POWER DISTANCE ORIENTATION IN PUERTO RICAN EMPLOYEES IN PENNSYLVANIA

by

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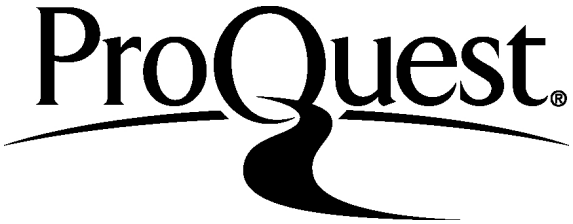

Abstract

This study expands upon Geert Hofstede's theory that employees in high power distance societies will prefer and accept direction from their workplace superiors. Hofstede's first two dimensions of national culture, power distance and uncertainty avoidance, are based in the results to questions related to hierarchical relationships. This and other studies into power distance orientation reveal significant country differences, but no previous research exists into power distance among Puerto Rican workers who have relocated to the continental United States. This dissertation addresses that gap with a qualitative, phenomenological study into the research question of whether there exists anecdotal evidence of high power distance orientation among Puerto Rican employees living and working in Pennsylvania. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Pennsylvania with 15 hourly employees originally from Puerto Rico. In answer to the research question, no evidence of high power distance orientation is indicated through the analysis. Implications of this study include the potential for cultural shifts over time as a result of economics, politics, and technology. From the anecdotes, emerge themes of the importance of family and leisure time over status, the desire for respect and organizational justice, and a sense of comfort and familiarity with current supervisors and managers.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

When outlining a model of cultural dimensions, Geert Hofstede (2001) described three levels of mental programming. The universal level, depicted as the base of a pyramid, applies to almost all human beings. This level includes the natural responses such as crying, laughing, and aggression. They are not acquired through cultural involvement, but are innate. The collective level includes traits and behaviors that are shared within a group, but may differ from those of other groups. This may include attitudes toward mothers, children, and norms regarding earning a living. The top of the pyramid depicts the individual level, or the area in which each human is unique, regardless of his or her membership in a specific cultural group. This dissertation research focuses upon the individual units that form the collective or cultural group of Puerto Rican workers in the continental United States.

Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006), reviewed research that indicates a link between cultural values and workplace attitudes and behaviors. Referencing this research, this dissertation concentrates upon Puerto Rican culture as it translates into the workplace of the mainland United States. It is important to note that cross-cultural researchers focused upon a collective must avoid basing their studies upon preconceived notions of national character, whether or not those stereotypes are rooted in personal experience. National character refers to the belief that those belonging to a culture will exhibit similar personalities, and this study focuses upon only one aspect of Hofstede's cultural model: the participants' notions of power distance in the workplace. Mauk Mulder researched power distance in the 1970's and 1980's, and theorized that those in power will seek to

widen the gap between themselves and their subordinates, and that subordinates will try to accomplish the opposite (Mulder, 1971). The study of power distance involves these questions as well as the theorizing of what the behaviors may mean in cultural terms.

Background of the Study

The basis for Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of national culture is the research with IBM's international employee attitude survey program, and the data collected in two rounds between 1967 and 1973. More than 116,000 surveys were completed in 20 languages and 72 countries. Data analysis related the values-based employee responses to their countries of origin. Gender, age, and position were also collected, but only in order to compare these categories across country lines. Hofstede (2001) stated that mental programming is unable to be observed except indirectly through observing the resulting behavior, specifically that "social systems can exist only because human behavior is not random, but to some extent predictable" (p. 1). Mental programming is composed of values and culture, both of which drive behavior.

Values are defined by both what people desire and what they believe they ought to desire. Hofstede (2001) called these "the desired" and "the desirable" (p. 6). Both define the following:

- Evil versus good
- Dirty versus clean
- Dangerous versus safe
- Decent versus indecent
- Ugly versus beautiful

- Unnatural versus natural
- Abnormal versus normal
- Paradoxical versus logical
- Irrational versus rational
- Moral versus immoral

(Hofstede, 2001, p. 6)

Values are held by individuals, but when those values are shared by a collective, they become the foundation or core of a culture.

Hofstede (2001) defined culture "as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 9), likening culture to an onion with shared values at its core, covered by layers of rituals, heroes, and symbols. These latter three can only be discerned through the observation of practices common to that culture. Cultures may shift when affected by external forces such as new technologies or influences from other cultures. Those influences may lead to shifts in religious beliefs or political opinions. Thus, research findings regarding these characteristics are an indication of a moment in time for those cultures, and researchers continue to refresh their data. Hofstede (2001) advised that data regarding a culture or population can only be regarded as valid if it meets all four of the following:

1. It is descriptive and not evaluative (judgmental).
2. It is verifiable from more than one independent source.
3. It applies, if not to all members of the population, at least to a statistical majority.

4. It discriminates; that is, it indicates those characteristics for which this population differs from others.

   (p. 14)

If a description of a population is unable to meet all four criteria, it can be considered a stereotype. Hofstede (2001) claimed that stereotypes are relatively simple to study because they indicate more about those doing the judging than the population being judged.

Hofstede's (2001) five dimensions of national culture were born of a quest to define what elements make a culture different from others. The resulting dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and long-term versus short-term orientation. Power distance is a culture's treatment of human inequality and hierarchy. Uncertainty avoidance reflects the level of comfort or discomfort with an unknowable future. Individualism versus collectivism refers to the extent to which members of a culture arrange themselves into groups. Definitions of masculinity and femininity address the accepted roles of both genders. The dimension of the level of focus on present versus future is referred to as long-term versus short-term orientation.

Hofstede's (2001) first two dimensions, power distance and uncertainty avoidance, are based in the results to questions related to hierarchical relationships. The analysis of these responses reveals significant country differences. Power distance orientation is a measure of the extent to which a culture favors hierarchy with wide distance between each level. These distances can be societal and based upon:

- Physical and mental characteristics (This is a basic fact of human existence)
- Social status and prestige
- Wealth
- Power
- Laws, rights, and rules ('Privileges' are private laws)

(Hofstede, 2001, p. 80)

However, Hofstede's work is primarily concerned with distance in organizations. Studies of power distance orientation have been conducted to compare other countries' organizational cultures with the United States. Examples include Hong Kong (Lam, Schaubroeck & Aryee, 2002), South Korea (Kim and Kim, 2010), China (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen & Lowe, 2009), Canada (MacNab & Worthley, 2007), and Mexico (Madlock, 2012). No research currently exists into power distance orientation among workers of Puerto Rico when they have relocated to the continental United States.

Statement of the Problem

The problem this study addresses and contributes against is the existing research gap in the area of the dimension of power distance in Puerto Rican workers within the contiguous United States. Secondarily, it offers to increase workplace leadership's understanding of the uniqueness of Puerto Ricans as they begin and continue to work for Pennsylvania employers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to begin to understand the level of power distance orientation for Pennsylvania blue-collar employees who have relocated from Puerto Rico. At this stage in the research, the concept of power distance orientation will be defined as "the degree to which an individual prefers to be told what to do and how by persons in higher positions than themselves" (Madlock, 2012, p. 170). Hofstede's (2001) survey question B46, "How frequently are employees afraid to express disagreement with their managers?" (p. 53) will also be a basis for this study, as it is used in Hofstede's calculations of power distance orientation.

Hofstede (2001) reported that the Central and South American countries of Guatemala, Panama, Mexico, Venezuela, and Ecuador rank among the highest levels of power distance orientation of the countries studied. The study seeks to determine if Puerto Rican workers show evidence of a similarly high orientation in contrast with the relatively low orientation among American workers.

Rationale

Phenomenology is the appropriate approach for this study, as the type of data to be collected and analyzed will be anecdotal and related to the phenomenon of power distance orientation. The research seeks to know whether there are commonalities among the participants in their views of power distance in the workplace. Creswell (2007) suggested phenomenology is a method of distilling the experiences of participants to determine if there exists a "universal essence" (p. 58) that emerges.

Research Question

What anecdotal evidence is there of high power distance orientation among blue-collar Puerto Rican employees working in Pennsylvania?

Significance of the Study

This dissertation, by contributing to the body of research into power distance orientation within cultural or country groups, aims to assist organizational leaders in Pennsylvania in better relating to employees of Puerto Rican descent. It will begin to fill the gap in existing research into Latin American groups working within the United States.

Definition of Terms

Hofstede (2001) described power inequality within organizations as "inevitable and functional" (p. 79), and the studies suggest that this inequality is derived less from internal structure than from societal influence. Power distance involves subordinates' perceptions of their superiors' decision-making, and the extent to which they would be afraid to disagree with those decisions (Hofstede, 2001).

Power distance is a concept introduced by Mauk Mulder (1971) when beginning research into expert power and the differences between those with that power and those without, identifying those differences in terms of distance and the degrees to which power levels are unequal. Hofstede's writings are based in Mulder's assumptions that those in power will seek to increase the distance between themselves and those with less power, and vice versa. Hofstede (2001), however, reported that the extent to which the latter is true is largely determined by an individual's national culture.

Assumptions and Limitations

This research is informed by a social constructivist and interpretivist theoretical perspective in that it seeks to learn the "how" and "what" of participants' construction of meaning with regard to their workplace superiors (Creswell, 2003; Kuhn, 1970). The research also assumes the topic of Hofstede's cultural dimension of power distance will be relevant to the studied population, and that those participants will have opinions and experiences to offer in that regard. Phenomenology is the chosen methodology due the existence of a phenomenon commonly experienced by all participants – that of some orientation of power distance.

The strengths of this study lie with the theory used to inform it. Hofstede's research has been much applied within the field, and is regularly reevaluated for relevance to the modern workplace. Other studies have been similarly conducted with other national cultures, allowing this study to be useful in filling a gap within that literature. Another strength is the phenomenon itself. Power distance is a narrow enough focus for a beginning research project such as this, but it is sufficiently multi-faceted as to allow for response variations and anecdote. The data collection instrument allows responses to be either brief or elaborate, and while the interviewer guided the process, the participants had flexibility to engage in the storytelling they felt was necessary to provide a complete response.

The risk to participants in this study for the demographic questionnaires is minimal, as the data is used for identification and context purposes while allowing the participants to remain anonymous in the analysis and presentation of results. The risk to

participants for the semi-structured interviews is also minimal, as traumatic experiences were not shared, nor were unduly intrusive questions included.

While risk levels may be minimal, considerations were taken for the comfort and ease of participants. In order to ensure participant trust, care was taken to "liberate herself from the professional discourse she brings with her in order to establish relations with the people in the research setting on their own terms" (Holliday, 2007, p. 163). Meanings and significance of participating in research discourse were explained, and a consciousness of participants' inexperience with the process was kept throughout the process.

The presentation or description of a group can only be considered valid when it is non-judgmental, when it can be independently verified by multiple sources, when it applies to at least a statistical majority, and when it identifies the traits that make the group unique from others (Hofstede, 2001). These criteria will pose obstacles to the qualitative study of a cultural group. For this reason, a descriptive study on the individual level is appropriate to this level of study and a smaller sample population.

MacNab and Worthley (2007) criticized the widespread reliance in current research upon Hofstede's country-specific results. Assuming a PDI will be the same in 2012 as it was during Hofstede's studies is an assumption that culture is constant from generation to generation. They cited the example of the United States and Canada being grouped into a category of "cultural sameness" (p. 2), and they cautioned that basing one's research upon even that one assumption may be fundamentally flawed.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The guiding theory for this study is Geert Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of national culture, specifically the dimension of power distance orientation. Only within the context of three sources affecting human behavior can power distance be explored. The influence of national culture upon an individual is in effect only after human nature, and before that individual's personality. Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) illustrated these levels of uniqueness in mental programming as follows:

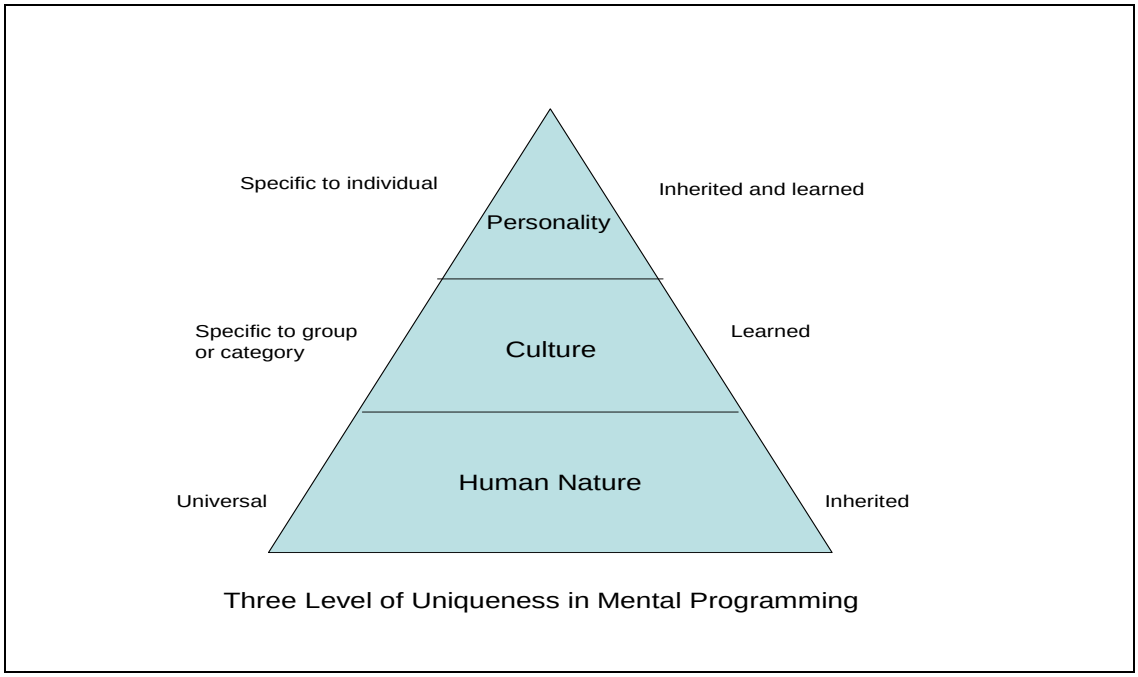

Figure 1. Three Levels of Mental Programming. From *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (3rd ed.), p. 6, by G. Hofstede, G. Hofstede, and M. Minkov, 2010. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. Copyright 2010 by Geert Hofstede BV.

Human nature responses are universal and automatic, but it is the second level of culture that Hofstede divided into dimensions. Hofstede began in the late 1960's to study differences in national cultures, noting through data collected from IBM employees that

organizational interaction does not occur in a vacuum, and that evaluating decisions based only upon their technical or rule-based context is insufficient. Hofstede described in the writings an additional layer of cultural context and its effect upon values and "mental programming" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 5). Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) likened an individual's potential to think, feel, and act a certain way to a software program. They referred to culture as "mental software" (p. 5), and asserted that this software predisposes a person to view concepts like politeness, power, and work within a predetermined grid. The extent to which members of a national culture accept and welcome the instruction of their workplace leaders (regardless of the leaders' approach) speaks to the amount of distance they perceive between themselves and those leaders.

Though Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions have been explored with several Latin American national cultures, little research exists into Puerto Rican power distance orientation. The concept of power distance orientation will be defined as "the degree to which an individual prefers to be told what to do and how by persons in higher positions than themselves" (Madlock, 2012, p. 170). Hofstede's measure of power distance is an index based upon scores in the following three areas, coded as elements of an overall picture of all five dimensions:

1. Nonmanagerial employees' perception that employees are afraid to disagree with their managers (B46)
2. Subordinates' perception that their boss tends to make decisions in an autocratic (1) or persuasive/paternalistic way (2, A55)

3. Subordinates' preference for anything but a consultative (3) style of decision making in their boss; that is, for an autocratic (1), a persuasive/paternalistic (2), *or* a democratic style (4, A54).

   (Hofstede, 2001, p. 86)

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of this reporting of the study outlines the existing research into power distance orientation, details the design, process, sample, and content of the semi-structured interviews, presents the analysis and findings of the data collected, and assesses how well the instrument and its results address the research question.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature

Hofstede, in an interview with Shawn Carraher in 2003, expressed a desire to see research progress toward a blend of quantitative and qualitative, stating that, "People run away with figures" (p. 98), but that those figures must often be buffeted by qualitative background to lend meaning. Studies into and based upon Hofstede's cultural dimensions are balanced between the two approaches. Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges, and Sully de Luque (2006) stated that cultural research is typically approached by collecting individual responses and collecting them into an aggregate labeled as the culture. However, Hofstede (2001) distinguished between clusters of individuals and general societal cultures in that "cultures are not king size individuals. They are wholes, and their internal logic cannot be understood in the terms used for the personality dynamics of individuals" (p. 17).

Defining Cultures

Brockner (2003) wrote of the dimensions of individualism versus collectivism along with psychological dimensions, and noted a strong relationship between the individual/collective dimension and that of power distance orientation. Brockner claimed that opinions vary regarding the value of studying within one culture versus comparing multiple cultures, and that "by operationalizing the psychological dimensions that are presumed to influence people's work attitudes and behaviors, we are better able to account for both between-country and within-country sources of variance" (2003, p. 353). Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006), referencing Brockner's work, agreed that "even

though mono-cultural studies may not be viewed as technically cross-cultural, we still include those studies empirically assessing cultural values in only a single country because of the theoretical importance of understanding within country cultural variation" (p. 288).

Hofstede (2006) questioned whether individuals are able to classify accurately their own cultures as a whole, and did not claim that self-reporting of cultural values is the only way to study those values, or even that the work is complete. Smith (2006) asserted that the fact that these individuals believe their descriptions to be accurate is significant in itself. They create their own stereotypes, which emerge as patterns when many individuals produce similar definitions.

Critics of Hofstede's dimensions expressed concern that the assumption of a sufficiently homogeneous participant group is too far a leap. McSweeney (2002) claimed that even a large group providing similar responses cannot prove a pattern without taking into account every possible factor, arguing it is impossible that national culture is the single influencer of participant responses, and thus "Hofstede's reliance on a single explanatory variable effectively closes his model not only to the possible effects of non-national cultures but also to the possible influence of the non-cultural" (p. 109).

Power Distance, Authority, Justice, and Ethics

Najera (2008) stated that Mexicans perceive distance between themselves and their supervisors. However, concern for religious and family responsibilities may outweigh their respect for and compliance with supervisor requests with regard to working long hours. While there is an understanding of the authority, they may be willing

to rebel against that authority in favor of spending more time with their families. This reality may indicate a difference between attitudes and behavior. What is felt may be at odds with what is done.

Vitell, Nwachukwu, and Barnes (1993) proposed when suggesting what future studies might be conducted, that workers in countries with low power distance will look to their coworkers regarding the definition of ethically appropriate behavior in the workplace. Conversely, they proposed that workers in countries with higher power distance are more likely to take their ethical cues from their supervisors or managers.

Poór, Alas, Vanhala, Kollár, Slavic, Berber, and Barasic (2015), in studying ethics in Slovakia, Romania, Finland, and Estonia, cited Hofstede's (1980) research in labeling the former two countries as having high power distance orientation, and the latter two as having a significantly lower orientation. They find that these differences do not appear to affect the ethical preferences of participants in these countries, and that all four groups exhibit subjectivist and situationist ethical viewpoints.

Begley, Lee, Fang, and Li (2002) wrote of a study in which they tested Chinese participants' power distance orientation against preferences toward either procedural or distributive justice. The difference lies in the perception of fairness. Procedural justice focuses upon the fairness of the procedure itself, and distributive justice focuses more upon the outcomes. They hypothesized that a higher power distance orientation will tend toward a preference for procedural justice, and that a lower power distance orientation will tend toward distributive justice in the workplace. Both hypotheses were supported in the study.

Also in the realm of ethics is the perception of organizational justice. Loi, Lam, and Chan (2012) discussed their study into the relationship between fair procedures, feelings of job insecurity, and the power distance orientation of followers. As previously established, those with high power distance orientation are more accepting of organizational hierarchy and less social interaction with superiors. The researchers reported that the higher the power distance, the more important it is for a manager to display strong leadership and a focus on procedural justice without attempting overly close relationships with followers.

Davis and Ruhe (2003) proposed that country cultures with high power distance would also have higher levels of perceived corruption. In defining corruption, they cited instances of misallocation of resources and the acceptance of bribes, especially by public officials in the awarding of contracts. Their corruption ratings are taken from Transparency International's 2000 Corruption Perception Index, which assigns a number based on factors such as population, population density, Gross Domestic Product, per capita income, and government spending. Their hypothesis related to power distance was confirmed. Countries rated by Hofstede (1980) as having high power distance orientation (i.e. India, Poland, and Mexico) also display high ratings on the Corruption Perception Index.

Power Distance and Leadership Style

Kim and Kim (2010) presented findings from a study of public relations professionals in South Korea. They reported that, while Hofstede lists Korean power distance orientation as high, it is decreasing over time to the extent that it now appears

rather low. Eisenberg, Pieczonka, Eisenring, and Mironski (2105) wrote of the transitioning culture of Poland and compared its managers with those of Western Europe. They found that Polish employees prefer a more Western, supportive style of leadership demonstrated by expatriates from other parts of Europe. Managers from Poland are more authoritarian and exhibit a Soviet-era, centralized leadership style. The researchers concluded that while the preference for more involvement exists, it is not yet being taught, nor is the business culture yet willing to accept it.

Khan, Bashir, Saqib, Abbas, and Nazir (2015) asserted that "better and more supportive supervisors enable individuals to achieve organization goals" (p. 259), but they first need to define what that type of supervisor looks like within their chosen country of Pakistan in the context of high power distance orientation. Their study utilized an empowerment style of leadership, and they found that power distance orientation does not significantly affect employee satisfaction in an empowerment culture. However, Shah, Kazmi, Shah, and Jamil (2016) wrote of Pakistan that the lowest working classes are still kept separate from those in management roles, and that top-down leadership is widely practiced. It would seem that empowerment leadership is appreciated, but that, similar to that of Poland, the wider culture is not yet ready to adopt it.

Degravel (2015) stated that "national culture determines how managers behave because it acts as a perceptual screen by constraining their vision of the environment" (p. 15). Leadership style can also be described in terms of influence tactic preferences (Hofstede, 2001). Koslowsky, Baharav, and Schwarzwald (2011) tested and confirmed their theory that the higher the power distance, the more employees will prefer harsh tactics by leadership. Leaders who are categorized as employing harsh tactics may be

more task-oriented and less interpersonal, and employees in the study with higher power distance orientation prefer the harsh approach.

Omanwa and Musyimi (2016) wrote of mentoring programs and their acceptance in Kenya versus that of the United States. They hypothesized that culture and the acceptance of mentoring are significantly related. In the higher power distance culture of Kenya, the researchers expected participants to be hesitant to adopt mentoring programs. However, the findings indicate that the amount to which the programs are embraced in the study is a promising commentary on the benefits of mentoring regardless of the national culture.

Power Distance and Communication

Organizational silence or silence climate is a concept new to the business arena, and the reasons for this silence are still being defined. Civelek, Asçi, and Çemberci (2015) stated that in countries of high power distance, silence climate is more prevalent. Reasons for silence may include Acquiescent Silence in the acceptance of things as they are, Defensive Silence based in fear of retaliation, and Pro-social Silence in the desire to protect the company or coworkers from harm caused by reporting issues that may tarnish the reputation. The authors concluded that organizations would remain stagnant without establishing a culture in which ideas are shared openly without fear.

Closely related to silence climate is communication apprehension. Yook (2015) defined this phenomenon as fear or anxiety in communicating with another person or group, stating that there may be cultural differences between those with high communication apprehension and those with a lower level of anxiety. Yook (2015)

postulated that power distance orientation is positively correlated with communication apprehension when comparing American managers and subordinates with French managers and subordinates. The findings indicate no difference between American and French managers, but the French subordinates are less likely to speak up their managers. The likelihood of speaking, however, is not necessarily congruent with their attitudes toward what should ideally happen in the workplace. Those who are unlikely to speak up still believe their managers should listen to their opinions and ideas, and their silence is a result of the belief that the position power of their managers will give those managers veto power over those ideas, rendering moot the perceived freedom to speak up.

In contrast to silence climate and communication apprehension is the need for whistleblowing within organizations when unethical or illegal activity is observed. Tavakoli, Keenan, and Crnjak-Karanovic (2003) described the structure of Croatian businesses as being multi-layered and indicating high power distance orientation. Subordinates only interact with management when managers initiate it. Businesses in the United States may be layered, but employees in the lower power distance society view themselves as equal and worthy to speak up. Their hypothesis that Croatian employees will be less likely to engage in whistleblowing was confirmed.

When discussing the reality of the fear of expressing one's opinions, one must also consider participants' tendency to answer questions based on their perception of what is socially desirable. Bernardi (2006) stated that individuals may "over-report activities that are deemed to be socially or culturally desirable… [and] under-report activities that are deemed to be socially or culturally undesirable" (p. 43). The hypothesis is that the higher the power distance orientation, the higher participants' tendency toward

social desirability response bias (SDRB). However, the findings indicate that individualism is far more likely to yield an increase in SDRB than is power distance orientation.

Kumar, Liu, and Demirag (2015) compared disruptions in supply chain management and the ways in which they are handled in different national cultures. Supply chain disruptions can be likened to crises in which leadership and decision making are crucial, but the types of such will vary. The authors reported that their study shows a positive correlation between power distance and effective disruption management. Study respondents described a team approach as causing confusion and delay, whereas a more centralized approach such as that typical in Japan allows for less back-and-forth debate and more immediate response.

Power Distance and Teams

Self-managed and team-based work are common and well accepted in American businesses, but Kirkman and Shapiro (1997) proposed that employees in high power distance societies may more strongly resist the idea of self-managed work teams than those with low power distance orientation. The authors found their hypothesis to be true, and they suggested that managers should carefully consider cultural factors when selecting teams. Some countries, including Mexico and the Philippines, may embrace the concept of teamwork, but may not want to be completely self-managed due to their high power distance orientation. Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) proposed and confirmed through a study conducted with organizations in the United States, Puerto Rico, France, and the Philippines that implementing team concepts in high power distance countries

may be more effective if metaphors including well-defined team roles are presented. When teams must allow roles to emerge organically, employees with high power distance orientation may experience anxiety. Conversely, Montebello (2003) reported that in the low power distance society of Malta, self-managed work teams are embraced and successful.

Power Distance and Compliance

Jiang, Colakoglu, Lepak, Blasi, and Kruse (2015) stated that "work practices that involve employees are generally assumed to be less effective in more hierarchical societies where employees' values are not aligned with such practices" (p. 332), but their study makes a distinction between the symbolic and instrumental impacts of such practices and challenges that assumption. They proposed that employees raised in more egalitarian societies (such as the United States) comply with involvement practices both due to the belief that it is what leadership wants and because they may believe it is an effective way to conduct business (symbolic mechanisms). Those raised in authoritarian societies may simply comply due to the edict from leadership that involvement practices will be used (instrumental mechanisms). The authors of the study hypothesized that involvement systems can work well with both types of workforces, but that national power distance may be a moderator of the mechanism by which compliance occurs. They reported that their findings confirm that hypothesis to be correct, but that the effectiveness is still greater in egalitarian, lower power distance societies whereby employees comply symbolically.

McCoy, Everard, and Jones (2005) also suggested that employees in societies of high power distance might comply instrumentally with managerial edicts such as the introduction of email and other technological solutions. In Uruguay, for example, employees view managers as being at the top of a pyramid, and they may comply by using the technology with peers but remain afraid to use it to communicate to superiors.

Power Distance and Job Satisfaction

Similar to the Jiang, Colakoglu, Lepak, Blasi, and Kruse (2015) study is the quantitative study of Hauff and Richter (2015), in which job satisfaction was measured against good relationships with management and colleagues within the context of high power distance cultures. They found their results to be surprising in that, within high power distance societies, employees may prefer to have a less friendly relationship with management, since in those cases power struggles do not occur. Where the roles of leader and subordinate are well defined, satisfaction is not necessarily lower.

Where leadership behavior seeks to improve the health of employees, power distance may have a moderating effect on both leaders' and the employees' attitudes toward that behavior, as proposed by Winkler, Busch, Clasen, and Vowinkel (2014). The researchers hypothesized that employees in high power distance cultures may view a supervisor's efforts to improve employees' well-being as condescending and insincere, since their understanding of supervision is authoritarian.

Employee absenteeism, like turnover, is a business metric that may indicate lack of employee satisfaction. Parboteeah, Addae, and Cullen (2005) proposed that workers in high power distance societies would exhibit lower levels of absenteeism due to fear and

respect for the superiors responsible for enforcing attendance policies. Conversely, in more egalitarian societies, employees who are free to express disagreement with supervisors may also feel less need to please those supervisors by adhering to standards of attendance. In surveying 17,842 participants from 24 countries, their hypothesis was proven correct in that there is a negative correlation between power distance and absenteeism. However, limitations do include the self-reporting of absence data.

Shifts in Culture

In retesting Hofstede's (1980) country classifications 25 years after the original study, Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, and Nicholson (1997) found power distance scores for Mexico, China, and Russia to be higher than the mean reported by Hofstede (Russia and China were not included in Hofstede's original study, but they currently indicate high power distance orientation). However, the United States, Japan, Chile, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, and Germany show a decrease. These findings are significant in demonstrating the ability of cultural dimensions to shift based upon external factors. More study is needed to identify what factors are most impactful, whether they are political, economic, religious, or otherwise. Tang and Koveos (2008) proposed that economic development is a significant influencer of shifts in culture, and they hypothesized that as gross domestic product increases, power distance orientation will decrease. Venezia's (2005) study of public administration university students in the United States, Belgium, and Kenya by comparing responses against Hofstede's averages using a t-test suggests a decrease in power distance orientation for all three countries, but that research is limited to those university populations.

Hofstede (2001) admitted that the group of countries in the studies would need to expand in the coming years, specifically to include more socialist nations and developing countries. Smith (2010) proposed that research into more African countries is overdue. Thus, Hofstede's work must be built upon, the principles applied elsewhere as political changes are made, and cultures shift. One example is the seven-country organizational development (OD) study by Fagenson-Eland, Ensher, and Burke (2004) into different culture's responses to change interventions. Despite Hofstede's (1980) data indicating high power distance orientation among South Africans, the researchers found that the South African participants and OD professionals in their study exhibited low power distance orientation and are among the highest in likelihood of using group interventions where process change is needed.

Power Distance and Latino Cultures

Plakhotnik, Rocco, Collins, and Landorf (2015) described national identity as existing in the background for most individuals until "certain circumstances bring sharp awareness to national identity and its complexity and ambiguity" (p. 43). Thus, they asserted that participant responses may reflect more cultural influence depending upon the context or the topic raised. They did state that, regardless of the extent to which that influence is expressed, it is always present. Romero (2004) wrote of the importance of understanding Latinos and how to integrate them into our workforce, generalizing Latino culture as being similar enough to include employees from all Spanish-speaking countries under the same broad heading. While acknowledging significant differences among countries' micro-level cultures, Romero (2004) asserted that the number of

commonalities is greater than the differences, citing Hofstede (1980) in making that assertion, since Hofstede reported that most Latin American countries display high power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and collectivism. Lenartowicz and Johnson (2002) took issue with this generalization, reporting a great number of cultural differences among Latin American nations, and they hypothesized that differences in management style must also exist. However, they too reported that their study yielded no evidence of significant differences among nations with regard to social and business relationships.

Duany (2003) stated that Puerto Rico "has been exposed to an intense penetration of American capital, commodities, laws, and customs unequaled in other Latin American countries. Yet today Puerto Ricans display a stronger cultural identity than most Caribbean peoples, even those who enjoy political independence" (p. 424). Somewhat in contrast to their findings one year earlier, Lenartowicz and Johnson (2003) again proposed differences in values across Latin America, specifically with Puerto Rico. They cited Puerto Rico's status as part of the United States as isolating it from other Latin American countries in economic, legal, and political contexts. They also expected to see a difference in the value of hard work and a lower power distance, more similar to that of the United States. For their study, they created six groupings of countries based upon geography and similarities in history. Groupings are the Southern Cone of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, the Andean nations of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, Northern South America (Colombia and Venezuela), and three countries given their own groups (Brazil, Mexico, and Puerto Rico). They expected to observe that leaders across the six groups would place different levels of importance on personal values, especially

those related to making decisions for the good of a group over individual interests. Their findings indicated significant differences among countries, and they confirmed their assertion that the countries should thus not be grouped into a whole for studies of cultural dimensions.

Both power distance orientation and collectivism are associated in the literature with Latin American culture. Mallol, Holtom, and Lee (2007) wrote of job embeddedness as a concept by which an individual's family, religious, leisure, and work lives are entwined. If the job and the employer are significantly embedded, that job becomes part of the individual's identity, and even that of the entire family. The more linkages the employee has between personal and work life, the greater the level of job embeddedness. The researchers hypothesized that higher collectivism indicates that job embeddedness will be higher among Hispanics than their Caucasian counterparts, that it is negatively correlated to employment turnover in the Hispanic group, and that the embeddedness is even higher when the company is Hispanic-owned. They proved the former two, but they did not find significant differences in Hispanic and non-Hispanic-owned organizations.

Criticism and Variations – The GLOBE Project

Blodgett, Bakir, and Rose (2008) tested the face validity (i.e. clarity to those unfamiliar with Hofstede's work) of dimensions of national culture by asking participants to match 32 items to which dimension they think most relevant to each item or scenario. The power distance items were only correctly identified 63.1 percent of the time, indicating to the researchers a low degree of face validity and a need for further detail and explanation. Any investigation into inadequacies of Hofstede's work will also yield

writings about and research based upon the Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) project. GLOBE expanded Hofstede's five cultural dimensions into eighteen and analyzed their effect upon leadership and practices within organizations. House (1998), the founder of the study, cited Hofstede's works as one of the first components of their early literature review and research design. GLOBE not only expanded the dimensions, but also added additional countries and included 951 corporations. GLOBE is viewed by some researchers as being at odds with Hofstede's studies, but at no time do its researchers deny Hofstede's work as valuable and seminal. Hofstede (2006, p. 883-885), in a commentary on the project, cited seven major differences between that work and GLOBE. First, Hofstede's work is based upon existing data, and GLOBE uses newly collected data from 62 different societies. Second, GLOBE project is a collaboration of several researchers, and Hofstede's work is single-researcher. Third, GLOBE is based upon manager responses, and Hofstede's uses employee responses. Fourth, GLOBE's foundation is theory, to include Hofstede's writings. Hofstede's work is based upon action-driven survey data. Fifth, although the GLOBE researchers expressed desire to be non-U.S.-centric and even lament (House, 1998) that 90 percent of cultural dimension research is Unites States based; the research team members were primarily American. Hofstede called his own work "decentered," and cited a Netherlands upbringing and the use of an instrument originally written in Chinese. Sixth, GLOBE distinguishes between societal and organizational culture related to each dimension. Hofstede's research and subsequent writings refer to the two as intertwined, the former influencing the experience of the latter. Seventh, the wealth of a country is minimized by GLOBE, but Hofstede viewed it as a factor for which the studies must be

controlled. While the GLOBE (House, Javidan, and Dorfman, 2001) researchers expanded upon some of Hofstede's dimensions, power distance orientation was largely described and used in the same way Hofstede used it. The GLOBE survey item reads "Followers are (should be) expected to obey their leaders without question" (p. 497). Even in criticism of the differences between both projects, Hofstede wrote of the value of both, and did not wholly discount GLOBE's results.

Qualitative Research in Business and Workplace

Garcia and Gluesing (2013) highlighted the need for qualitative inquiry within international businesses. While they admitted the number of published qualitative studies has dramatically increased in recent years, they proposed that more be conducted because the contextual elements to workplace behavior, change, and learning are changing. They asserted that qualitative methods are "best suited to examine unique characteristics of particular groups" (p. 425), and that organizational study is too layered to be studied by purely quantitative means. They stated they most commonly observe qualitative methods used in:

(1) uncovering new elements of organizations and new phenomena (theory development);

(2) theory testing and construct validation; and

(3) development and testing of new methods

(p. 431)

Garcia and Gluesing (2013) entreated scholars to increase their use of qualitative methods in order that context and change continue to be included in new organizational knowledge creation.

One example of the importance of context is in the study of perceptions of ethical behavior in workplaces. Definitions of what is considered ethical will differ among cultures, and participant examples of workplace scenarios are helpful in gaining understanding. Chikudate (2000) stated, "Through discipline, organizational members learn to behave according to normative expectation" (p. 63), and those expectations are largely based in national culture norms. Snell (1999) wrote of ethics and obedience among employees in Hong Kong, offering participants eight dilemmas and requesting their responses and perceptions of obeying the unethical requests. While some admitted they would obey the request even though they found it to be unethical, others claimed they would be openly defiant. Such questions could be asked in a quantitative survey format, but allowing the participants to explain the reasons behind their responses lends depth and meaning to those responses.

Leadership teams may embark upon strategic pursuits, but they are commonly focused upon running the daily operations within their business, as described by Soltani, Ahmed, Liao, and Anosike (2014). They outlined the history of operations management, from its beginning in agrarian life to its progression toward manufacturing and the current supply chain, information, and service industries. The activities that define operations management "in all their myriad forms, are primarily short term and diverse in nature but with long-term implications for the success and survival of the organisation" (p. 1006). These short-term, project-based activities may require collaboration among

departments that did not historically interact. In the global organization, those interactions may occur across country and cultural borders, requiring leaders to be culturally fluent. The researchers asserted that quantitative research provides "rigorous answers to narrow questions, whilst at the same time failing to provide answers to important questions" (p. 1010). They emphasized the need to explore the complexity of attitudes and behavior, and not simply their results.

Kaufman and Hwang (2015) explored the need for cultural intelligence and mindfulness when conducting business, especially within a cross-cultural context. Their study, conducted with two French banks operating in the United States, examined the nuances and needs when a business structure is created within one culture and applied within another. One of the banks involved in the study described itself as being rooted in 160 years of professionalism. However, the French definition of what is professional is not necessarily the same as what might meet an American's expectation of the term. The researchers defined mindfulness as the need to use all senses to fully interpret an environment and interact with it. Their first research question asks how mindfulness enhances an individual's cross-cultural knowledge and ability. This first question alone requires a qualitative design.

In their study of expatriate experiences, Russell and Aquino-Russell (2012) investigated the unique perspectives of Indonesian host-country nationals working in Western organizations based within Indonesia. While living in their home culture, Indonesian workers within Western companies are immersed in a different business culture, similar to that of expatriates working overseas. The researchers asked participants to write and email their experiences. This qualitative design allows for

storytelling, and the researchers gathered such feedback as “working in this such organization has a better bargaining position than working in the local company” and “gives more benefit and facility (in term of total amount and type of benefits) than local company” (p. 207). A quantitative, predefined set of survey questions may have needed to be revised if the researchers did not anticipate economic-type responses. Where cross-cultural study is involved, the lived experiences of participants are captured best through the storytelling permitted by qualitative design.

Dimitrov (2012), in presenting a study of meaning in the workplace, defended the use of qualitative research within the hospitality sector. The study defined the sources of meaning in workers as arising from a quest for comfort and a humane environment, and that both are influenced by employees’ cultural contexts. The hospitality industry involves service outside the home, and frequently requires long and overnight shifts. Dimitrov (2012) asserted that shift work involves a physical and emotional investment from workers, and that their interpretations of meaning must not be forced into predetermined and quantitative survey responses. Employees define a humane environment based upon their cultural expectations of what is acceptable and fair. Dimitrov’s instrument consists of semi-structured interview questions such as “Please share your thoughts and feelings about how your organization supports you as an employee?” (2012, p. 358). Participants were also permitted to submit written responses. The responses to such a question vary widely, but Dimitrov reported that most responses involve the personal feeling of pride in the work and the service provided. One participant wrote, "I think that to work in a meaningful workplace means that you are working for a company that you believe in. For me that means I believe in what the

company stands for as well as what I am selling to customers…" (2012, p. 358). With regard to the cultural similarities of the participants, Dimitrov (2012) reported that regardless of age and gender, those of similar cultural groups answered using similar examples and language. However, the general desire was the same across cultural groups, that all participants wanted managers who are open-minded and respectful, allowing employees to balance work and life.

Also related to the definition of meaning in the workplace, Stebleton (2012) wrote of the study of adult African immigrant college students in the United States. The research question of "What is the meaning of work for Black, sub-Saharan African immigrant adult students pursuing an undergraduate 4-year degree?" (p. 51) is answered with semi-structured interview questions. Stebleton (2012) found that participant responses, while varied, included similar stories of the need to support family at home in Africa, a desire to serve others, and a need to adapt to civil unrest at home. Responses were coded into contextual factors, family and community connections, and changing identity. The unique experiences shared by the participants led to Stebleton's (2012) suggestions for further research into ways universities can help immigrant students to navigate school procedures.

Another workplace-related area in which qualitative inquiry is most effective is in the study of new mothers in their return to the workplace. Quantitative researchers may successfully develop and employ survey-based instruments, but verbal expressions of meaning from participating mothers are compelling additions to the existing body of knowledge. Millward (2006) presented the findings of an interpretive phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of eight new working mothers, beginning a study with

ten participants chosen based upon their current pregnancy and intention to return to work. As Millward (2006) attested, no study is without its unexpected changes, as two of the participants later decided not to return to work. Millward (2006) asserted that returning to work after the birth of a child is both a socio-economic and an emotional decision, grouping women into three types: work-centered, home-centered, and adaptive. The adaptive mother keeps her focus in both realms. Millward (2006) opposed the use of quantitative methods in studying this topic, and asserted that motherhood and returning to work are intensely personal transitions. Quantitative inquiry may inhibit the researcher's ability to record changes during the process of study.

Phenomenology in Organizational Research

Conducting phenomenology relies heavily upon the verbal expressions of participants, and cross-cultural phenomenology bears the additional element of the need to glean meaning from not only the words used, but also the context in which they are spoken. Kanagui-Muñoz, Garriott, Flores, Cho, and Groves (2012) cited language barriers and adjustment challenges as significant factors to consider when conducting qualitative research with Latino populations within the United States. Chikudate (1997) described language as the tool a community uses to access their experiences when relating to others within the group. For that to be effective, all members must understand that language similarly. This phenomenology is most effective when all participants from a cultural group speak that language. For example, participants from different Spanish-speaking countries and cultures may speak the same Spanish words, but their context is too diverse for meaning to be generalized. San Miguel and Kim's (2015)

phenomenological study into Latina scientists and engineers and their experiences using mentors throughout their careers yielded examples of the lived experiences of participants. The researchers conceded that linguistic factors should be explored in future research, as they did not consider differences among participants born in the United States and those raised overseas before relocating to the United States.

Gill (2014) wrote of the need for focus upon the types of phenomenology researchers choose, proposing that the result of the type chosen should direct the reader to the source of the meaning, to desire to know more about that source, rather than focusing upon the description or meaning itself. Conklin (2007) described the phenomenologist as one who "aspires to access the personal, the individual, the variations within themes. It is, inherently, a means of creating knowledge that is particular – knowledge that offers a portal of insight into the individual and the idiosyncratic" (p. 276). In the study, Conklin (2007) used transcripts of interviews with participants and then asked them if they could recognize their own words in the transcripts. Conklin (2007) sought to learn whether, even on a different day, the participants would still answer the same way, recognizing what they had said previously. The researcher reported that all of the participants recognized themselves in the written descriptions provided, and then asserted that the definition of a participant's truth will vary little from day to day, thus lending validity to the description of his or her responses. These written transcriptions are used in the epoche or transcendental stage of analysis, as described by Vallack (2010) as "a period of quiet." If participants recognize themselves without other participant responses or the researcher's themes to color their understanding, the researcher can similarly allow the meaning of responses to emerge.

Qualitative approaches, and especially interpretivist analysis, are not without challenges. Sandberg (2005) addressed the question of whether interpretive approaches to analyzing qualitative data can be justified and trusted, citing a shift from positivistic to interpretive approaches. Sandberg (2005) did not discount their results, but rather offered an apologetic on and a solution regarding the latter approach, defining the dilemma as follows:

> At the same time as advocates of interpretive research deny the possibility of producing objective knowledge, they want to claim the knowledge they generate is true in some way or another. But how can they justify their knowledge as true if they deny the idea of objective truth? Does not the rejection of objective truth mean that advocates of interpretive research approaches are forever condemned to produce arbitrary and relativist knowledge? (pp. 45-46)

In offering a solution, Sandberg (2005) suggested that researchers examine the definition of truth. If objective and absolute truth is not to be found employing an interpretivist approach, what is truth? For an interpretivist, truth is never complete. It continues to change for participants. Thus, truth in interpretivist phenomenology is fluid and person-based. When a researcher intends to produce descriptions of a phenomenon, he or she also describes the truth of the participants as they perceive it.

Dislocated workers base their career decisions, in part, upon a similar quest for fairness and open-minded leadership, as described by Fouad, Cotter, Carter, Bernfield, Gray, and Liu (2012) in introducing their phenomenological study. They stated that workers in blue-collar roles are not accustomed to task autonomy, they derive less of their identity from their work, and they rely on work primarily for financial reasons.

However, richly described participant responses reflect a desire for greater meaning within work. One participant stated the job was chosen based upon it being "Something I could be proud of. Something that I would get something out of. Helping people." (p. 295). Another participant described childhood as influencing the current career struggles as,

> I was kind of ruddlerless. And I'm not… denigrate my family because my parents did the best they could. They worked very hard. They made sure we were fed, we were clothed, we were warm. And beyond that, there wasn't a whole lot of energy. And they just wanted us to be able to maintain, you know? And get us on our own and at that time we could make our own decisions. And unfortunately, by the time you're 18, there's a lot of time wasted. (p. 296)

A researcher is able to code these responses in order to classify them, but in phenomenology there is a valid place for the content of the stories, as well.

As can be gleaned from research into blue-collar and dislocated workers, the career is not only a personal phenomenon, but also a societal and political one. Gunz, Mayrhofer, and Tolbert (2011) asserted that the study of context and using an "onion-skin model" (p. 1616) is essential to fully understand the career experiences of participants. The four contextual levels of the onion represent work, the participant's origin, his or her national culture, and the current global climate. One or more of these levels may change, and the results will likewise change. The researchers emphasized the importance of qualitative inquiry in uncovering these layers in creating thick descriptions.

The field of knowledge management within business continues to grow as more researchers seek to classify knowledge types and the means to achieving that knowledge.

The questions of "what is knowing" and "how do we know?" are asked within organizational contexts in order to better understand and design training programs, written procedures, and documenting tribal knowledge. Küpers (2005), in studying the relationship between implicit and narrative knowing, stated that humans, as "embodied beings" (p. 115) know through our lived experiences, and we are unable to know anything independent of those experiences. Küpers (2005) asserted that our responses to available knowledge are at once "cognitive, emotional, and volitional processes" (p. 115), but that all three are intertwined and influenced by our experiences and cultural contexts. In making this assertion, Küpers (2005) defended the use of phenomenology within the workplace, as responses must be permitted to be rooted in experience and enhanced by storytelling.

Learning and knowledge can be influenced by spiritual and cultural factors in the workplace, as presented by Gallagher, Rocco, and Landorf (2007). They conducted a phenomenology into the spiritual aspects of learning and applying spirituality to workplace situations. A high number of their participants were Hispanic and Roman Catholic. The researchers reported that the cultural and religious influences upon their participants were intertwined, and that phenomenology allowed those factors to be fully explored and presented. The link between spirituality and culture is also evident in the phenomenological study of Hernandez, Foley, and Beitin (2011), their findings linking religious activities to culture and the view of career as a calling or act of service. Cultural diversity similarly affects participant interpretations of internal business communication. Yeomans (2008) found through a phenomenology that the sharing of policy changes and

procedural instructions using electronic media versus face-to-face explanation can have unintended meanings to employees based upon their national identities.

Terrell and Rosenbusch (2013) wrote of their phenomenological study into the development of leaders within global organizations. They defined globalization within business as a growing necessity, especially over the past 25 years with the advances in communication technologies. They stated that the majority of global companies operate locations internationally as a single body, and they identified that as a unique and new need within leadership development. A successful global leader will have flexibility and cross-cultural sensitivity. Moustakas' phenomenology as their framework, they cited the recommendation that the "empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (1994, p. 13). In their study, Terrell and Rosenbusch (2013) sought not to prove a hypothesis, but rather to collect the "verbal descriptions of experiences they found to be important in their development as global leaders, as well as what they learned from those experiences and how they translated their lived experiences into new global leadership capabilities" (p. 1060). Participants described those experiences as having been intensely cross-cultural, and they claimed to have learned flexibility, increased cultural sensitivity, and the ability to better detect nuances in behavior. They cited their most valuable learning processes as being informal, observational, and accidental. The choice of phenomenology allowed the researchers to record and interpret those participant stories.

Newly formed or merged organizations afford leadership teams the opportunity to design or restructure the learning environment within those organizations. Including a

cultural and flexible element to these designs is especially crucial within global organizations. In their phenomenological study, Lancaster and DiMilia (2015) asserted that learning occurs most effectively when the learners are exposed to diverse perspectives. Those perspectives will either be embraced or stifled based upon the leadership approach. The topics and functions upon which leaders invest their time and attention will influence the level of importance the followers will place upon them. One participant stated, with regard to development and learning programs, "having an executive management team member attend showed that they are also expected to be across aspects and that it's important enough to be there [manager #16]" (p. 448). Investments in training are impactful in themselves. The researchers proposed that a supportive learning environment would allow cultural differences to be used to the organization's advantage, rather than being regarded as an impediment.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to begin to understand the level of power distance orientation for Pennsylvania blue-collar employees who have relocated from Puerto Rico.

Research Design

Phenomenology is the methodological approach of this study, and it is an appropriate choice in that a researcher seeks to "describe the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). The phenomenon is Hofstede's cultural dimension of power distance, and the individuals included are blue-collar workers of Puerto Rican descent in the Pennsylvania area.

More specifically within the phenomenological approach, Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology and its three steps to derivation of knowledge were applied, in which a researcher "brackets" or sets aside previous experiences and notions in favor of viewing the data from a new perspective, "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (1994, p. 34). Moustakas' model is largely informed by the philosophies of Edmund Husserl. The three stages within this model are Epoche (bracketing), Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction, and Imaginative Variation. Once responses are collected, they are "naively" (p. 34) bracketed before the researcher moves into the next stage. In Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction, the researcher considers each described experience as a singular event or statement without consideration of context or motivation. The final step, Imaginative Variation, is the stage

during which the researcher reconstructs the pieces into wholes to capture the "structural essences of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 35).

In this study, one semi-structured interview was conducted with each of 15 hourly, blue-collar employees who previously lived and worked in Puerto Rico and are now working in Pennsylvania. Interview questions include "Which is most important - education, experience, or professional connections? How does one access these three things in order to progress within your organization?," "What (if anything) are you doing now to change your position within your organization?," and "Is it better for a manager to speak with you in the work area, or privately in a separate office?" While I am bilingual, an interpreter reviewed and corrected the informed consent forms and the instrument when translated into Spanish, and also interpreted and assisted with translating Spanish recorded and written notes of responses into English.

Sample

The population for this phenomenological study is hourly employees of Puerto Rican descent, with a total number of 15 participants. Criteria include having lived or worked in Puerto Rico as an adult, currently living and working in Pennsylvania in an hourly role, and being at least 18 years of age. Excluded are any volunteers younger than 18, those who have not lived or worked in Puerto Rico, those who have lived in the continental United States for less than one year, and any who are currently working in salaried, leadership, or administrative roles.

Participants were sourced at a publicly funded career-training center serving the Latino population in Pennsylvania. Those enrolled in English classes or job training were

invited to review a brief study overview in the reception area of the training center. They completed demographic questionnaires and submitted them via a locked box owned by and only accessible to me. Returning the questionnaires via United States mail was also offered, and a contact phone number was provided for all questions. The involvement of staff from the facility was minimal, and entailed assisting with scheduling private classrooms and supplying space for the questionnaire box.

Setting

Interviews were conducted at a non-profit Latino outreach and career and life skills training facility in a populated urban area. Parking for participants was available, but parking lots were crowded and street parking was also limited. Community members frequent the center to purchase meals from an onsite café, to pick up free Spanish-language newspapers, to use computers, learn English, train for nursing assistant certifications, and to visit with staff and friends. Decorated with brightly colored artwork, the facility appears a magnet for the community with parents and children milling about in the outside patio area. One visitor played music from a small speaker and danced while two small children watched and laughed. Other music could be heard from cars parked in the street. Participants awaiting their interview appointments inside gathered in the reception area of the career-training center until greeted. All interviews were conducted in a large but private nursing classroom setting, with hospital beds and mannequins lining one wall. Only one participant was present for each interview.

Instrumentation/Measures

The opinion- and experience-based responses of the participants were analyzed. Thus, the unit of analysis is the individual participant. The instrument is the conducted seven-question semi-structured interview, which allowed for anecdote (fig. B6). This is a newly developed instrument with questions based upon Hofstede's (2001) primary power distance survey question B46, "How frequently are employees afraid to express disagreement with their managers?" (p. 53). Questions are also based upon Hofstede's (2001) declaration that high power distance societal norms are characterized by the beliefs that:

> There should be an order of inequality in this world in which everyone has his/her rightful place; high and low are protected by this order. Hierarchy means existential inequality. Superiors consider subordinates as being of a different kind. Subordinates consider superiors as being of a different kind… The underdog is to blame. [There exists] latent conflict between the powerful and the powerless. (p. 98)

The instrument seeks to elicit participants' beliefs regarding the high and low, and their place in a continuum between the two.

Changes made to the original instrument interview questions involved removing language such as "why do you think?" and "why do you believe?" The removal of terms like "think" and "believe" were found to be redundant and confusing when converted to Spanish. The simple "why" and "how" questions will elicit belief and opinion responses. The interpreter was used to ensure the instrument's Spanish version was correct, and to ensure responses were correctly translated back into English.

Data Collection

The method of collecting the demographic information used to determine participant eligibility is a demographic form submitted confidentially to a lock box and later reviewed by only me. All volunteers were contacted by telephone to inform them of eligibility, answer questions, and to schedule interviews. Informed consent forms were given to participants prior to the beginning of the interview. All were given the opportunity to refuse participation at that or any point before or during the interview process.

Each participant was given the choice to have the interview conducted in English or Spanish, but some participants switched freely between the two. During the interviews, notes were taken in the language spoken, and the notetaking during each interview was conducted in full view of and read verbatim back to that participant to ensure accuracy and agreement. Spanish notes were later translated and verified by the translator. Audio recordings were made of each interview and were used in validating verbatim notes taken, as well as assisting in translation from Spanish.

Data Analysis

While this is a qualitative study, it is based upon Hofstede's Power Distance Index (PDI), which relies upon three questions from the IBM survey (Hofstede, 2001, p. 491). When the responses to the three questions are calculated separately for each country, PDI results can be reported in numerical form and assigned to that country. A higher PDI indicates a country's high power distance dimension. Hofstede's (2001) organization of the data is based in country clusters grouped not by geography, but by

economic health (poorer and richer), population size, population growth, population density, latitude, past and present economic growth, and IBM actual and relative organization size within those countries. Power distance was identified during data collection in the extent to which participants are willing or afraid to approach their managers with questions or disagreement. It also considered the described level of comfort or discomfort with approaching that same manager in a non-work setting.

Power Distance Index (PDI) refers to Hofstede's (2001) measure of mean scores in the following three areas factored into a formula: non-managers' beliefs that employees fear disagreeing with managers, non-managers' beliefs that managers make autocratic or paternalistic decisions, and the degree to which non-managers prefer a non-consultative leadership style. These mean scores are entered into the following formula to determine a national culture's PDI:

> PDI = 135 – 25 (mean score of first area) + (mean score of second area) + (mean score of third area) (p. 86)

To address power distance with a qualitative methodology, this research will be based upon the core questions asked in Hofstede's research, but with the allowance for further discussion and anecdote.

In seeking to collect the lived experiences of the participants, each interview was approached as a whole in itself, and not first as part of the collection of participants. At the data entry stage, the use of NVivo 11 Pro for Windows qualitative software allowed for input of individual units of data without regard to their relationship to each other. The data was then observed as a whole to get an understanding of what the whole may appear to be. Next, based upon the phenomenon of power distance orientation, the emerging

meanings were identified. Once those meanings or patterns were apparent, the individual data units were reviewed to begin to form a picture of each participant's experience with regard to the phenomenon. Where patterns in those experiences existed, a picture could be formed of those experiences as a collective of the participants.

Responses were coded and arranged into nodes by themes (Creswell, 2007). The codes or nodes within the power distance orientation category were divided into two groups according to their indication of either low or high power distance. Statements falling into those two categories were opposites of each other. For example, a statement such as "I feel comfortable when my manager approaches me directly" was coded in the opposite node to "I feel nervous when my supervisor approaches me directly." Other codes were independent of each other, such as "I feel experience is the most important requirement for a supervisor in the United States" or "I feel education is the most important." When these themes are presented, other possible interpretations are also presented. Holliday referred to the researcher as an "architect of meaning" (2007, p. 112), and although the arrangement and presentation of data will be a creative process, a researcher must remain aware that this process cannot overtake the data's innate message. For this reason, the research is presented with meaning attached, but also with other potential meanings presented and explored.

Validity and Reliability

The demographic questionnaire allowed for objectivity regarding the qualifications for participants, and for defining the participant group. Thick descriptions (Holliday, 2007) of each participant were produced along with his or her responses.

These descriptions allowed as much detail to be included as possible, to ensure transparency and to allow each detail to be independently evaluated for transferability. Qualitative data in this study may not prove to be consistent among participants, but I am especially concerned with ensuring what is collected is credible and accurate. I asked throughout the process, "Am I being true to what the participant is actually saying? Am I presenting the data as-is, regardless of what I want it to say?"

As outlined by Guba and Lincoln (2001), qualitative researchers can refer to four elements to ensure validity and reliability of their studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The credibility of the responses was ensured by member checking during the interview process. This entailed the participants viewing and being read the verbatim notes taken in the chosen language, validating them for accuracy, and agreeing that what was written was the same as what was spoken. Clarifying and follow-up questions were asked to ensure credibility. Transferability of the study refers to the ability of the study to be conducted with other participant groups. In this case, the study may be conducted with any group of participants who have come to the United States after being raised and having worked in another country. While the participants from Puerto Rico are unique in that they arrived in the continental United States already being United States citizens, that difference from other participant groups would not significantly affect the questions asked. The dependability of the study refers to its ability to yield similar results even while the setting may change. Regardless of the setting in which the interviews are conducted, ensuring a private room with no distractions will be the most important factor in obtaining detailed and honest participant responses. However, the location and setting itself can otherwise change and the study be effectively

conducted. Confirmability refers to the likelihood that the same study may be conducted with participants from the same demographic group and yield similar results. As the results demonstrate, a majority of the participants answered the questions similarly and without hesitation, confirming that another researcher using the instrument would be likely to yield similar responses and confirm the results presented here.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations related to the data collection procedures exist in the area on confidentiality and, more broadly, beneficence. Beneficence is the focus upon the well-being of participants and ensuring the research is conducted with no more than minimal risk to that well-being, if possible (Lindorff, 2007). Confidentiality was ensured by my retaining custody of all notes and records, with the exception of those taken or being used by the interpreter for audio tape transcription and document translation. The interpreter completed a confidentiality form agreeing not to retain copies of tapes or other materials and to return all such materials promptly upon completion of transcription and translation activities. Each participant was assigned a number, and no names were recorded on demographic questionnaires or interview notes.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The Study and the Researcher

The results and interpretation to follow are outcomes of the study outlined above, and are in answer to the research question of whether there exists anecdotal evidence of high power distance orientation in Puerto Rican hourly employees working in Pennsylvania. The 15 participants' responses are first bracketed individually, then meanings are identified and coding assigned. Results of coding assist in forming the themes within the group.

I have worked in Pennsylvania with the Puerto Rican population for over 15 years, and have found the culture to be rich and varied. Those new to the continental United States may face an adjustment period, but individuals within this population exhibit many of the same traits as those raised in the area. Well-versed in technology with a strong sense of basic human rights, aside from the primary use of Spanish in daily conversation, these workers closely resemble their Pennsylvanian counterparts. Studying Hofstede's cultural dimensions led to a desire to explore further a national culture that has become a sub-culture within the United States. Hofstede's research indicates higher power distance orientation in several Central and South American countries, including Puerto Rico, but that research was conducted on the island itself, and not as a subset of American culture. While bilingual, I am not a part of the Puerto Rican population, and I approached the study from the perspective of an outsider. No workers with whom I am acquainted personally or professionally were chosen, in order to maximize objectivity.

Description of Participants

The 15 participants in this study are of ages well distributed between 24 and 68 years old, and they are evenly divided between seven males and eight females. The lengths of time lived and worked in Puerto Rico range from ten to 45 years, and lengths of time living and working in the continental United States range from under one year to 32 years. Participants currently work in the roles of maintenance, sanitation, forklift operator, laborer, machine operator, packer, food preparation, and waste collection.

Demographic questionnaires were collected from 22 potential participants, but as detailed in the recruiting materials and informed consent, those under 18 years old or from countries other than Puerto Rico would be excluded. Excluded was one potential participant under 18 years old, and two from Dominican Republic. Three others failed either to respond to telephone calls or to keep their interview appointments. The remaining potential participant stated that a driver's license had recently been suspended and that there was no ride available to the center, and instead asked if the interview could be conducted in the home, regardless of never having met the caller. That offer was declined, and all interviews were conducted in the same setting.

Interviews were scheduled in 45-minute blocks, but several participants were either early or late to appointments, and the order of interviews needed to remain flexible. Some participants had schedule conflicts within the building due to attending classes. Two were late due to working overtime at their jobs, and one was late due to a medical appointment elsewhere in the city. The interview schedule extended two hours longer than planned, and ended well after the center's reception area closing time.

All 15 participants were keenly interested in a study that focuses upon their culture, and several asked how the topic came about. Two spoke of children and grandchildren living in Puerto Rico who are struggling to find work while attending college there. Several stated they had moved to the continental United States because jobs in Puerto Rico are too scarce, but they spoke lovingly about their homeland and its beauty. One spoke of the crime in her home city, and said the home had been burglarized too often, requiring a move to a rural area before relocating to Pennsylvania. Four participants had lived in the New Jersey and New York City areas before settling in Pennsylvania. Three participants had moved to Pennsylvania after other family members moved there first and encouraged them to follow, citing many available jobs and a large Spanish-speaking community. One participant stated that the family had said learning English would not be important, since the local community is so friendly to Spanish-speaking people.

Research Methodology Applied to Data Analysis

After entering interview responses into the NVivo 11 Pro for Windows software program, codes were applied to each statement as previously described. Where data fit easily into codes, quick coding assignments were possible. One theme needed to be given a code as most participants placed a high emphasis on the importance of speaking to English to being an effective leader. That code was added to the section regarding requirements for becoming a manager in the United States, since it emerged as being more important to participants than experience, education, and professional connections combined.

While taking an interpretivist approach to this phenomenology, it was necessary to code data due to viewing responses or activity as "'text' – as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). One other unexpected challenge was the early realization that a high number of participants answered some questions in a similar way. While that could appear to be a positive development for a researcher, it can create a tendency to generalize or look for emerging themes too early in the process of analysis. As Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012) remind researchers, the use of computer-assisted data analysis software such as NVivo allows the researcher to enter and code without making judgments until the coding process is complete and themes emerge. The process can be non-linear, as was learned when the English-language-related statements were made and coding needed to be added, which was evidence of the bracketing of preconceptions needed.

Presentation of Data and Results of the Analysis

Study results are organized by sub-topics and by separate indications of low power distance for some topical areas and high power distance in others, as indicated in Figures 2 through 5. Those results are then presented in aggregate in discussion of the overall picture for the participant group, Figure 6. Participant quotes labeled by numbers are included to lend context and present the desired level of anecdote needed to draw conclusions. In answering the research question of whether there is anecdotal evidence of high power distance among Puerto Rican employees working in Pennsylvania, no evidence is indicated, as will be expanded in Chapter 5.

Preferences in Task Instructions

In response to a question regarding preferences for high task specificity (high power distance) versus high task flexibility (low power distance), participant responses were evenly divided, indicating no clear evidence of high power distance orientation. As depicted in Figures 3 and 4, eight participants preferred specificity while seven preferred flexibility. This question was the one most directly derived from the power distance definition presented earlier: "the degree to which an individual prefers to be told what to do and how by persons in higher positions than themselves" (Madlock, 2012, p. 170).

Those eight participants indicating a desire for a high level of detail in what their managers assign expressed fear of making errors, in disappointing those managers, and even in losing their jobs if they make too many mistakes. Six of those eight had been with their employers less than one year, and four of those six had been working there six months or less. Seven of the eight preferring detail stated, however, that once they are experienced with a task, they would be less nervous if given fewer instructions. Those with less experience demonstrated more apprehension regarding job security.

Conversely, all of the seven participants that preferred a high level of flexibility had worked for their employers for over one year. Their responses indicated a higher level of confidence with their current roles and the tasks required. Participant 11, for example, expanded upon the response to indicate a desire for not only completing the task correctly, but also discovering new ways to be faster and more efficient than peers.

Participants have been assigned arbitrary numbers for use throughout the data analysis and reporting process:

- Participant 2: “I like flexibility. Right now we are cross-training on other people’s jobs, so I am making a booklet about how to do my own job and I am writing down all the little things I do to make it easier. They are letting me write it myself.”
- Participant 5: “I feel better with detailed instructions, especially at first. When I don’t get details, I feel nervous. But later on, when I know my job better, I don’t mind as much.”
- Participant 7: “I like instructions, definitely, so I don’t make mistakes. I want the procedure step-by-step. When I don’t get that I ask for more information.”
- Participant 10: “It is better for me to have specifics. I want to know when it needs to be done, how many I need to do, and what they are supposed to look like. But later on, I think I will feel more relaxed with no specific information because I will already know those things.
- Participant 11: “It depends if it’s a new task, but then later I don’t need to be told how. At that point I will try new ways on my own so I can do the job faster than other people do it.”
- Participant 14: “I have to have details. I am always afraid to make mistakes because if I mess something up I could lose my job. I need the money, so I don’t want to put my job in danger.”

When answering the question, eight of the 15 total participants used the same phrase: “it depends.” They followed the phrase with statements such as Participant 5’s “later on, when I know my job better, I don’t mind as much” when offered more

flexibility. No definitive conclusions can be drawn from this question, as participant responses were qualified, situational, and based heavily upon tenure with the employer and experience with performing the tasks.

Participant Aspirations to Management Roles

Responses regarding whether or not participants are interested in moving into leadership roles were less varied. Four participants expressed the desire to become a supervisor or manager in the future. The other 11 participants expressed strong aversion to the idea of assuming a leadership role. Statements included “too much pressure,” “too stressful,” “I don’t feel I am capable of becoming a manager,” and “I can’t speak in front of people in English.”

- Participant 1: “I like to give other people opportunities, so I would really like to be a supervisor, but I’m comfortable with my job for now.”
- Participant 3: “I don’t have the capacity to be a manager. I need more English, more education, more experience. I need more patience with people too.”
- Participant 10: “I don’t have seniority at my job, and I really don’t want to be a supervisor.”
- Participant 12: “Supervisors have to talk in front of people, and I don’t think I can do that without stumbling over my words, even if I would be allowed to speak Spanish. My English is not good enough.”
- Participant 14: “There’s a lot of stress to dealing with people. I don’t know if I can do that because my personality is too strong. And I don’t speak English.”

- Participant 15: “I don’t know. Maybe I couldn’t do the job well. I don’t know how to use a computer, and I don’t speak English.”

Comments indicating intimidation permeated 11 of the 15 interviews, although the English language issue emerged as a more compelling reason than a sense of being incapable or unworthy of the leadership role. Participant 12 expressed a lack of confidence in the ability to speak English, but spoke English for the duration of the interview and seemed fluent. Job stress seemed to conflict with participants’ desire to preserve family and relaxation time, and several such as Participant 1 spoke of currently being “comfortable.” This perception that work-life balance might be compromised when taking on more responsibility, along with the lack of confidence in English language skills and formal education indicate some level of high power distance orientation, or a belief that supervisors are, as Hofstede (2001) describes, “of a different kind” (p. 98).

Participant Requirements in Achieving Own Leadership Roles

Following the question regarding aspirations, a question was asked about participants’ perceived requirements for attaining leadership roles. The same four participants that expressed leadership aspirations, in response to a separate question regarding ease of access to training and education, stated that they felt they had easy access to the tools needed to achieve that goal. When asked if they felt they would be able to easily access education and experience necessary for a management role, the other 11 relayed some reason that access would be too difficult. Two cited financial constraints preventing them from attending school. One cited old age as a disqualifier, and two stated

they do not have the patience. Seven of the 11 stated they needed to learn to speak English. Statements regarding having no access to English classes are notable due to the offering of English classes within the same facility in which the study was conducted. Several of the same participants that cited their need for better English skills had spoken English for part or the entire interview.

- Participant 8: “Finding English classes that fit into my schedule is hard, with all my other family things going on. There are free classes at my church, which is nice, but I don’t really go enough. Plus, I need other education and going to school is for the young.”
- Participant 10: “I would want more managerial or business experience first, but somebody has to give me a chance, and I don’t know anybody right now that would give me the chance. I am also such a people person that making a boundary would be difficult. I always end up being close friends with people at work, and I know I could not go out with them on the weekends anymore.”
- Participant 11: “I would need a job that would still let me have flexibility and relaxation. I need more than just pay. I have all the skills I need, but it’s too hard to find a job that fits my lifestyle.”
- Participant 12: “I am very busy, and I think it is hard to get the education and English skills I would need. I am doing my best to learn English by myself.”

Responses indicate the perception that the necessary education and experience are difficult to access, but several participants also indicate that obtaining that knowledge and

skill is not a priority if it interferes with other priorities such as time with family, medical appointments, and relaxation. Hofstede (2001) stated that a high power distance culture is characterized by subordinates actively attempting to decrease the distance between themselves and their superiors as "the way to change a social system is by dethroning those in power" (p. 98). This set of responses lacks a clear indication that the participants are actively attempting to reduce any distance between themselves and their workplace superiors, but rather, that they are either comfortable in their roles or resigned that achieving the skills and experience needed would be too difficult.

Most Important Attribute for a Manager in the United States

It was in this section of the data entry that "English" was later added to the coding list, as depicted in Figure 2. The three choices offered to participants were experience, education, and professional connections. This question is significant only in light of the question regarding ease of access to these elements. Seven participants stated that supervisory experience is the most important attribute of a good manager, but four of those seven asked if they could combine job experience with English-language experience in their responses. Two of the 15 chose English alone as the most important. Thus, a total of six participants viewed English as chiefly important, and given the perception that learning English is inaccessible, some degree of distance is indicated here. Four others chose education as the most important, and these same four had indicated it was difficult to access. Their responses coded as "professional connections," the final two participants both stated that "who you know" and "politics" are the only way to be awarded a leadership role. Both had earlier indicated an interest in becoming supervisors.

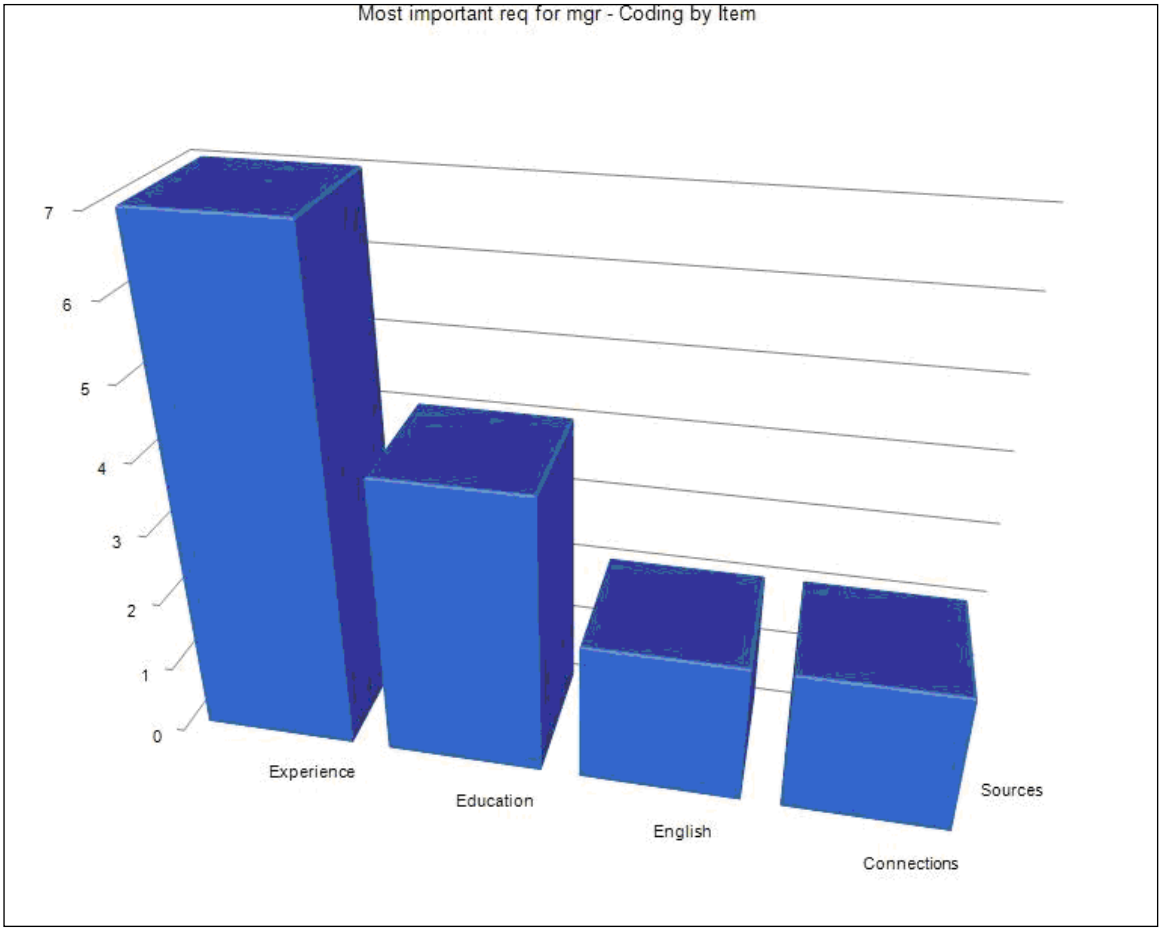

Figure 2. Primary attribute needed for United States managers

- Participant 2: “Education is not really important at all. I went to college, but not for anything related to management, and I know I could be a manager because I have done the same jobs the other guys are doing now. Experience is the top thing.”
- Participant 4: “May I say ‘English’ instead? I just think that is more important here than anything else. I guess English is considered education, but I think it’s different than going to college.”

- Participant 7: “Education is definitely the most important. If you do not know anything, how can you expect to lead a team of people who might know more than you?”
- Participant 9: “Connections. Politics. Who you know. Because I think my supervisors kissed up to someone above them to get to where they are. I don’t like it, but it is true. And they act like they are better than we are just because they have that job.”
- Participant 11: “Who you know does not matter. Education is most important, and then experience, and after that you meet people.”
- Participant 15: “Experience is the most important. People with college sometimes act like they know everything. No offense to you, but I would rather work for someone who knows what it is like to struggle and work their way up from the bottom. They know what we are going through working all the mandatory overtime and night shifts for low pay.”

Tied to the previously presented issue of ease of access, these responses give only a slight indication of high power distance orientation. Participant 9’s response that supervisors regard themselves as better would be an indication of a low power distance orientation, since the participant expressed disgust along with the statement. Members of a culture of high power distance would be accepting of their superiors as having more power. Hofstede (2001) describes the related low power distance societal norm as a belief that “Powerful people should try to look less powerful than they are” (p. 98). The

participant's response indicates distaste for supervisors that attempt to elevate themselves.

Level of Comfort with Being Approached by Manager

Ten participants, when asked how they feel when a manager approaches them individually in the workplace, expressed that they would be nervous and anxious. One stated "Oh no, what did I do wrong?," another stated that the comfort level would depend upon the look on the manager's face, and five stated that they would assume it is "something bad." All of the other five of the 15 participants qualified their responses, stating that they will be comfortable being approached as long as they know they did not do anything wrong. This response, while initially spearing to indicate high power distance, is problematic in that while Hofstede (2001) lists two norms of high societal power distance as "latent conflict between the powerful and the powerless" and "the underdog is to blame" (p. 98), however Muschalla, Linden, and Olbrich (2010) cite workplace expectations and productivity standards as inherently anxiety-causing.

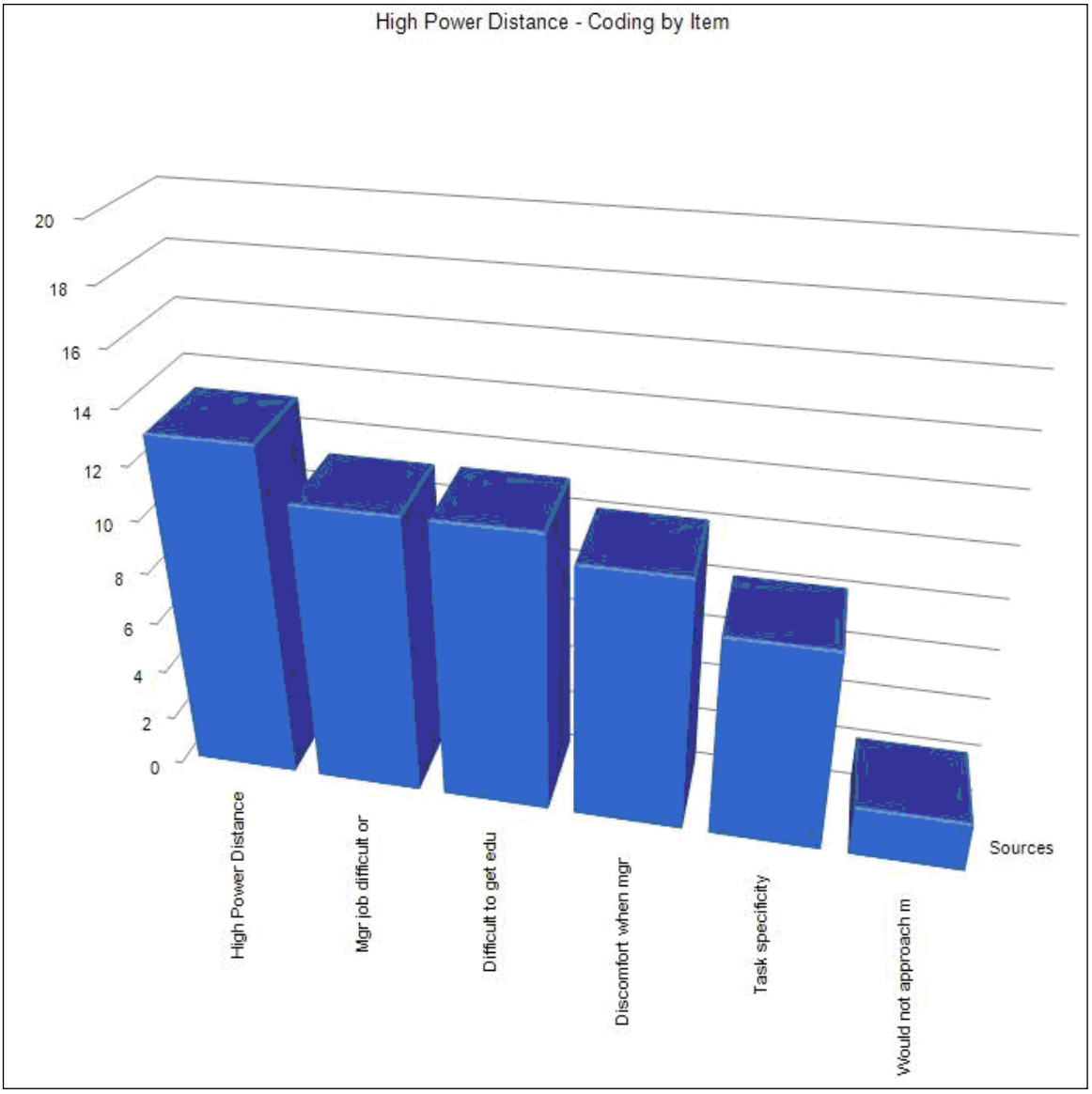

Figure 3.Indications of high power distance

- Participant 1: “I feel fine, but if they seem mad, I take it as a challenge. I come from the streets, and nobody disrespects me, so I would hope my old ways do not come out, but I don’t like being questioned.”

- Participant 3: “I feel nervous and mad. I want to talk in a private office, but they better respect me and not yell. I have had supervisors who yell all the time. I will not work at a place like that.”
- Participant 5: “Oh, I always assume it’s about something bad. It is much better if it’s private, especially if I am in trouble. If we all did something wrong, it’s probably ok to talk to us as a group out in the work area, but otherwise private.”
- Participant 6: “At first I assume it is bad, but then I think about it and if I know I didn’t do anything wrong on purpose, I just wait and see. I prefer the manager to set up a time to meet with me privately and not spring it on me.”
- Participant 7: “Oh no, I’m in trouble. They should come out quietly and bring me to the office. I never know if I’m in trouble. Even if I didn’t do anything wrong I’ve had supervisors yell in front of everyone, and it scared me really bad.”
- Participant 11: “I would be fine if I know I didn’t do anything wrong, but it needs to be private because I do not want people in my business. Nobody needs to know.”
- Participant 15: “I get scared that it is something bad or an emergency with my daughter and her baby.”

Given the reality of inherent workplace anxiety, when paired with other indicators of high power distance, these responses may be a factor, but when found with other weak indications, their impact upon the whole will not be emphasized.

Willingness to Approach Manager in Public

When asked how they would respond when seeing their managers in public places such as the grocery store or gas station, 13 participants answered that they would approach the manager in a friendly manner and engage in casual conversation. All of the 13 expressed surprise that such a question would be asked, as several felt it would be rude not to be friendly. One expressed excitement to introduce the family. Another stated, "We are supposed to have a relationship, and that extends outside of work, too." The two participants that stated they would not approach the manager cited a preference for keeping their work and personal lives separate, but showed no indication that they would be intimidated to approach the manager.

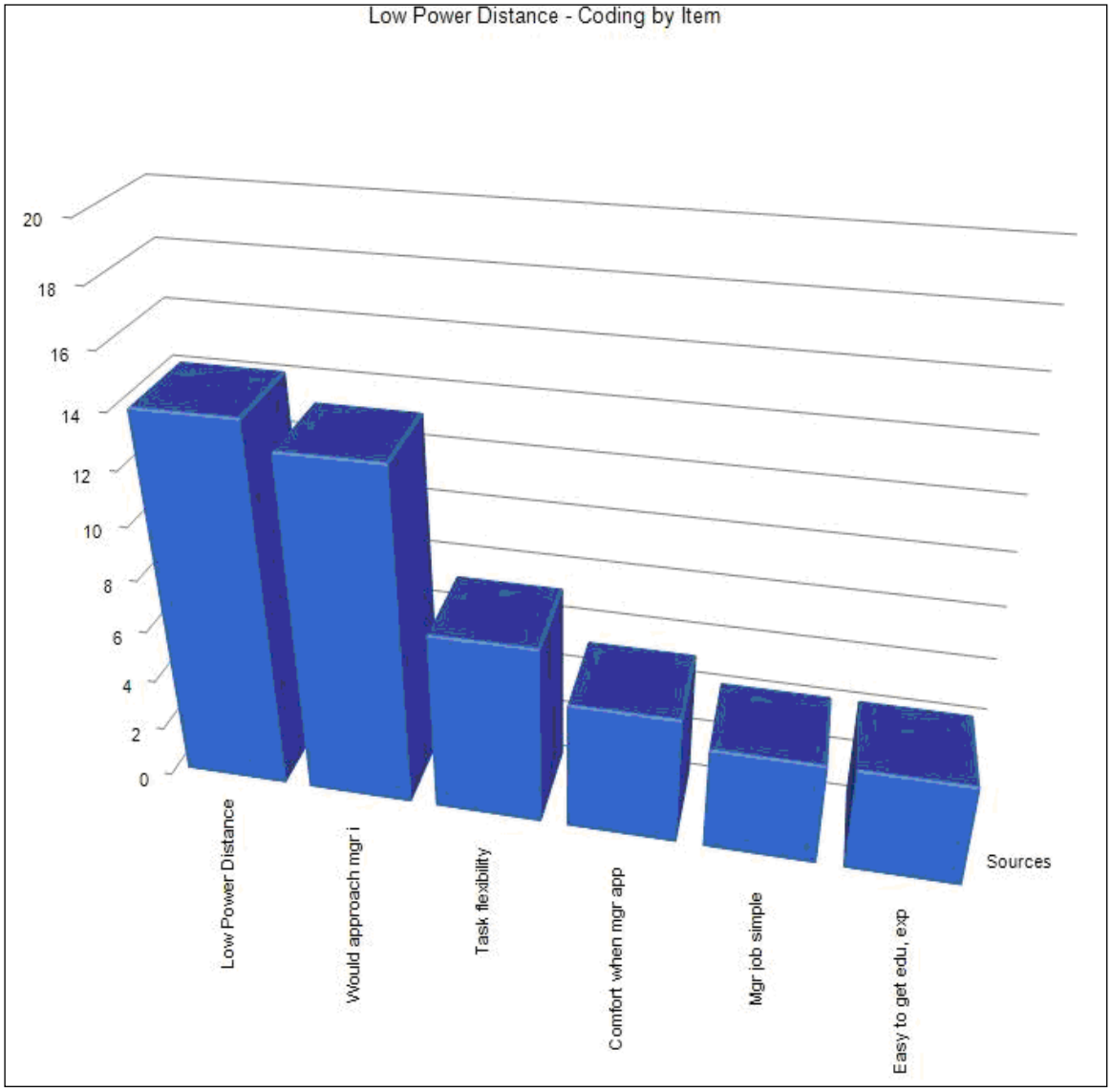

Figure 4. Indications of low power distance

- Participant 2: “I have a good relationship with the CFO and my supervisor, and I can approach both of them about anything. So if I saw them at the grocery store I would probably ask them if they want to go out that night if I’m already going somewhere. But we don’t talk about work. We keep that line there.”

- Participant 6: “They are not different than me, so I don’t treat them differently. I would be glad to walk up and talk to them.”
- Participant 7: “I avoid him. I do not want to see him. It’s bad enough I have to deal with them for 40 hours a week. I do not want to talk about work or see anybody from there.”
- Participant 10: “Oh, that would be cool because I hang out with my supervisors outside work anyway. We keep work conversations out of our friendships, though. And nobody is supposed to really know we hang out, so it doesn’t seem like I’m getting special treatment. At work if I did something wrong, they would definitely still write me up.”
- Participant 14: “I would be so happy to see him, and if my husband was with me I would love for them to meet each other. I think it would be nice to see him outside work and have a conversation.”

This set of responses indicates a low level of apprehension in interaction with superiors outside the workplace, and a lack of evidence of high power distance orientation. Several participants expressed not only openness to interacting in public, but also excitement in holding conversations, even making social plans, and indicating little aversion to allowing a coworker (even a superior) to share a part of their personal time.

How Puerto Rican Managers Have Achieved their Roles

Moving from the general to the specific within the interviewing, a question was asked regarding whether the participants know any Puerto Rican supervisors or managers

in the continental United States. Three participants did now know anyone in that category, and one stated that the supervisor or manager had achieved the role simply by "knowing the right people." Eight stated that the supervisors and managers they know have achieved their positions through practical experience, and the other three believed their acquaintances had some extra education. All 15 participants expressed the belief that speaking English is necessary for any aspiring supervisor or manager.

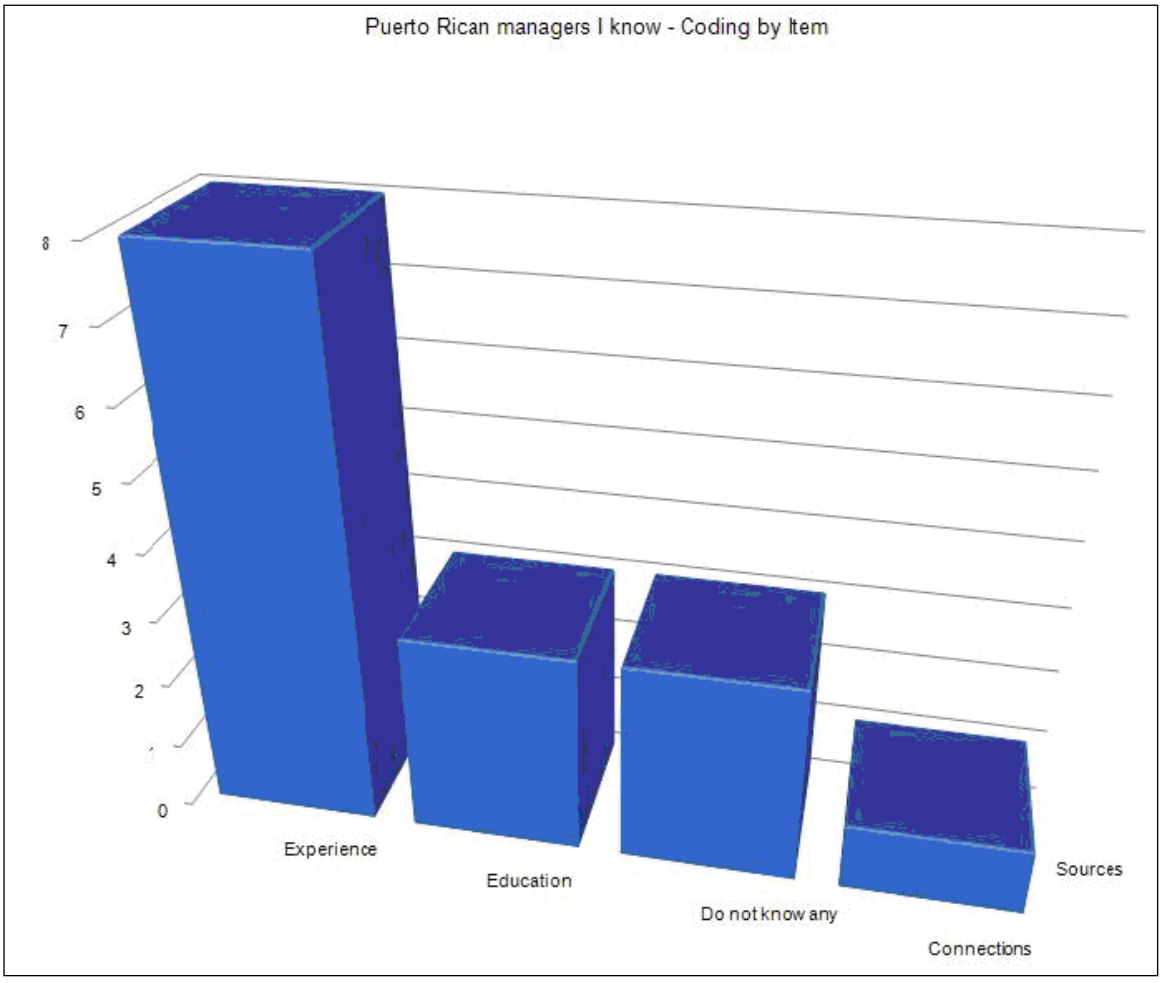

Figure 5. Primary attributes with which Puerto Rican managers achieved positions

- Participant 1: “Sometimes I think he just got the job by knowing the right people. I think he talked impressive and manipulated people to get there. Of course he is a smooth talker in English too.”
- Participant 2: “My manager is Puerto Rican. She relates to me really well, and we understand each other. She has a lot of experience. I think she has education, too, but she’s done pretty much every job there is.”
- Participant 5: “One of my supervisors is actually from Puerto Rico, and I think he got that job because he has experience and his English is also really good. He speaks in both languages depending on what language his workers speak. I think that is really good to be able to do. I am not sure what education he has.”
- Participant 11: “He started from the bottom when he came from Puerto Rico, so I would say he got his job through experience with the company.”
- Participant 12: “The supervisor I work for is from Puerto Rico. I think he had some college in Puerto Rico and maybe here too. He has a lot of experience now, but when he got his job I think it was mostly because of his education.”
- Participant 15: “Yes, my current supervisor is from Puerto Rico, and he has been a supervisor here for around 20 years, I think. He speaks English very well. I think he also had experience before he left Puerto Rico. Being bilingual helps, especially in this area where a lot of workers speak Spanish.”

While participants had earlier expressed doubts regarding their own abilities to become supervisors and managers, and while several stated that gaining the necessary experience, education, and English skills would be difficult, a majority of participants knew at least

one fellow Puerto Rican who has attained a leadership role. Thus, from the data emerged no strong indication of a belief that those roles are unattainable, but rather, that such roles are less desirable with regard to stress level and lifestyle.

Summary of Findings

Researchers are divided regarding the power distance orientation of Puerto Rico, as evidenced by the contradicting conclusions of some studies as low (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001; Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier & Rogelio Flores, 2009) and others as high (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001). Cerbone (2014) likens phenomenology to a melody, in that to become a melody, each note is considered separately, and it is not until all notes have been included that the pieces can be regarded as a whole and recognized as a melody. Results of this current study show no evidence of high power distance orientation among Pennsylvania workers from Puerto Rico.

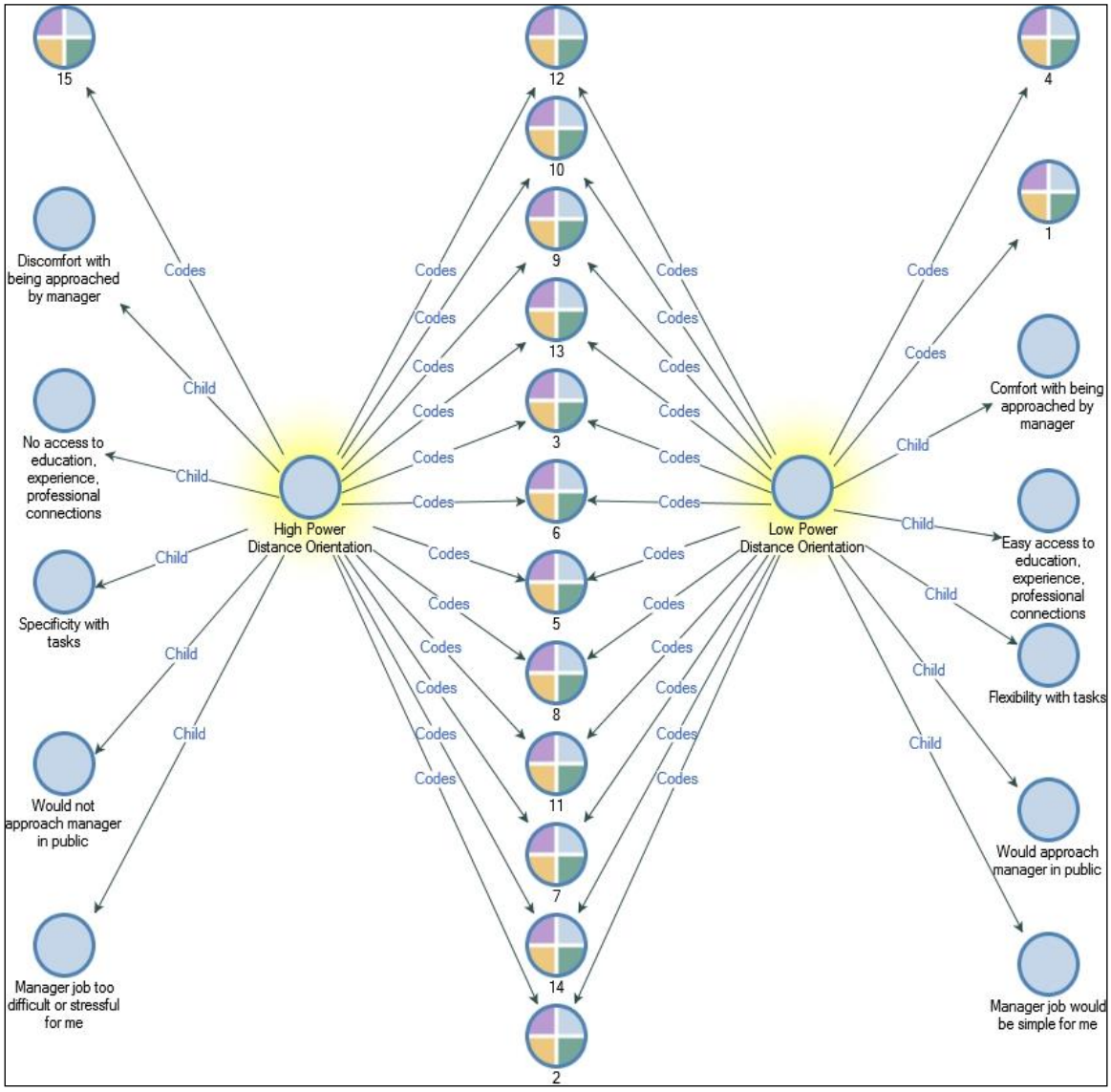

Figure 6. Fifteen numbered cases compared by coding

As depicted in Figure 6, most participants provided responses indicating coding of both high and low power distance orientation. Participant responses indicate moderate anxiety when approached by managers in the workplace, while there is an absence of anxiety when encountering the same managers in public, non-work settings. A preference for structured and detailed task instructions is tempered with a desire for flexibility once the

job is learned. Results indicate a general perception that access to experience, education, and English-language training is difficult, even when that training is free and offered at convenient locations within the community. Most participants cite management roles as being unattainable for the same reason, but they also indicate distaste for the long hours and stress of leading others. The responses are thus not pure indicators of a high power distance orientation, and are too influenced by personality and lifestyle factors. The research question is answered in that there is insufficient anecdotal evidence of high power distance orientation among Puerto Rican blue-collar workers in Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction and Summary of Results

The results of this study into Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of power distance answer the research question of whether there exists any anecdotal evidence of high power distance orientation among Puerto Rican employees in Pennsylvania. Findings do not indicate significant evidence, but they add to the body of research into the area of power distance, especially within the Latino and Puerto Rican communities within the continental United States. Previous research exists into the power distance orientations of several Central and South American countries including Puerto Rico, especially as the dimension relates to organizational justice and perceptions of ethical leadership (Hofstede, 1980; Mallol, Holtom, & Lee, 2007; Najera, 2008), the need for cultural considerations when forming work teams (Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997), and the admonishment to researchers that all dimensions are capable of change based upon political and economic shifts (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, & Nicholson, 1997). The current phenomenological study expands upon Hofstede's (2001) notion that employees in high power distance societies will prefer and accept direction from their workplace superiors. These findings indicate little evidence that this high power distance exists for Puerto Rican employees working in Pennsylvania.

Discussion of Results

Results of this study lend additional meaning and anecdote to the growing body of research into Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, and while little power distance is evident in the findings, patterns emerge that will lead to further study. Limitations with

the instrument and the results include the need for at least a statistical majority (Hofstede, 2001) in order for qualitative research into a cultural group to be generalized. Cerbone (2014) states that "Consciousness consists of 'phenomena,' which cannot be understood by analogy to material objects" (p. 38), and for that reason these results cannot be compared to survey-based quantitative results. They are concerned with consciousness, and individual-level results are thus reported and group meanings are attempted, but where emerging patterns appear weak or mitigating factors are evident, those group meanings are also weak.

The patterns previously referred to are those indicating greater individualism and a movement toward a more casual workplace relationship with superiors. The United States, according to Hofstede's 1980 data, was ranked among the bottom 15 countries with regard to having a relatively low PDI. Thirty-four years later, Cavazotte, Hartman, and Bahiense (2014) reached the same conclusion. However, they cited the increasing individualism in the Western world as affecting participant power distance perspectives. They suggest that as individualism is encouraged, the impact of cultural influences such as power distance upon responses may decrease. As more research into that possibility is conducted, if an increasing overlap of dimensions is observed, the field of study may continue its expansion into cultural shifts.

The results of this study do indicate patterns of lower power distance than anticipated. What the study is unable to do is offer a comparison between Puerto Rican workers within Puerto Rico and those working within the continental United States. It is also unable to indicate shifts over time or comparisons between those born and raised in the United States and those from Puerto Rico. Elements of impact include the challenges

experienced in securing committed participants, the relatively small number of participants, and the impact of external and personality-related factors upon responses.

Implications of the Study Results

In contrast to the quantitative results of Hofstede's (2001) IBM study using data from as early as 1967, the current study's results confirm Kirkman and Shapiro (2001) and Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn's (2001) suggestions that cultural dimensions will continue to shift over time. The use of a qualitative instrument, and the difficulty experienced in isolating responses and classifying them as being culture-based serves to reinforce Hofstede's (2001) warning that the whole of a culture cannot be defined as a cluster of individual personalities (p. 17). All three levels of programming must factor into individual responses, and qualitative inquiry may not be the most effective method of gathering and analyzing data about a culture if the group of participants is small. If the instrument were able to distinguish within responses the difference among human nature-based, culture-based, and personality-based influences, the cultural themes would be most compelling.

The current study fails to correlate sufficiently to Hofstede's (2001) evidence, as well as Kim and Kim's (2010) and Kirkman and Shapiro's (2001). Their studies employ quantitative data to assign numerical ratings to levels of power distance. However, this current study does offer additional context to be reviewed within the larger collection of research. The gaps in findings can be useful to inform other researchers regarding preparation for mitigating factors such as personality and creating definitions of the levels of leadership to which the questions refer.

For human resource practitioners and business leaders, especially within blue-collar industries, this research offers insight into the current working lives of Puerto Rican employees now working within Pennsylvania and the continental United States. From the anecdotes, emerge themes of the importance of family and leisure time over status, the desire for respect and organizational justice, and a sense of comfort and familiarity with current supervisors and managers. Wilson and Baumann (2015) write of their study into the ways in which work is either in conflict or in harmony with employees' family and personal lives. They assert and prove that conflict among the three is inherent, but that the more stress or exhaustion results from one area of life, the more will also be felt in the other areas. Any measure of cultural understanding an organizational researcher can contribute can serve to educate business leaders in the ways they can minimize the negative impact of the work life upon other areas.

Limitations

Limitations of the study and its instrument include a lack of specificity and an inability to prove a direct correlation between the instrument's interview questions, responses, and Hofstede's (1980) quantitative instrument. Irvine, Drew, and Sainsbury (2013), in their research into differences between face-to-face and telephone semi-structured interviews, write of the challenges of attention and understanding. In the current study, it was not the understanding that emerged as a challenge, but the attention to the questions asked. Several participants were interested in discussing their experiences in their home country, rather than answering the questions regarding their current locale. Clarifying and follow-up questions were expected and necessary on the

parts of both the interviewer and the participants, but there was some level of anxiety regarding which work experience was being discussed at the time.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) three levels of mental programming cite the cultural level as being at the center of the pyramid. Human nature forms the base of the pyramid, and the responses to questions such as "How do you feel when your supervisor speaks to you directly?" are unable to be viewed independently of the natural response to be afraid of failure. At the top level of the pyramid is personality, which will also influence participant responses. Where responses contrasted with one another personality differences were also observed. One participant, while being willing to speak to a manager in public, admitted to feeling a bit shy. Other participants indicated they would eagerly approach the manager. Introverted and extraverted personality types may respond to the situation differently, and responses should not be interpreted to be simply cultural. Another flaw with that theme within the instrument is the lack of distinction among levels of management. Some participants asked clarifying questions, such as "Is this person my direct supervisor or a high level manager?" Two participants stated that they might be hesitant to approach a director or vice president in public. Four added that the length and level of friendliness of the conversation would depend upon how well the participants know the supervisor or manager. Thus, there are varying levels of comfort among participants, and not all factors are related to cultural dimensions.

Another design flaw in the instrument is the absence of a focus upon participants' apprehension or willingness to express disagreement with their superiors. Future iterations of the instrument would require additional questions such as "If your manager were clearly making an error in performing a task, how likely would you be to make him

or her aware of that error?" or "If your manager had an idea for a change to a work procedure that you strongly disagreed with, how likely would you be to give your opinion regarding that change?" Interview questions in the current instrument addressed only the participants' comfort or discomfort in conversations, but subordinate assertiveness and willingness to express disagreement is not a sufficient focus.

Recommendations for Further Research or Intervention

While little evidence of high power distance is found, emergent themes bear potential for further study. The instrument, with the suggested additions made, can be used with other groups, although the questions may lack the specificity needed. The work of other researchers such as Kirkman and Shapiro (2001) and Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) indicates a shift in the cultural dimensions of Puerto Rico over time. These studies based upon Hofstede's (2001) dimensions may continue indefinitely and be compared as economic and political climates change.

If members of the population believe that access to English language instruction and practical experience are lacking, and if such perceptions lead to hesitancy among Puerto Ricans to aspire to leadership roles, more research into these perceptions is needed. The growing number of Spanish-speaking employees will benefit from bilingual leaders who are familiar with the culture and its members' unique traits and needs. Duval-Couetil and Mikulecky (2011) suggest that the higher the number of non-English speaking employees, the greater investment an organization should make both in training its employees to speak English, and offering or requiring foreign language training for its leaders. Their study also found a correlation between the number of employees from a

given country, and the overall job satisfaction of those from that country. The greater numbers reflected a greater investment and a greater perception that the immigrants from that country were valuable. Further related studies focused upon the Puerto Rican community are recommended.

Another compelling direction for future research is the use of a similar instrument with layers of questioning added to gain a richer understanding of participants' motivation behind their responses. If each question were to include follow-up elements to dissect the response into human nature, cultural, and personality coding, the modified instrument could be utilized as a study into the three levels of programming as factors in power distance orientation.

Since this current study is focused only upon Puerto Ricans working within the United States, the potential is high for further comparative studies. The instrument may be applied within Puerto Rico and within the United States, and results compared in order to glean an understanding of differences. Likewise, the interviews may be conducted with participants born and raised in the United States and compared with the responses of Puerto Ricans now working in the United States. Fok, Payne, and Corey (2016) conducted a study comparing United States and Puerto Rican professionals and the extent to which their cultural values impact their understanding of ethical decision-making. They hypothesized that they would observe statistically significant cultural differences between Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries, but also that they would observe differences between Puerto Rico and the United States, although to a lesser extent. The former statement was proven, but only due to Puerto Rico's increasing similarity to the United States with regard to cultural dimensions. They attribute this to

the similarities in the Puerto Rico and United States legal environments, and the closing cultural gap due to Puerto Rico's status as a United States territory. They suggest that researchers interested in comparing a Latin American culture to that of the United States choose a country other than Puerto Rico.

Another area related to comparison is the question of whether there are factors that predispose some Puerto Ricans to stay in Puerto Rico while others decide to move to the United States. That inquiry could be conducted alone or as an element of the previously suggested study. Shemdoe, Mbaruku, Dillip, Bradley, William, Wason, and Hildon (2016), through a mixed-methods study, sought to learn the factors that contribute to a health care worker's staying in Tanzania and coping with overburdened staff and facilities, lack of leadership support and dangerous transportation conditions. Those with strong family and community ties and those who cited faith and service-based reasons for their career were the professionals most likely to stay. Similar questions may be asked in Puerto Rico of those workers who choose to stay despite a shortage of jobs and high crime rate.

As Hofstede (2001) and others such as Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, and Nicholson (1997) have demonstrated, shifts in culture necessitate that the same instruments be applied and results be compared over time. Another recommendation is for the current study to be conducted multiple times over the course of ten or 20 years to determine if there is a shift in cultural dimensions of those moving from Puerto Rico at that time into the United States.

Hu, Kaplan, and Dalal (2010) compared the rates of job satisfaction of white-collar workers with those of blue-collar workers. They hypothesized that the elements of

satisfaction would be more varied and complex among white-collar workers than among blue-collar workers. They report their results as slightly supporting their hypothesis, but only as the jobs of the two groups are significantly different. Their findings of differences in attitudes based on differences in job type suggest opportunities with these two groups with regard to cultural dimensions as they apply in the workplace. The current study included only the blue-collar group, but a comparison study could be conducted to include workers from Puerto Rico working in the United States in blue-collar and white-collar roles. As power distance involves the relationship between the hourly and leadership groups, a study is recommended into the ways their perceptions of the dimension may differ.

Detert and Treviño (2010) write of their qualitative study into the effect direct supervisors and high-level managers have upon employee willingness to speak up in the workplace. Their findings indicate that direct supervisors have a significantly greater impact upon that willingness, and that workers are more comfortable addressing concerns to those supervisors than to high-level managers. In the case of the current study, responses to the interview questions may differ depending on the level of supervisor or manager indicated, and that level of specificity could be added to obtain more focused results and to determine whether indicators of high power distance would differ.

Conclusion

Accounting for flaws within the instrument and difficulties in accessing eligible and committed participants, this study into the existence of evidence of high power distance orientation among Puerto Rican employees in Pennsylvania is significant in that

it is an example of the complexity of culture. Qualitative cross-cultural research must be undertaken with awareness that no response will be a perfect representation of that culture's influence upon the individual. Personality and human nature factors prevent a finding of clear evidence of high power distance orientation among the participant group and culture as a whole.

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APPENDIX A. STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK

Academic Honesty Policy

Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes but is not limited to discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation or capstone project.

Established in the Policy are the expectations for original work, rationale for the policy, definition of terms that pertain to academic honesty and original work, and disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty. Also stated in the Policy is the expectation that learners will follow APA rules for citing another person's ideas or works.

The following standards for original work and definition of *plagiarism* are discussed in the Policy:

> Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others' work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person's ideas, including another learner's, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. (p. 1)
>
> Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own. Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium. (p. 2)

Capella University's Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06) holds learners accountable for research integrity. What constitutes research misconduct is discussed in the Policy:

> Research misconduct includes but is not limited to falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. (p. 1)

Learners failing to abide by these policies are subject to consequences, including but not limited to dismissal or revocation of the degree.

Statement of Original Work and Signature

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) and Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06), including the Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the APA *Publication Manual*.

Learner name and date  August 28, 2016

Mentor name and school Stephanie Fraser-Beekman, PhD, School of Business and Technology

APPENDIX B. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The semi-structured interview questions are as follows:

1. How do you feel when your manager gives you detailed instructions to complete a task? How do you feel when you are given no detailed instructions to complete a task?

2. Why are you not currently a supervisor or manager in your company?

3. If you aspire to become a manager, what would you need to have or do in order to reach the manager level? What are you doing now to change your position within your company?

4. Which is most important for becoming a manager – education, experience, or professional connections, and how easy or difficult would it be for you to access these three things in order to progress within your organization?

5. How do you feel when a manager speaks to you directly, and is it better for a manager to speak with you in the work area, or privately in a separate office?

6. How would you respond to seeing this manager in public, outside of the work setting? How comfortable would you feel with approaching him or her to have a conversation?

7. If you know any managers who are originally from Puerto Rico, what did they do to get to their current position?