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# SELF-ESTEEM IN ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DECISION-MAKING CASE: SMES AHMC SPECIALIZED MEDICAL CLINIC<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The present study is derived from a doctoral thesis whose objective is to know the influence of self-esteem on assertive decision-making in all areas and hierarchical levels of an ATS in the hospital sector in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. The approach is qualitative with a phenomenological design, carried out on 10 employees, of which 54.5% were operational personnel, 18% support personnel and 27.5% administrative. The measurement instruments are psychometric tests and questionnaires to measure decision-making and self-esteem. Data analysis is used using descriptive statistics, SPSS version 22 and PSICO-TEST. The result shows that 100% of employees possess the required skills, however, they have only developed 34% of confidence and self-esteem to decide. It is concluded that it is necessary to implement a model for the development of self-esteem as part of the continuous program of training and skills required in hiring.

**Keywords:** self-esteem, assertive decision-making.

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of assertive decision-making for the achievement of competitiveness and profitability of companies has become relevant mainly in for-profit organizations since the main objective is the generation of profits. Decision-making processes within organizations have evolved over time, however, there are factors that intervene in the mechanism that is followed when making a decision to solve a problem with the consequent impact it generates on the processes and procedures with which it is interrelated (Bonilla, 2020). The results of the doctoral thesis have been adapted for

this article, a thesis developed under the direction of Dr. Rodolfo Martínez Gutiérrez (Researcher Member of the National System of Researchers Level 2).

As Mitchell, S. et al (2011) (cited in Rodríguez, 2014) mention, in order to achieve competitiveness, it is necessary for organizations to make assertive and quick decisions in a constantly changing environment. Bonilla (2020) states that generally companies only consider decision-making as a process, leaving aside the human factor who can modify the result of the decision according to their experience, knowledge, trust and values, directly affecting the results of the organization.

Knowing that the decision-maker is directly responsible for choosing the best alternative solution, and that he is also accustomed to thinking and solving problems in a linear manner (Ackoff, 2004) (cited in Nieto, 2018), without greater awareness of the impact that his decisions generate in other areas of the organization and much less of the cost and direct impact on the customer with the corresponding effect on profitability, the complexity of the result of assertive decision-making goes beyond a simple process.

As Bonilla (2020) mentions, a weighty factor in making a decision is the confidence and level of self-esteem that the decision-maker has about himself, since sometimes the stress that is generated by fear of making a mistake by not being sure of the selected alternative or by the punishment he will have in case of not making a favorable decision, they lead him to not be able to correctly determine the alternative solution or simply not to make the decision.

The present study aims to determine whether the decision-maker in all areas and hierarchical levels of AHMC has the ability to make assertive decisions, as well as to establish the influence that self-esteem has on their decision-making. AHMC is an SME in the health sector that was founded in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, in 2010 to meet the need of the International Medical Tourism market, which according to the definition of ProMexico, is the process of leaving the country or state of residence to receive treatments and care abroad. because since the beginning of the current decade, a global movement of patients seeking to obtain health services in places outside their country of residence has been triggered.

ProMéxico reports that Mexico is the second destination country for medical tourism, with Tijuana being the number one city in income generation for this concept, with the average growth of the industry in Mexico being 14.8% since 2010. If it is taken into account that the medical tourism industry is increasing and that in order to remain in the market being competitive, it is important to make assertive decisions, it is essential to develop a strategy to ensure that decisions are made at all levels of the organization that contribute to the achievement of profitability and permanence in the market (Bonilla, 2020).

In order to be competitive and obtain the desired profitability, AHMC has generated a culture of empowerment for decision-making at all levels of the organization, and, for 3 years, it has developed and implemented training and feedback programs in assertive decision-making, however, it has been observed that for a year and a half, The lack of self-confidence and self-esteem of the employee (among other factors), for

fear of making mistakes, is a limiting factor for decisions to be made at all levels of the organization, directly impacting waste, costs of acquisition of inputs and the level of internal customer service mainly. Due to the impact it generates on competitiveness, this research is carried out to determine if, according to experience and observation, self-esteem is a factor that influences assertive decision-making in AHMC.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The decision-making that takes place within organizations must be fast, timely, based on concrete information, which allows efficient, effective decisions to be made at a low cost for the company; since the success or failure of an organization will depend on it, which will allow it to be competitive and profitable to remain in the market (Bonilla, 2020). Decision-making is a process that is carried out from birth on a daily basis, which is learned through life experience and family and school education, and that according to it plus the beliefs and hierarchy of values that are acquired, determine the degree of confidence and security to decide.

Ackoff (2004) (cited in Nieto, 2018), mentions that currently people from different generations are working in companies, which makes the maturity of the team in general even more complex, since it is observed that according to their generational tendencies and their emotional maturity, it is the effectiveness of their decisions. Herbert Simon (1947) (cited in Cabeza de Vergara, 2004) in his theory of bounded rationality suggests that decision-makers cannot contemplate all possibilities and are therefore limited in their understanding of the impli-

cations of decisions. Schutz considers that the knowledge and expectations “at hand” that the individual has, formed with his life experience, become the basis of all his personal actions (cited in Velez, 2006).

The model of Janis and Mann (1977) (cited in Navarrete et al, 2011), is based on the fact that decision-making is a process that entails a stress-generating decision-making conflict. This decision stress is fueled by the concern of objective and subjective losses, which causes the individual to initially have some resistance to making decisions and to wonder if they are really taking any risk by leaving things as they are.

Riso (2018) describes that the image one has of oneself is not inherited, but learned and defines self-esteem as loving oneself forcefully. One of the categories of self-esteem is self-efficacy, which is the confidence that the person has of himself. Trust is formed through a gradual process of knowledge and interaction, in the personal experience of communication with the other, and although it is associated, in the first place, with the personal system of ethical values, it is also socially conditioned, with explicit or implicit punishments for those who violate it (Tristá, 2004). Decision-making is a current issue for the competitiveness of companies, and since the decision-maker is the determining factor for its outcome, it is necessary to consider that their values, experience, and self-esteem determine the outcome of the decision with a direct impact on the competitiveness of the organization (Bonilla, 2020). In Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. Postgraduate research has generated contributions to the state of the art in innovation research methodologies for the benefit of society, such as the case of the Fifth Systemic Helix (FSH) in Spanish

known as the Fifth Systemic Helix (QHS), based on focus group techniques for studies of sectoral integration and evaluation of public policies (Martínez, 2012, 2014, 2024, 2025).

As Bonilla (2020) mentions, throughout 9 years of operation at AHMC, it has been observed that employees at all hierarchical levels support their decisions in their beliefs and values, since this is the defense mechanism acquired since their childhood and precisely because it is a protection mechanism, they do not have the confidence in themselves to decide assertively if the option is not registered within that system of beliefs and hierarchy of values, therefore, it is necessary to develop self-esteem so that by having confidence in themselves, they can integrate knowledge and experience into the choice of their decision without the fear of making a mistake.

For the purposes of this study, Ornar Aktouf’s definition of decision-making (cited by Navia, in Cabeza de Vergara, 2004) will be taken: The decision is the process by which an option is reached, but an option that is supposedly clarified, informed and motivated. It is a matter of choosing among several possible ways of acting with a view to achieving a goal, under given conditions and circumstances. This process involves a series of partial and sequential acts that will lead the decision-maker to become aware of the need to choose, to select a solution among the most appropriate, taking into account the situation, and going through the collection and processing of all the necessary information.

In reference to self-esteem, for the purposes of this research, self-confidence is taken as the variable to be determined, the frame of reference for this definition being

that of Rodríguez et al (1998) (cited in Rodas, 2013), who define self-concept: they are the beliefs that are formed through the subjectivity of the person and are manifested in behavior acting as a vicious circle. If the person visualizes himself as successful he will act as such and if he visualizes himself incompetent in the same way, his actions will manifest as such.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

The approach is qualitative of phenomenological design and it is intended to determine how self-esteem influences decision-making from the experience of the participants, therefore, the data must be collected in the place where the participants carry out their activities to improve the current situation. Phenomenology, by its nature, focuses on experiences and highlights the meaning that surrounds the everyday, the meaning of the human being, that is, the experience that we are. Phenomenology is sensitive to the problems unleashed around the world of life (Fuster, 2019).

### Subjects

The population includes all AHMC employees, which are 10 who work with fixed hours in the morning and afternoon shifts, with no limit of age, gender, department or hierarchical level and who are active during the research period. The population corresponds to 80% of the female sex and 20% to the male sex, with schooling from primary to bachelor's degree. 40% of the employees have been working in the organization for more than 5 years, with seniority ranging from 28 days to 9 years and with an

age ranging from 21 to 48 years, with the average being 32 years. 54.5% are operational personnel, 18% are in the category of support personnel and 27.5% are administrative personnel.

## INSTRUMENTS

### Self-esteem questionnaire.

For the purposes of this research, this instrument is used because they are the answers that are required to be known about the participants. The questionnaire is applied in its entirety, however, as the scope is defined, the measurement is carried out only of the self-concept aspect, which includes items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34 and 39. The instrument consists of 40 items measured with closed questions with a 4-point scale with multiple choice and Likert modality ("never", "sometimes", "almost always" and "always"), adapted by Meléndez (2011) (obtained from Rodas, 2017).

The questionnaire consists of a series of statements in which the subject must choose the option with which he or she most identifies. Each point is assigned a numerical value. Thus, the subject obtains a score with respect to the statement and at the end his total score, adding the scores obtained in relation to all the statements. The instrument is based on the self-esteem pyramid of Rodríguez, Pellicer and Domínguez (1998), which takes five aspects which are: self-respect, self-acceptance, self-evaluation, self-concept and self-knowledge.

The maximum score for each of the questionnaires is 160 points and the minimum is 40 points, with a reliability index of 0.697. The parameters to define the level of self-esteem of the person are: High Level

160 -131 Good Level 130 -101 Medium Level 100 – 71 Low Level 70 – 40 Each area is evaluated as follows: High Level 32 – 27 Good Level 26 – 21 Medium Level 20 – 15 Low Level 14 – 08 (See Annex 1).

## PSICOTEST psychometric test

The PSICOTEST psychometric test is a commercial psychometric test of registered trademark from which the CIBAIN test is evaluated to measure the safety of the subject when deciding in everyday situations. The reliability coefficient of the Kuder-Richardson formula 20 is 0.90 (PSICOTEST 2019).

## Procedure

### Data analysis

The statistical methodology used is descriptive statistics. Statistical methods are traditionally used for descriptive purposes, to organize and summarize numerical data. Descriptive statistics, for example, deals with the tabulation of data, its presentation in graphic or illustrative form, and the calculation of descriptive measures (Barreto, 2012). Additionally, the application of the SPSS statistical package is used to generate the results required for this research. The tools used for data analysis are:

A) SPSS program version 22.

C) PSICOTEST psychometric test (PSICOTEST, 2019).

### Data collection

The procedure is performed in 4 phases over a period of 6 months.

- **Phase 1** Psychometric measurement to determine the level of security when deciding in everyday situations, using the PSICOTEST tool (PSICOTEST 2019).
- **Phase 2** Application of the Self-Esteem instrument, which takes into account five aspects, of which self-concept is taken only for the purposes of this research (Rodas, 2017).
- **Phase 3** Integration and analysis of results.
- **Phase 4** Presentation of results and proposal for improvement.

## RESULTS

The findings resulting from this research are described qualitatively below, and it is important to note that the answers obtained are those required to thoroughly investigate the safety of the participant when making a decision.

### Self-esteem instrument

The Self-Esteem instrument is applied to determine the security that each subject feels based on self-confidence (Rodas, 2017). The results serve as a basis for understanding phenomenologically how self-esteem contributes to decision-making. For the purposes of this research, the items that determine self-concept (4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34 and 39) are analyzed because it is the item that expresses confidence when making a decision.

The average grade of the self-concept category is 24, being good according to the assigned rating scale (See Figure 1). In gene-

ral, the participants are seen as competent and with skills to develop their activities and in their decision-making, however, none of them perceive themselves as having excellence with respect to themselves.

Figure 2 shows that there is no direct relationship between age and the self-concept that each participant has. The life experience of age does not improve the way in which the participant perceives himself.

The level of schooling does not reflect a direct relationship with self-concept (see Figure 3). 70% of the participants have a bachelor's degree level of education, however, it is observed that the academic level does not improve the subject's self-confidence or perception.

Figure 4 shows that only 40% of employees consider themselves skilled in 100% of what they do, with the majority feeling unskilled in their performance in all the activities they perform.

90% of employees do not feel confident about what they do because they consider that others think they do not do things well (see Figure 5).

Figure 6 shows that in general, employees like to face new challenges and that they feel motivated to carry them out.

In general, employees know their main personal qualities (see Figure 7).

## PSICOTEST

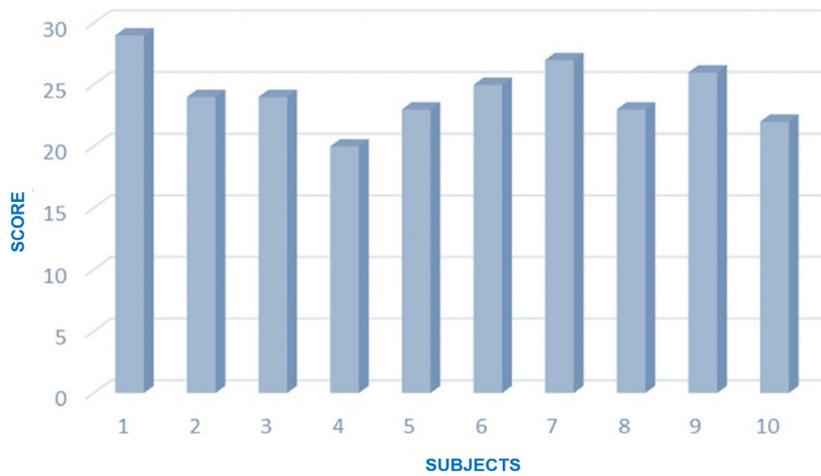
The objective of this psychometric test is to evaluate safety in daily decision-making. The results are shown from the graphs emitted by the direct electronic instrument of the application of the tool (PSICOTEST, 2019). Initially, the safety concentrate will

be shown to decide on the 10 study subjects, and then the result will be analyzed per participant. On a scale of 0 to 100, the average level of security to decide in everyday situations is 34%, with the highest being 60% and the lowest 0% (see Figure 8). Only 30% of the participants have greater than 50% confidence in making daily decisions and looking for the best alternative solution in a timely manner.

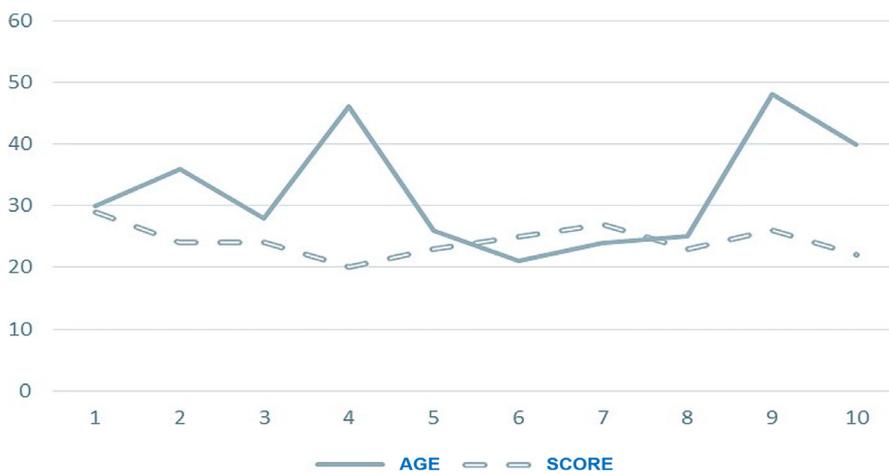
Subject 1 is a 30-year-old male, with a bachelor's degree, in the operational area, with 2 years' seniority, and it is observed that he decides in 50% of everyday situations (see Figure 9). It is shown that academic degree and seniority do not give them the security to decide in more than 50% of the actions they perform.

Subject 2 is a 21-year-old female, with a bachelor's degree, from the administrative area with 9 months of seniority and with a level of certainty to decide of 35% in everyday situations (see Figure 10). Despite the academic level, it is observed that young age and young seniority are a limitation to have security in decision-making.

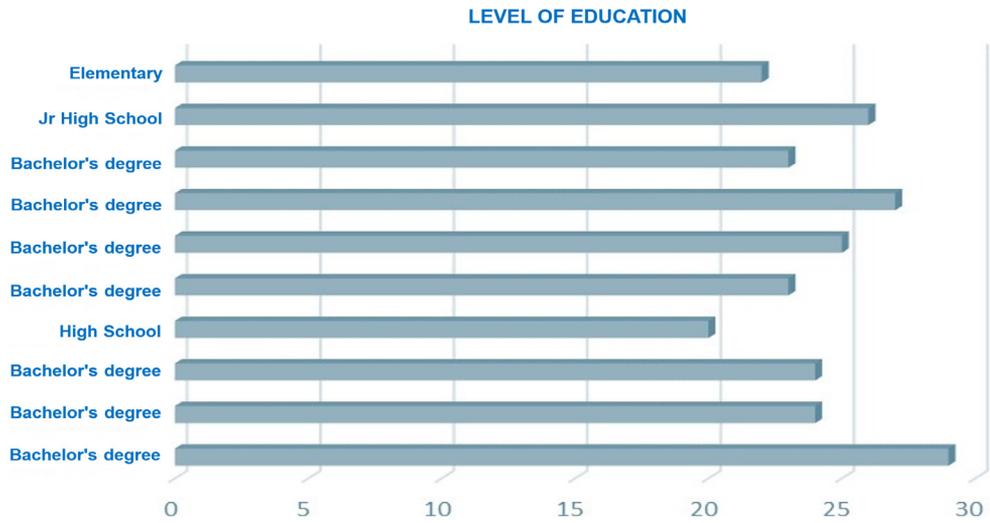
Subject 3 is a 34-year-old female, with a bachelor's degree, from the operational area with 6 months' seniority, observing that her confidence in deciding is less than 25% (see Figure 11). It can be seen that age and seniority are a limitation for decision-making, despite the level of schooling.



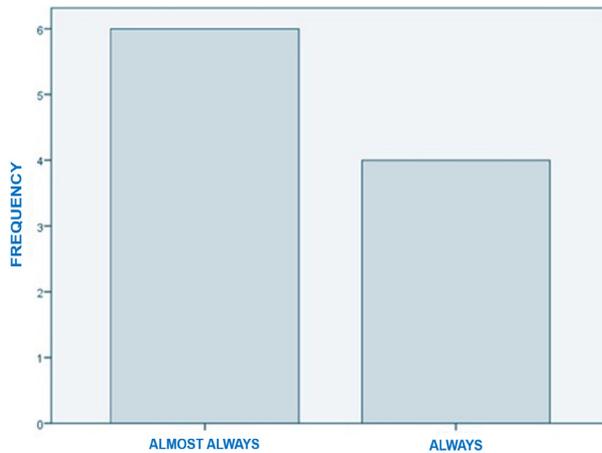
**Figure 1.** Self-concept result per participant. Self-esteem instrument (adapted by Meléndez, 2011).  
*Note:* Own elaboration (2020).



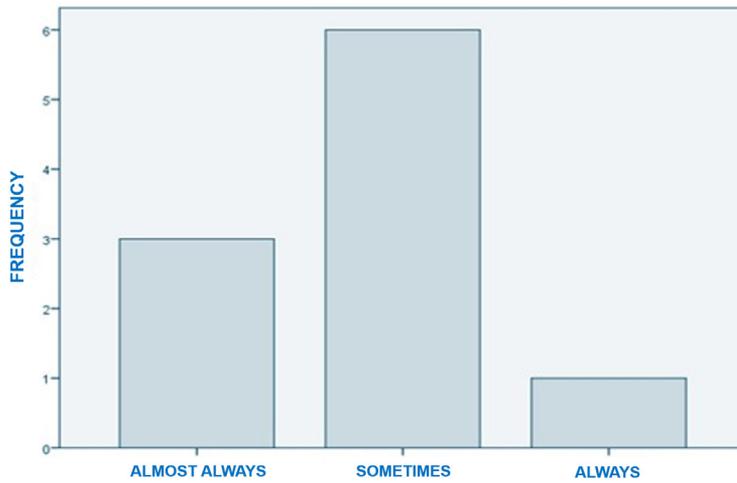
**Figure 2.** Age result vs score per participant. Self-esteem instrument (adapted by Meléndez, 2011).  
*Note:* Own elaboration (2020).



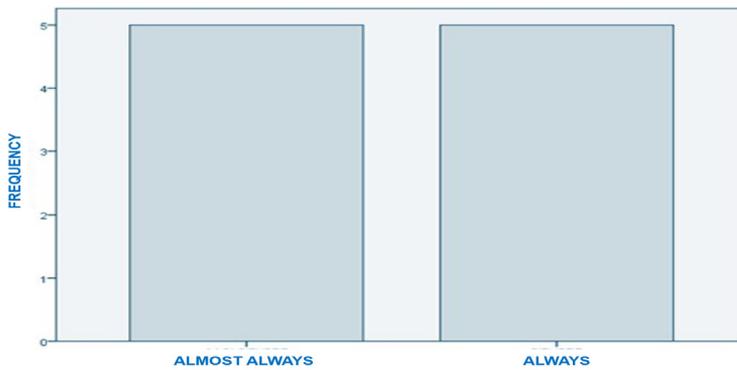
**Figure 3.** Result of schooling vs. score per participant. Self-esteem instrument (adapted by Meléndez, 2011). *Note:* Own elaboration (2020).



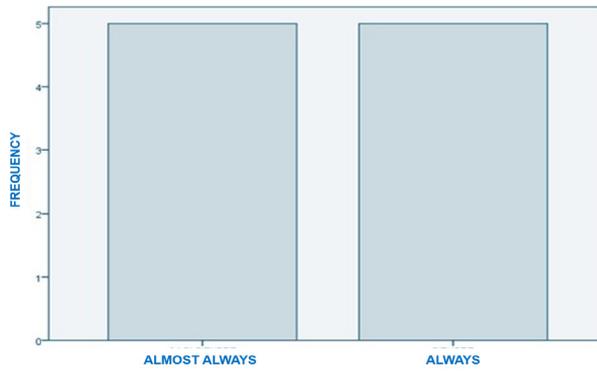
**Figure 4.** Reactive I am a skilled person in what I do. Self-esteem instrument (adapted by Meléndez, 2011). *Note:* Own elaboration (2020). SPSS version 22.



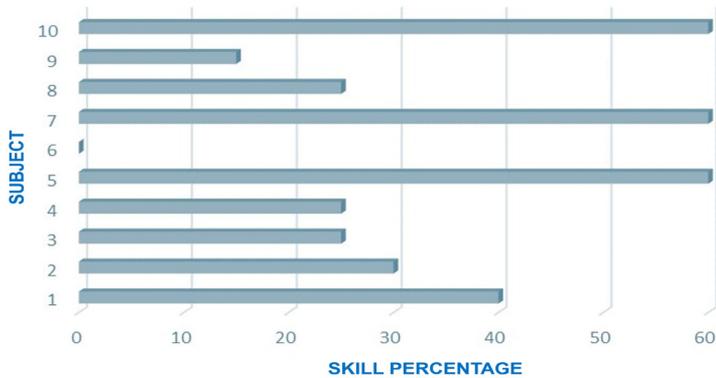
**Figura 5** Reactivo siento que los demás creen que no me salen bien las cosas. Instrumento Autoestima (adaptado por Meléndez, 2011). *Nota:* Elaboración propia (2020). SPSS versión 22.



**Figure 6** Reactive I like to face new challenges. Self-esteem instrument (adapted by Meléndez, 2011). *Note:* Own elaboration (2020). SPSS version 22.



**Figure 7** Reactive I know very well what my personal qualities are. Self-esteem instrument (Meléndez, 2011). *Note:* Own elaboration (2020). SPSS version 22.



**Figure 8** Concentrated result security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test. *Note:* Own elaboration (2019).



**Figure 9** Subject result 1. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 10** Subject result 2. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 11** Subject result 3. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 12** Subject result 4. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.

Subject 4 is a 35-year-old female, with a bachelor's degree, from the administrative area with 1 year's seniority, and it can be seen in Figure 12 that she has less than 25% certainty to decide. Although the academic level is a bachelor's degree and there is a level of personal maturity due to age and knowledge of the position due to seniority, it is shown that the participant does not have the security to decide.

Subject 5 is a 30-year-old female, with a bachelor's degree, from the operational area with 1 year's seniority with a 50% ability in security to decide (see Figure 13). It is determined that the level of education, personal maturity and knowledge of the position are not factors that determine the security to decide.

Subject 6 is a 22-year-old female, with a bachelor's degree, from the administrative area with 11 months of seniority. Figure 14 shows that despite academic degree, age and seniority are limiting when making decisions.

Subject 7 is a 40-year-old female from the operational area with 4 months' seniority, showing that despite the lack of knowledge of the position, her age and academic level are strengths that allow her to decide in 60% of the cases (see Figure 15).

Subject 8 is a 46-year-old female, secondary level, from the operational area with 6 years of seniority, showing that despite the maturity of age and the security conferred by the knowledge of the position, her level of schooling is a limitation in her confidence to decide, since she has only developed decision-making skills of 25% (see Figure 16).

Subject 9 is a 45-year-old female, primary level, support personnel with 5 years'

seniority, and despite age and knowledge in her position due to seniority, her level of schooling has only allowed her to develop her confidence in decision-making by 25% (see Figure 17).

Subject 10 is a 47-year-old male, preparatory level, support staff with 9 years of seniority, observing that his confidence to decide is 60%, however, his level of education, his age and his knowledge of the position by seniority give him greater security to decide (see Figure 18).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As has been proposed throughout this research, the objective is to determine the influence that self-esteem has on decision-making from the security and self-confidence of employees in all areas and hierarchical levels of AHMC. Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that the participants generally have a good concept of themselves and are willing to face new challenges, however, although they are aware of their strengths, they feel that others do not consider them capable of performing their activities effectively. They do not have self-confidence in the way they act and decide in the eyes of others, and this situation does not depend on the level of schooling or personal maturity acquired with age, nor on the confidence that mastery of the position provides through seniority.

Over time, the importance of decision-making in the competitiveness and profitability of organizations has been commented on, as well as the relevance of the strategic decisions of middle and upper managers in the achievement of strategic objectives, as mentioned by Rodríguez and



**Figure 13** Subject result 5. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 14** Subject result 6. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



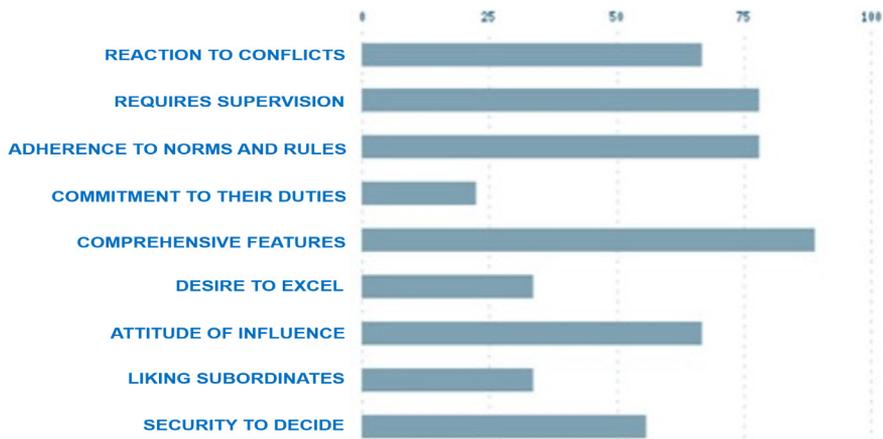
**Figure 15** Result subject 7. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 16** Result subject 8. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 17** Subject result 9. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.



**Figure 18** Subject result 10. Security to decide in everyday situations. PSICOTEST (2018). CIBAIN personality test.

Pedrajas (2009) (cited in Rodríguez, 2014), however, it is important to consider that operational positions are those that are in direct contact with the customer on a daily basis, making decisions that can impact the level of service, savings, waste, etc., so their decisions are of vital importance for the profitability of organizations.

It is interesting to elucidate whether middle and senior management positions that have the academic profile and the skills required according to the job profile, despite their knowledge, do not have the security to decide, and if in general in organizations one of the main objectives of such positions is decision-making. So, there is a gap in the selection of personnel who have the security to decide, in addition to the knowledge and technical skills.

With the result obtained from this research, it is concluded that in order for AHMC to continue to be competitive and achieve the required profitability, it is necessary to complement in the description of each position in the organization the level of security and confidence as part of the skills of the position, as well as the implementation of a continuous training program in self-esteem and self-confidence. This research can be applied to SMEs in any line of business since we realize that technical competence and work experience do not ensure assertive decision-making.

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