People and good relationships are important
Social behavior	Ambition and assertiveness, competition, fairness and performance	Modesty, equality and solidarity
Emotions	Low expressiveness and emotional experience. Low emotional support	High expressiveness and emotional experience. High emotional support

Source: Paéz and Fernández (2002)

Montt and Rehner (2012: 23) mention that masculinity can be understood with the phrase "live to work", precisely because these societies are focused on tasks and work. On the other hand, female societies do not give so much value to this characteristic and they expect to have leaders endowed with human warmth, as well as negotiations in which consensus is sought.

The theoretical considerations that have been presented served as a basis to identify the main characteristics to be evaluated in this research: success,

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competences, individual achievements and few emotions for male societies; and equality, harmony, friendly relations, modesty, solidarity and emotional support for female societies.

In this way, the research will refer to the masculinity variable as typical of an aggressive and competitive society, where people (men and women) are objective, critical and efficient. On the other hand, we will study the feminine variable, which includes modesty, related to humility and subjectivity; the second indicator will correspond to the affective aspect of society, expressed through friendship relations.

After having exposed each of the characteristics that integrate both masculinity and femininity according to Hofstede, and before moving on to the presentation of results and methodology, a very brief reference will be made to the context of this study: the tourist destination of Bahías de Huatulco is the fifth and last of the Integrally Planned Centers developed by the National Fund for Tourism Promotion (FONATUR). Bahías de Huatulco is a destination which construction began in 1985, after the criticized expropriation of more than 21,000 hectares of land carried out a year earlier (Talledos, 2012). The destination includes nine bays and 36 beaches, it is provided with an international airport and a cruise ship dock. In 2013, there were 121 lodging establishments, offering a total of 4,066 rooms, mostly hoteliers with a high profile (SECTUR, 2013). Today it is already one of the main tourist destinations in Mexico, with 402,733 tourist arrivals in 2014.

Taking into account the importance that the organizational culture can have for the development of competitive tourism services, we want to highlight the relevance of the results that will be presented below, presenting one of the five dimensions differentiated by Hofstede.

2. METHODOLOGY

This masculinity-femininity dimension research is considered to be of a transectional-exploratory nature because there is a set of variables for a single situation. Hernández *et al.* (2006) mention that the purpose of exploratory transectional designs is to begin to know a variable or a set of variables (a community, a context, an event, a situation).

The information was obtained from a survey, designed after a cabinet work. In general terms, it is a descriptive work that included the entire universe or subjects of study (with 72 represented companies, public and private, all of

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them dedicated to the provision of tourist services, formally) constituting not a sample but a census (Hernández *et al.*, 2006).

The questionnaire consisted of two clearly defined parts. In the first one, the person was asked to describe their position in the company (command or not), together with a series of identification data, while in the second part was dedicated to collect the views of the interviewee regarding the different dimensions of their perception of the masculinity-femininity platform, which will be explained below.

3. RESULTS OBTAINED

To present these results, the three male dimensions of the platform will be presented first, and then the three female dimensions.

For all the characteristics studied there is also a margin, sometimes significantly wider, of "don't know / no opinion" answers, whose meaning is still being weighed in depth. One of the most likely possibilities in this regard is that some participants in the study did not want to give answers about certain dimensions of the behavior of their hierarchical superiors for fear of possible reprisals (even though the research clearly established that the answers would be anonymous). There are also other possibilities, such as the recognition of the lack of proper information about such behavior or in some cases the lack of understanding of the question. Leaving this point clear, all the analysis that follows will focus on the answers that did opt for one or the other options exposed, considering that it is the material that can offer a basis for the characterization presented here.
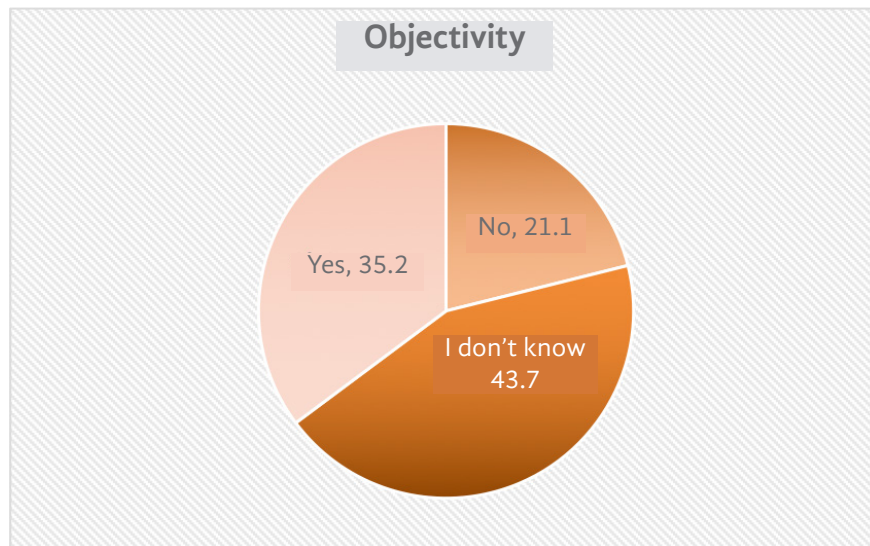
3.1 Objectivity

Objectivity, a concept that in philosophy is related to reality and truth, refers here to the state or quality of being true, outside the biases, interpretations, feelings or imaginations of an individual subject (Bolaños, 2002). This definition frames in a conceptual way the first questioning carried out during the field work, considering objectivity as one of the characteristics of masculine societies, according to what was expressed by Hofstede (1984).

Chart 1 shows that the surveyed subjects perceive that they belong to tourist organizations whose collaborators are objective people, that is, they base the decision making on the facts and not on personal rumors or impressions. Likewise, it was noted that conflicts within organizations

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are recognized, but the subjects surveyed agree on the objectivity of the authorities to resolve these conflicts.
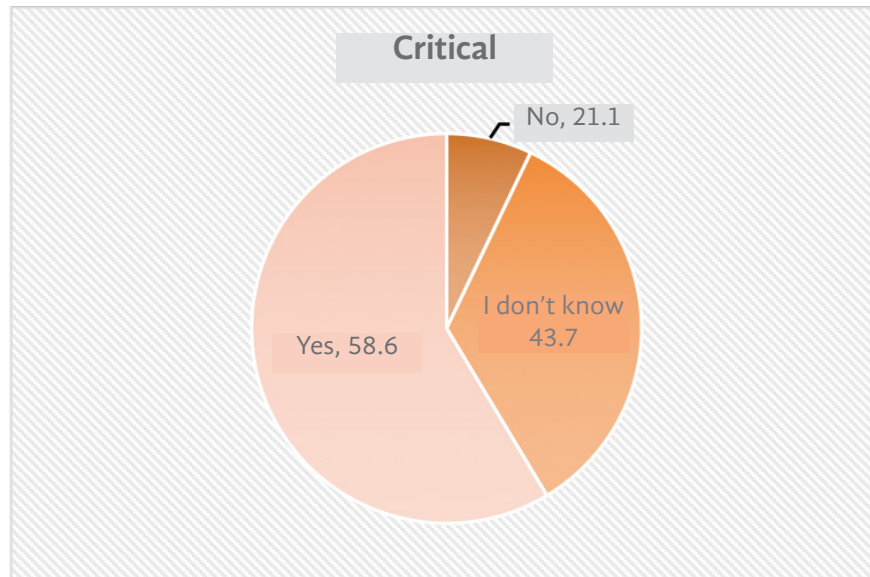
Chart 1. Objectivity

Source: own preparation with survey data (08/30/2016)

The previous chart shows one of the characteristics considered masculine by Hofstede that predominates in the tourist companies of destination: the objectivity of the decision makers, that is to say, the capacity to make decisions based on the facts and not of speculations or rumors. In this particular case, the persons interviewed mention that most decisions are made based on real events. This is also reflected in the chart, since (leaving aside the don't know / no opinion responses, as mentioned above), only 21.1% mentions that they are not objective persons.

3.2 Critical thinking

Critical thinking is considered the way of thinking (on any subject, content or problem) in which the subject improves the quality of their thinking by seizing the inherent structures of the act of thinking and subjecting them to intellectual standards (Richard and Elder, 2003). The questioning to measure this characteristic was developed in function of the perception of the collaborators about the way in which the decisions are made by the leaders of the organizations, that is to say, if they consider that they use or not the critical thinking, considered masculine by Hofstede (1984).

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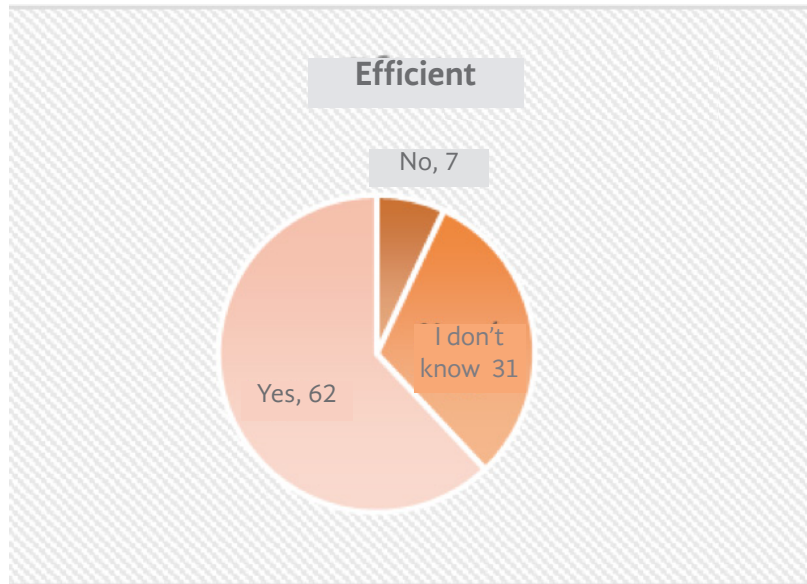**Chart 2.** Critical thinking

Source: own preparation with survey data (08/30/2016)

Chart 2 shows 58.6% of the responses estimate that decision making is based on critical reasoning. On the other hand, there is a low percentage regarding the negative perception (7.1%), so in general terms the perception of the employees is once again inclined towards the masculine characteristic.

3.3 Efficiency

Efficiency, according to Robbins (2002), is to do something correctly; refers to the relationship between inputs and products, seeking to minimize the costs of resources. Based on the previous characterization, it can be said that efficient people within the tourist companies studied will correctly use the resources they have, reducing costs and waste, and at the same time generating a quality service. The answers obtained regarding this item are the ones shown below.

Chart 3. Efficiency

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Efficient

No, 7

I don't
know 31

Yes, 62

Source: own preparation with survey data (08/30/2016)

62% of the people surveyed perceive that the people that make up the organizations of destination are efficient, that is, they make the most of the resources to obtain higher profits. With this reference is made to have competitive collaborators, who are capable to obtain positive results, making the most of the existing resources in the organization. The foregoing, of course, is favorable for companies because it can be obtained greater savings and at the same time a rise in profits.

The chart shows that only 7% of the collaborators surveyed perceive not having efficient people within the organizations, and 31% indicate that they do not have knowledge about it. Up to this point of the investigation three characteristics corresponding to masculinity have been determined. Next, those corresponding to femininity are measured.

3.4 Humility

Humility is the virtue that consists in knowing your own limitations and weaknesses and acting according to that knowledge. As noted by Llano (2006), it could be said that humility and firmness are made through a dialectical balance: a humble man can be firm, if he acknowledges the evidence even if it is contrary to his previous conceptions and even to his own self-image. Taking this into account, one of the feminine characteristics was measured obtaining the following results.

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Chart 4. Humility

Source: own preparation with survey data (08/30/2016)

In spite of the well-known masculine characteristics explored up to now, in the survey some feminine characteristics also appear, like humility, although in smaller percentage. The foregoing is shown in Chart 4. 52.9% of the universe investigated considers that humility is a value that is constantly practiced in the institutions of destiny. This characteristic corresponds to the femininity of the organizations, since the organizations belonging to this classification give greater attention to values, feelings and personal relationships. It should be remembered that this questioning refers to modesty, in the way Hofstede (1984) relates it to people who have no interest in flaunting their personal achievements. However, recognition, encouragement and incentives remain a fundamental part of organizations.

Humility is considered a social value, since it speaks of the little presumption of the people with respect to the obtained achievements. According to Hofstede (1984), this value is part of the feminine characteristics, in view of the fact that is contrary to the aggressiveness that, in his opinion, represents the masculine gender. At the same time, it is important to remember that when we talk about masculinity or femininity, we look at the characteristics focused on the organization, always according to Hofstede, and not on gender issues.

3.5 Subjectivity

Subjectivity is opposed to objectivity. It corresponds to the subject establishing an opposition to the external, and a certain way of feeling and thinking

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that is proper to it. In other words, it refers to the primacy of the particular perceptions of individuals over some situation. Chart 5 measures the subjectivity on the part of the members of the tourism companies.

Chart 5. Subjectivity
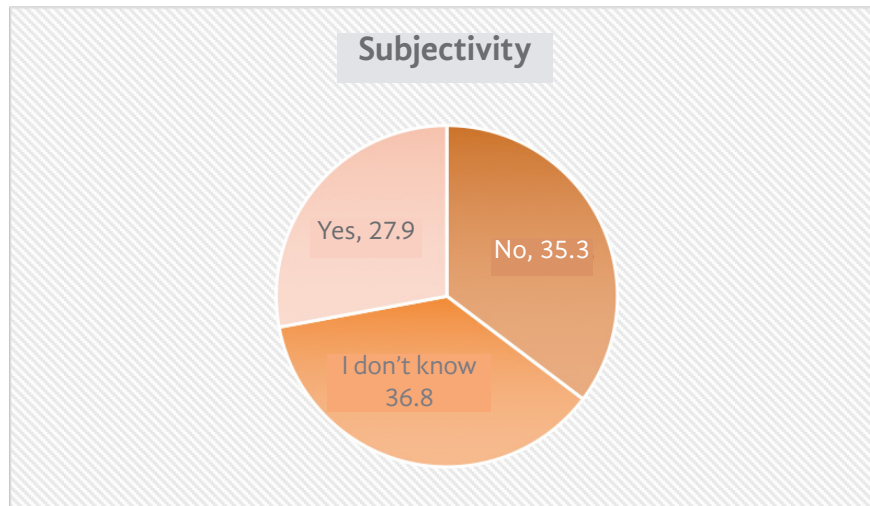
Source: own preparation with survey data (08/30/2016)

In can be seen in the chart that 27.9% mentions that within organizations they do have subjective people; while 35.5% mentions that this is not the case. These results correspond to those of section 3.1, where the outstanding perception is that of having collaborators and decision makers that are based on objectivity and critical thinking.

According to Hofstede subjective individuals are those who show greater interest in keeping appearances and not generate conflict, so their decisions are made in terms of people and not the facts, which is a female trait. Therefore, for this classification, the results are also inclined towards the masculine trait.

3.6 Friendship

Friendship is an affective relationship that can be established between two or more individuals, to which values such as loyalty, solidarity, unconditionally, love, sincerity, commitment, among others, are associated; and it is nurture with assiduous treatment and reciprocal interest over time (Cucó, 1995). Maintaining friendly relationships is a prominent feature of the organizations that Hofstede considers feminine. In fact, this characteristic represents one

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of the fundamental pillars of the same, because it avoids the appearance of conflicts. This is reflected in chart 6.

Chart 6. Friendship
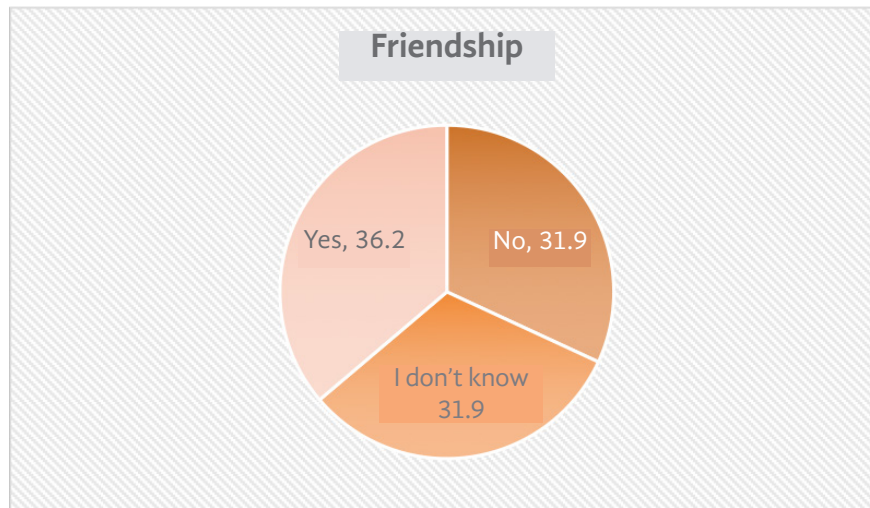
Source: own preparation with survey data (08/30/2016)

For this characteristic, 36.2% of the universe affirms that relations of friendship are effectively found within the organizations for which they work, which is a trait considered feminine by Hofstede. However, this feature must be nuanced, to note that such relations of friendship are not capable of influencing decision-making. It is important to remember that previously the subjects surveyed said that the people in their organizations are objective and critical, which contrasts with this characteristic; that is to say, the friendship relationships that occur within organizations are taken into consideration, but they are not able to motivate decision-making.

For a better understanding of the previous charts, each of the results obtained in the surveys is shown below. In this chart, each of the characteristics corresponding to the masculine vs. feminine concepts is clearly identified. The two highest results correspond to efficiency and critical thinking, two traits considered masculine and that seem to dominate the panorama of the organizational culture of Bahías de Huatulco. Third place is occupied by humility, with a percentage also relevant, which is close to the previous two, which shows the existence of this feminine characteristic in said organizational culture. In fourth place, and at a greater percentage distance, friendship appears, another trait considered feminine but, as just explained, hardly influences decision-making. The last two elements are objectivity

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and subjectivity, with greater relevance on the first, considered masculine. Taking into account these results, it can be inferred that the organizational culture held at the destination is inclined towards what Hofstede calls 'masculinity'. Despite this general inclination, companies also show the existence of some elements considered feminine.

Chart 7. Summary results
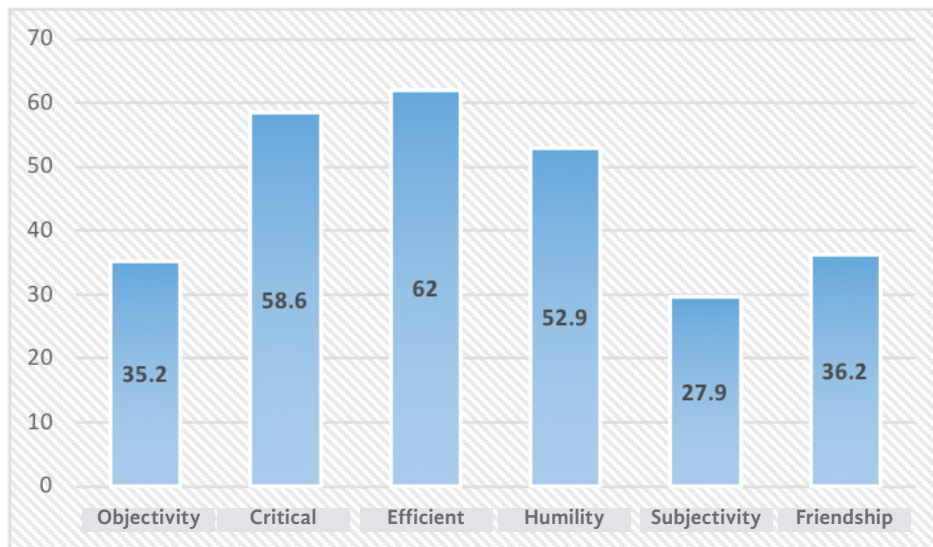
Source: own preparation with survey data

4. FINAL THOUGHTS

Hofstede (1984), in his original research, considered Mexico a country with masculine characteristics, which means that emphasis is placed on materialism and competition. People within organizations are critical, because they base their decisions on facts and at the same time they rarely tend to express their emotions. In the case of this investigation, it is considered that the results were not so divergent, since the most outstanding characteristics of the organizational culture of the tourist companies of Bahías de Huatulco belong to the masculine platform.

The way of working of collaborators within such companies tends to efficiency; at the same time, these collaborators are objective, since they consider that the decisions are made based on the facts. On the other hand, the participants in the research have also shown themselves to be critical, that is, capable of making constructive judgments towards others, in order to improve, and capable of receiving criticism.

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It was also possible to identify a feminine side in the organizations, with the relevance of the 'humility' trait, with which the collaborators of the tourist companies have no interest in noting their personal achievements and are considered people with little presumption. Even so, femininity traits appear to a generally lesser degree.

Therefore, after observing the survey data, it can be affirmed that the organizational culture of the Bahías de Huatulco tourism sector possesses characteristics of those considered masculine by Hofstede, since it values the efficiency in labor issues and the people who are part of the organizations in this region are critical and objective, leaving the issues of friendship in the background.

In this article, reference has been made to Hofstede's considerations about the organizational culture, voluntarily excluding any comments from the point of view of gender equity, because they are very different issues. However, delving into the subject from that point of view would also be of great interest and would result in a greater understanding of the organizational culture of Huatulco, which is, as has been suggested, a strategic element for the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

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