Determinant Factors for the Sustainability of SMEs in the Northern Mexican Restaurant Sector: A Documentary Perspective.

Evelin Anahí Torres-Torres; Alfonso López-Lira Arjona; César Eduardo Perales Martínez
Ciencias económico y Administrativo
Facultad de Contaduría Pública y Administración
Av. Universidad s/n Cd. Universidad, San Nicolás de los Garza, Nuevo León, México.
evelintorres1@hotmail.com; alfonso.lopezlr@uanl.edu.mx; cesareduardoperales@hotmail.com

Abstract

Small and medium-sized companies need to establish strategies that increase the life expectancy of companies and at the same time promote innovation and allow access to new opportunities. Therefore; It seeks to identify the factors that contribute to the sustainability of SMEs in the restaurant sector through a documentary research approach that allows the creation of a measurement instrument that will serve to collect data and identify the relevant factors that make up the sustainability of SMEs; Therefore, the most important findings of the present investigation fall on the measurement instrument, which is made up of six variables; one independent (SME sustainability) and five dependents; which are measured through various dimensions and that together make up the research model that in the future will allow to continue developing the research with the aim of increasing the scope of the research so that information can be collected from SMEs in the northern restaurant sector of Mexico and later the data will be analyzed by means of a correlation analysis and other inferential statistical methods that will allow to identify the existing relationship between the study variables.

Keywords
Sustainability, SMEs, survival.

1. Introduction
In Mexico, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 72 per cent of the country's formal employment and the contribution of these enterprises is approximately 58 per cent of the Mexican economy's gross domestic product (GDP), However, the situation of SME emerging economies such as Mexico is worrisome since about 80% of these companies usually end up in bankruptcy. So is necessary to know why SMEs often have the same destination. Therefore, it is an obvious problem to solve since it is necessary to identify the causes of the lack of sustainability in SMEs (CAINTRA, 2017).

Researching the sustainability of small businesses helps to eliminate the uncertainty that 80% of SMEs tend to close their doors in such a short period of time. Therefore, it is important to identify the factors that determine the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises, in addition to theoretically contributing to the advancement of the topic and its definition in the administrative field, generating more information on sustainability and small businesses.

In addition, in the economic environment involving SMEs it is necessary to create new strategies and mechanisms that support the private initiative segment in order to boost them to stay in the market therefore, a strategy is needed that facilitates and extends the life expectancy of companies while encouraging innovation and allowing access to new business opportunities contributing in this way to the growth of small industries in the state (INADEM, 2018).

1.1 Objectives
Develop a measurement tool to identify the factors contributing to the sustainability of SMEs in the restaurant sector.

2. Literature Review

SME sustainability has been studied for several years in different fields, especially in the field of ecology or the environment, however the term sustainability can also be investigated in administrative terms since the goal of sustainability within the administrations is to maintain, balance, or survive in turbulent environments so that authors like Bombiak (2020), Sharma, Bhagwat, & Dangayach, (2005), Elkington (1994), Koontz & O'Donnell, (2014), Galarza, Gómez, & Gonzalez (2002), Slaper & Hall (2011), Brundtland (1987), Djordjevic & Cotton (2011), Olaya (2006), Rolstadas (1998), Delmar, Davidsson, & Gartner (2003),among others, have taken sustainability as the object of study in order to contribute to the permanence, success, or development of companies.

In addition, it should be mentioned that sustainability is an important aspect in all fields of study and despite the literary existence of sustainability models at the social level, understanding of sustainable business models and how sustainable development is operationalized in enterprises is weak. In management, sustainability is a very important factor in measuring performance, as it demonstrates the viability of the business to maintain and develop it over time (Sharma, Bhagwat, & Dangayach, 2005).

Audretsch y Mahmood (1994), y Audretsch (1991) have researched business demographics in the United States where they analyzed the probability of business survival and concluded that innovation, economies of scale, concentration and high technology are the relevant variables that determine the survival of companies. In addition, other research on SME sustainability has found that various authors theoretically justify the construct as well as the relationship between risk management, the use of ICT, adaptive capacity, quality in service and knowledge management.

Finally, the definition used for particular purposes of this research is a definition proposed by the author, which mentions that SME sustainability is a management process that is carried out to maintain the organizational profitability of a company with the aim of continuing to work in situations of lack allowing to maintain success, innovation and business development. In addition, it should be mentioned that the construct will be evaluated by means of profitability.

2.1 Risk management and sustainability

The authors Brustbauer (2014), Naldi, Nordqvist, Sjoberg, & Wiklund, (2007), Domańska-Szaruga (2020), Nunes y Serrasqueiro (2012), Jankensgård (2019), Smith (1998) have investigated risk management in different contexts and situations, However, all of the authors cited agree that risk management is useful in ensuring that companies continue to work and provide their services since risk management allows them to take advantage of adversities. Then, according to the authors already mentioned, risk management influences the sustainability of companies, therefore it was taken as one of the variables that make up the study.

The definition that will be taken into account for the construct is the one proposed by COSO (2013) that mentions that risk management is the identification of risks and opportunities that affect the creation or preservation of the value of an organization. Additionally, it will be evaluated through two dimensions; monitoring and identification.

2.2 Use of ICT and sustainability

The use of ICT has been investigated by authors such as Gargallo-Castel & Pérez-Sanz, (2009), Chege, Wang, & Suntu (2019), Giarratana & Torrisi (2010), Doms, Dunne, & Roberts (1995), among others. The aforementioned authors indicate that the use of ICT in companies and especially in SMEs is a resource that contributes in the company to create a reduction in time and even costs, however it is also mentioned that this depends on the use that is Give them either the training that the employees have on this type of tools, thereby allowing them to enhance the activities of the companies and thus allow them to continue working in the market in a competitive manner.

For the construct use of ICT, the definition of Gargallo-Castel and Pérez-Sanz (2009) was taken, adding some adaptations of the original definition of the authors so that the definition is as follows: it is the use of the technologies of information and communication in order to manage and expand opportunities for expansion, service improvement, adaptation and response to demand, as well as improving relationships with customers and suppliers to achieve improvements in the competitive position of the market. For the evaluation of the variable, two dimensions will be taken; one focused on hardware and the second focused on software.

2.3 Adaptability and sustainability

Adaptive capacity is defined as the ability to consciously or unconsciously change to adapt to different circumstances, for example changes in the environment. And the variable will be evaluated by only one dimension that is resilience (Busquets, Rodon, & Wareham, 2009).

Likewise, adaptability and sustainability have been studied by Kihara, Bwisa, & Kihoro (2016), Eikelenboom & De Jong (2019), Fansuri (2019), Zhou & Li (2010), Teece, Pisano y Shuen (1997) among others to investigate the benefits that have been achieved thanks to the adaptability of companies, such as adaptation allows small companies to face the dynamic environments in which they live, as well as to establish new strategies and continue to be successful in the business.

2.4 Quality of service and sustainability

Dale, Van der Wile, & Van Iwaarden (2007) they mention that the quality of the service is based on the fulfillment of the requirements and the specifications that satisfy and delight the client. And in the literature it is possible to specify that there are four important dimensions to take into account when measuring the construct, which are reliability, tangibility, responsibility and trust.

As regards the specific case of service companies, one of the attributes that fundamentally contributes to success or survival in the long term is the opinion of customers about the service they receive. The essence of service organizations is the opinion that customers have of them, and they will only have a favorable opinion of the company, if it satisfies all their needs and expectations. According to the existing literature, higher customer satisfaction leads to higher levels of customer loyalty and repeat purchase intentions and, ultimately, better business performance which allows continued profitability and business success (Anderson, Fornell, & Rust, 1977) (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994) (Fornell, 1992) (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000); (Stefanovic, Prokic, & Rankovic, 2010) (Rose, Kumar, & Li yen, 2006) (Zhao & Di Benedetto, 2013).

2.5 Knowledge management and sustainability

Alavy y Leidener (2001) define knowledge management as that which refers to the identification and use of collective knowledge in an organization to help the organization compete, within the framework of three basic processes of creation, storage and retrieval, transfer and application of knowledge. Therefore; These last three basic processes will be those that will allow to evaluate the amplitude of the variable.

The relationship between sustainability and knowledge management has been investigated by several authors who agree on the argument that in the current global competitive landscape, knowledge and information are key determinants of the profitability and survival of companies, to a greater extent that traditional productive factors such as land, capital or labor may be, for which authors such as (Hall, 1993) (Grant, 1996) (Zahra, 1999) (Dean & Kretschmer, 2007) have investigated that knowledge management influences the sustainability of companies. In addition, Madhok and Osegowitsh add that to achieve success in dynamic environments, the acquisition of new knowledge should be considered (Madhok & Osegowitsh, 2000).

3. Methods

The scope that is proposed for the investigation is of the documentary type; That is, information is collected through books, articles and research previously carried out by other authors, it is later classified and ordered appropriately according to the need of the research and the criteria of the researcher based on the objectives of the research (Hernández-Sampieri, Fernández-Collado, & Basptista-Lucio, 2014).

4. Data Collection

To prepare the survey, the literature was investigated and the items that allow measuring each of the dimensions that correspond to each of the variables that make up the research model were selected (see figure 1. Research model). It is worth mentioning that the items in each of the sections were previously used in other investigations with situations or scenarios similar to the one for this investigation.
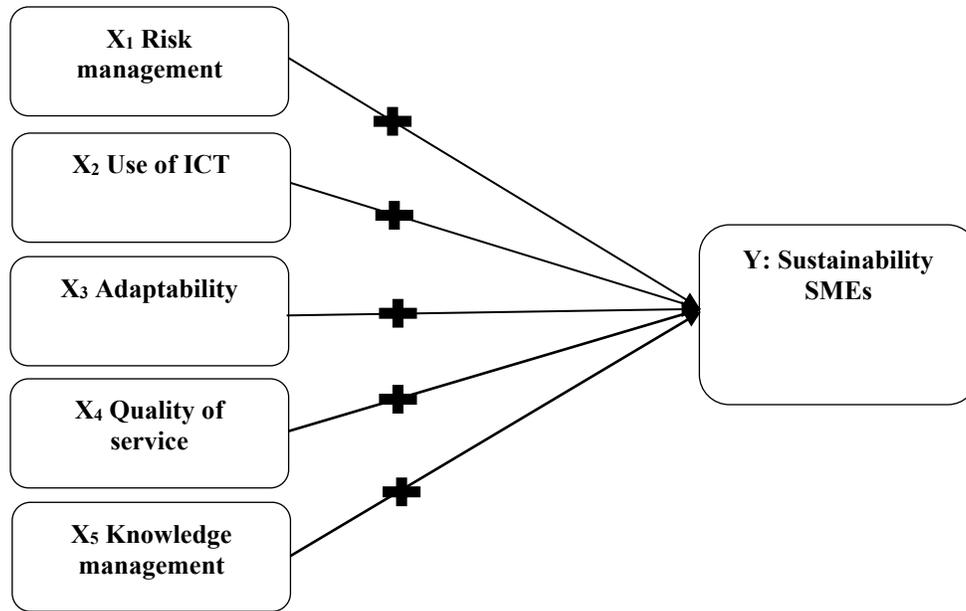
Figure 1. Research model

In table 1, elaboration of the survey, it can be seen that for the dependent variable a single dimension is used which is intended to be evaluated with 10 elements, it is worth mentioning that the decision to take the 10 elements depends on the recommendations of the experts. For the risk management variable, two dimensions are used, which will be evaluated with three and four elements respectively. Likewise, for the ICT use variable, two dimensions will also be used, however, the number of elements is 13 for the first dimension, which is titled hardware; while for the second dimension entitled software only three elements will be used. While for the evaluation of the adaptive capacity variable, it will be measured by a single dimension, which will be evaluated with nine items that were collected from Fatoki (2018), y Connor & Davidson (2003).

On the other hand, for the evaluation of the fourth independent variable, it will be measured by four dimensions which will be evaluated by two elements each, collecting a total of eight items together. And, finally, for the knowledge management variable, three dimensions will be used to evaluate the breadth of the construct, which will be made up of three, five and seven elements each.

Table 1 Elaboration of the survey

Variable	Dimensions	Items to evaluate the dimension	Authors
Y: Sustainability	Profitability	10 elements	(Forest & Fred, 2003) (Duygulu, Ozeren, Işıldar, & Appolloni, 2016)
X1: Risk management	Monitoring	3 elements	(Mustapha & Mustapah, 2020) ISO31000
	Identification	4 elements	
X2: Use of ICT	Hardware	13 elements	(Ruíz-Molina, Gil-Saura, & Berenguer-Contrí, 2014)
	Software	3 elements	
X3: Adaptability	Resiliencie	9 elements	(Connor & Davidson, 2003) (Fatoki, 2018)
X4: Quality in the service	Reliability	2 elements	(Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985)
	Tangibility	2 elements	

	Responsability	2 elements	
	Trust	2 elements	
X5: Knowledge management	Creation of knowledge	3 elements	(García-Fernández, 2015)
	Knowledge storage and transfer	5 elements	
	Knowledge application	7 elements	

Source: self-made

It is important to add that it was decided to choose the items used by the authors cited in the previous table due to the validity that each one reports in their respective publications; being Cronbach's alpha values acceptable and therefore indicates the reliability of the content. In addition, the quality of the articles shared by the different items was also taken into account, each of them being internationally recognized journals. Subsequently, the content of the survey is validated with highly trained personnel such as experts on the subject who evaluated the items on a scale of one to four, where one was irrelevant and four very relevant.

5. Results and Discussion

Once the survey was validated by the experts, it was suggested to make changes in the wording of the questions and eliminate those questions that were irrelevant and that did not measure what the construct intended to evaluate; leaving the instrument with a total of 46 questions, 19 questions being eliminated from the initial version of the survey. In addition, six questions are added referring to company data and data from who answered the survey (See *table 2. Measurement instrument*)

Table 2. Measurment instrument

Details of who responds to the survey
1. Age _____
2. Sex : (   ) Male () Female
3. Schooling
(   ) Primary
(   ) Secondary
(   ) High School
(   ) Bachelor's degree or Engineering
(   ) Postgraduate

General information about the company
1. Year of foundation of the company: _____
2. City where the company is located: _____
3. Number of employees: _____

0 to 20%	21 to 40%	41 to 60%	61-80%	81-100%
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

No.	items	0 to 20 %	21 to 40 %	41 to 60 %	61 to 80 %	81 to 100 %
1	Compared to 2020, how much sales have increased in 2021	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2	Compared to 2019, how much sales have increased in 2020	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3	Compared to 2018, how much sales have increased in 2019	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
4	Compared to 2020, how much sales have decreased in 2021	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
5	Compared to 2019, how much sales have decreased in 2020	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
6	Compared to 2018, how much sales have decreased in 2019	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Any	Little	Something	Enough	Much
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

No.	In the last year	Any	Little	Something	Enough	Much
7	How much have customers complained about late service i.e. excessive waiting time	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
8	How much have customers complained about poor service	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
9	How much new tools and equipment have been acquired to provide better service	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
10	How much training has been carried out for employees	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
11	How much has been used bank terminal in business to process card payments	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
12	To what extent business objectives tend to lean towards profit generation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
13	How long have the prices of the products offered	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
14	How far have the financial objectives of the business been achieved?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
15	How much investment is planned for future business innovation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
16	To what extent does it contemplate identifying solutions to address future business problems	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
17	To what extent is it necessary for you to change your business objectives, whether due to internal or external causes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
18	How well do you keep informed about damaged equipment (for example, phones, computers, machinery, food, etc.) that could affect the business in any way	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
19	How much do you keep informed about the laws, the price of the dollar, contracts to expire, customer opinions, etc. that in some way may affect the business	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
20	To what extent cell phone communications are carried out	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

21	To what extent desktop computer is used	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
22	To what extent are tablets used in the business	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
23	To what extent laptops are used	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
24	To what extent accounting software is used	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
25	To what extent communication software is used	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
26	To what extent are digital security systems used? (antivirus, anti-spam, anti-spyware, firewalls, etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
27	To what extent electronic invoicing is used	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
28	How well does the company adapt to changes in the environment	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
29	To what extent do I deal with the problems that affect the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
30	To what extent do I try to meet the objectives, even if the chances of achieving it are low.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
31	To what extent is accepted when not met the objectives and seek solutions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
32	To what extent do I see challenges as an opportunity to grow the business	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
33	To what extent do I try to meet my business goals despite adversity?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
34	How much customer complaints and suggestions have been taken into account	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
35	To what extent employee knowledge is harnessed to improve the business	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
36	To what extent do I have the practice of taking customer feedback through surveys	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
37	To what extent do I have the practice of conducting market research	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
38	To what extent employees tend to be jealous of their own knowledge as a source of power *	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
39	To what extent employees tend to deny sharing their knowledge with other employees	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
40	How much staff turnover impacts the loss of knowledge or skills important to the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
41	To what extent are employee proposals collected for the improvement of the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
42	How much care is taken that the important information about the business is shared by all employees of the business	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

43	To what extent does the company usually solve problems through teamwork	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
44	To what extent does the organization adopt customer actions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
45	To what extent actions are taken to inform all employees about company news	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
46	To what extent the employees of the organization help to redefine the strategies of the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Source: self-made

In the Table 2. Measurement instrument shows all the items of the questionnaire and the measurement scale that will be used to evaluate each of the items; however, the number of items corresponding to each construct and dimension is presented in table 3. Distribution of items.

Table 3. Distribution of ítems

Variable	Dimensions	Items to evaluate the dimension
Y: Sustainability	Profitability	10 elementos (1,2,3,4,5,6,12,13,14,15)
X1: Risk management	Monitoring	2 elementos (16 y 17)
	Identification	2 elementos (18 y 19)
X2: Use of ICT	Hardware	5 elementos (11,20,21,22,23)
	Software	4 elementos (24,25,26,27)
X3: Adaptability	Resiliencie	6 elementos (28,29,30,31,32,33)
X4: Quality in the service	Reliability	2 elementos (7 y 8)
	Tangibility	1 elementos (9)
	Responsability	1 elementos (10)
	Trust	1 elementos (34)
X5: Knowledge management	Creation of knowledge	3 elementos (35,36,37)
	Knowledge storage and transfer	5 elementos (38,39,40,41,42)
	Knowledge application	4 elementos (43,44,45,46)

Source: self-made

Definitely, it is necessary to continue developing the research and expand its scope so that the survey is applied to decision makers or managers of restaurants in northern Mexico and it is possible to collect data that allow analyzing them and identifying the correlation that exists between the independent variables of the model and the dependent variable in order to quantitatively identify whether the proposed factors are indeed potentializing the sustainability of SMEs.

6. Conclusion

Everything that has been proposed so far has allowed the development of a measurement instrument that allows evaluating the sustainability of SMEs in order to identify if the factors proposed in the research model contribute to the preservation of SMEs and subsequently generate strategies that promote to the growth of companies in the restaurant sector, reducing the number of companies that end up bankrupt.

Even if it were of interest to the reader; The research proposed in this article allows the subject to be approached from the general perspective of SMEs in the service sector. Although, of course, it would require making some adjustments to the measurement instrument and it could be used in research focused on companies in the service sector in general without focusing solely on the restaurant area.

Unquestionably, the future work of the research lies in the fact that once the data has been collected, it will be analyzed by means of a correlation analysis to identify the relationship between the variables, therefore, a multiple linear regression analysis will be used to identify how it is relate the variables of risk management, use of ICT, adaptability, quality of service and knowledge management with the sustainability variable, so the statistical program SPSS Statistics 25 will be used to identify the value of r2 and the value Cronbach's Alpha (Duygulu, Ozeren, Işıldar, & Appolloni, 2016) (Anggadwita & Mustafid, 2014) (Ghobakhloo, Arias-Aranda, & Benitez-Amado, 2011).

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Biographies

Evelin Anahí Torres Torres is a full time student in the Management Oriented Philosophy Doctorate at UANL faculty working on firm's business sustainability projects. She got her MBA from the Instituto Nacional de Mexico en Celaya and got B.S. in Business Management from Instituto Tecnológico Nacional de México en Linares.

Alfonso López-Lira Arjona is responsible for strategic relations among FEMSA COMERCIO and its equity-owned digital business startups. He's head of program contents, faculty and alumni pertaining the Master in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program at UANL Business School. He´s a Graduate School Professor of Human Capital, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. As a researcher, conduct studies on firm's business sustainability through knowledge management and innovation, as well as gender-based entrepreneurship in emerging economies. He is also a core member of various consultant firms such as Core Value Consultores, ALFRA Lean Advisors and Blinks Institute where he dedicates to the continuous improvement of projects (Lean Manufacturing), quality and productivity certifications (ISO 9000) as well as management training programs for SMEs.

César Eduardo Perales Martínez is a PhD student at Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial y Posgrado de FACPyA, He earned B.S. in Computer Science from Instituto Tecnológico de Linares, and M.B.A. from Instituto Tecnológico de Celaya, México.