

## Pequeños Negocios Familiares (PNF) Sustentables y Competitivos. Una Aproximación Cualitativa a PNFs de Actividad de Servicio Automotriz en Ciudad Juárez, México

*(Sustainable and Competitive Small Familiar Businesses (SFB). A Qualitative Approach to SFBs from Automotive Service Activity in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico)*

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Recibido: 01/04/19

Aceptado: 16/12/19

### RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la realidad que experimentan los Pequeños Negocios Familiares (PNF), determinando el enfoque de sustentabilidad en el proceso de toma de decisiones del propietario del PNF en relación con su tipo de visión. Con esta finalidad, fue realizada una revisión de literatura basada en información y datos obtenidos de diversas investigaciones realizadas. Se utilizó un método cualitativo por medio de 10 entrevistas a profundidad a propietarios de PNFs en Ciudad Juárez, México. Los resultados muestran un deseo por parte de la PNF de ser competitiva en aras de ser sustentable. Esta investigación es relevante debido a que permitió identificar los factores de sustentabilidad y competitividad a través de un modelo explicativo para la PEF que le ayudará a desarrollar un adecuado proceso de toma de decisiones que le permita ser exitosa a través del tiempo.

**Palabras claves:** pequeño negocio; negocio familiar; sustentabilidad; competitividad; México.

### ABSTRACT

*This paper analyzes the experienced reality by Small Familiar Businesses (SFB), aiming to determine the sustainable focus in the SFB owner's decision-making process in relation to their type of vision. For this purpose, a literature review was conducted based on information obtained from different researches and data. A qualitative method was conducted through 10 in-depth interviews from SFB owners in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Findings show a will in SFBs to be competitive in order to be sustainable. The study's research is relevant because it made possible to identify the sustainability and competitiveness factors through an explicative model for the SFB that may help them to develop an adequate decision-making process in order to achieve their success through time.*

**Keywords:** small business, familiar business, sustainability, competitiveness, Mexico.

**JEL Classification:** M10

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## I. INTRODUCCIÓN.

Existing data about the Small Familiar Business (SFB) context is relatively scarce in comparison with other studied contexts in business activity. In that sense, literature should not only be focused in dilemmas related to just familiar business in general terms; instead, it should emerge as an associated element to that specific kind of business context and its own management characteristics, where the business owner could cause survival or failure of the SFB (Presas, Guía, & Muñoz, 2014; Tuntrabundit & Tuntrabundit, 2012).

However, one of the main reasons that affect SFBs is the fact that national and international markets demand them everyday a major amount of integrity. This is in a bid to achieve sustainability according to all actual changing conditions. To accomplish that, it implies to develop businesses with the ability to achieve and interiorize knowledge that allow them to become competitive. In other words, is a priority to “use organizational learning processes as a fundamental strategy to acquire knowledge and to develop competitive advantages that will help their sustainability at medium and long terms” (Perez & Cortes, 2007, p. 259).

From a competitiveness achievement focus, sustainability in the SFB has become a research topic nowadays. One of the main reasons is provided by Badiru (2010, p. 30):

[...] The concept of sustainability applies to all aspects of functional and operational requirements, embracing both technical and managerial needs. Sustainability requires methodological, scientific and analytical rigor to make it effective for managing human activities and resources.

And he also highlights the following:

[...] Sustainability imparts value on any organizational process and product. Even though the initial investment and commitment to sustainability may seem discouraging, sustainability can reduce long-term cost, increase productivity and promote achievement of global standards (2010, p. 32).

As per the expressed by Badiru, the importance of sustainability for SFBs then should be conceived essential in order to lead to quality generation. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) define quality as the satisfaction degree perceived by the customer from the product and/or service provided. Therefore, sustainability will be transformed into competitiveness, based on three main poles: 1) the optimization of all resources held by the business, such as material, human, and financial; 2) the efficient achievement of operational objectives planned for short and, above all, long term, such as sales, costs, profits and revenues; and 3) the effectiveness in the accomplishment of all intern processes, such as

customer service, production, distribution, among others.

Frequently, SFBs owners are not willing to take actions based on a sustainable focus decision-making process, because they do not believe in its value or do not trust its effectiveness as a result of its novelty or divergence from the traditional decision-making way (Epstein & Widener, 2010). Furthermore, the SFB owner do not will to take this kind of actions due to the idea where the business' profits belongs to him; therefore, he can use them at his discretion. Then, all proposed actions contrary to that idea produce resistance and unconformity.

By doing so, they arbitrarily dispose all the necessary resources for the future of their business. Resources needed for confronting turbulences, or just to prevent its future commercial activities from having lack of resources that will impede its subsistence as time progresses. “The goal of every business is profit maximization, but when there is a separation between ownership and control monitoring, costs arise” (San Martín, Duran & Lorenzo, 2012, p. 13).

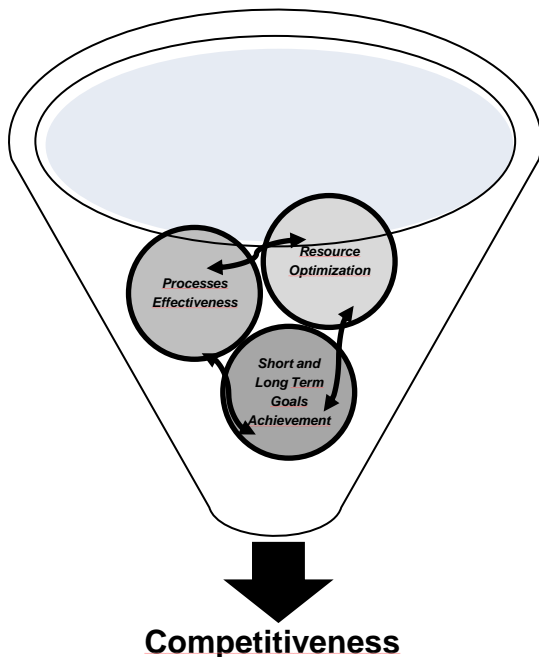
Research focused on the directive capabilities of the SFB owners, in matters of sustainability, helps to determine how is going to convert itself as a recurring variable; because the business' direction and all major decisions do rest on him (Gomez, 2008). If the SFB owner could not be able to manage difficulties and problems through an adequate decision-making, the business will then get into declining conditions (Tuntrabundit & Tuntrabundit, 2012). Therefore, these decisions should mainly observe all those external factors to the SFB, such as market changes, competitors, technology, sector dynamism, taxes, among others. This could motivate to define and develop a sustainable focus that envisions on competitiveness and stability through time (Betancourt, Gomez & Lopez, 2011).

In addition to the above mentioned, “...entrepreneurs, as new social, sustainable, political, ethical, and civil development actors, have gain great importance in societies, due to their increasing decision power in the last few years (Ruiz A., Ruiz E. & Ruiz M., 2014). That sustainable focus decision-making must consider, aside to its own interests (profits to earn, cost effectiveness to achieve, wealth to amass, status to obtain, economic solvency to generate, among others), all impacts that decision-making will provoke in the business. These impacts could appear in three ways: 1) environmental, which include pollution, residual water mistreatment, non-recycling; 2) economic, such as decapitalization, acquisition of cheap low-quality raw material, unnecessary cost reduction; and 3) social, such as lack of competitiveness, employee firing, discredit. The study of Epstein and Widener (2010) states that if those impacts are considered and prevented, it will be easier for the SFB to reach its competitiveness.

The prevention of those impacts has been conceptualized as the application of sustainability principles, addressed to, in Beder (1997) words, "...that development which will satisfy all present needs without compromising the future generations possibility to satisfy their own needs." Those principles, being part of the SFB owner decision-making, will minimize all impacts on the social, economic, and environmental resources used for its development to be competitive (Enriques & Richardson, 2004).

Likewise, a sustainability focus has turned into one of the main needs for SFBs in order to be competitive, because it prevents the lack of necessary resources needed by the business to confront future turbulences or compromise those required resources for its future generation to maintain the business and commercial activities through time. Therefore, it is the conceptual framework that holds and provides all the success factors by articulating the sustainability philosophy into an accessible language for SFBs (Enriques & Richardson, 2004). Success factors include the optimal usage of resources, the efficient achievement of organizational goals in short and long terms, and the effectiveness of its internal processes (Figure 1). Furthermore, these success factors will serve as guidance to SFB owners to direct their businesses towards sustainability and to become competitive.

**Figure 1. Between a Sustainability Focus and Competitiveness**



Source: Own elaboration based in Enriques & Richardson, 2004.

It was suggested that the SFB can produce a competitive advantage that is not based on the adopted strategies, but on the nature of its resources and capabilities generated from the interaction between family and business (Presas, *et. al.*, 2014). So, it could be inferred that such sustainability must not only emerge from the study of all internal and external factors for decision-making, but also from the existing familiar relationships between its members. Thus, this will be reflected in the business' management.

Based on the focus of the sustainable focus, the optimal exploitation of all resources owned by the SFB will provide it with enough and efficient means that will allow the achievement of operational goals, designed to be accomplished in the short and long run. This, however, must be in addition to the effectiveness of all internal processes. They will serve as a direction for the SFB owners towards attaining sustainability and competitiveness.

Mexico's SFB problematic reside on the fact that most of these businesses are auto-employment enterprises with a precarious competitiveness nature, due to their lack of sustainability. Despite the importance that SFBs represent to its national economy, little has been done to create awareness among these businesses owners to take pertinent actions to avoid, as much as possible, the loss of necessary resources needed for their commercial activities. Also, in case that the loss could not be avoided, it will help them to find better ways to solve the problem in an effective and efficient manner. That will prevent the SFB stagnation and disappearance. In other words, it will help them to reach a desirable sustainability level to be competitive.

## II. SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THE SMALL FAMILIAR BUSINESS. A LITERATURE REVIEW

Competitiveness could be understood "...as that resultant from an ensemble of innovations and technological processes in enterprises, interacting inside a determinate context, linked to all technical and organizational transformation" (Bianco, 2007, p. 11). It produces substantial advantages to confront all other competitors to penetrate the same consuming market. According to Millan and Marin (2014, p. 1056):

[...] Globalization is making markets to be increasingly competitive, and consumers to be more demanding in terms of quality in products and services. Because of it, managers in charge of enterprises must be always in advance-guard of information and proceedings to achieve market competitiveness.

The conforming aspects of organizational knowledge manifest the important role of SFBs in this new conceptualization of the actual business contexts. This happens due to their attributes, such as flexibility and innovative capability, observed as a priority and essential to be competitive in the market (La Rovere & Hasenclever, 2010). Idea that could be understood

because SFBs constitute the predominant group of businesses that significantly contribute to job creation, income generation, among others; besides, and it satisfies needs in certain markets which are not attractive to the grand business figure (Hernani & Hamann, 2013).

As stated by La Rovere and Hasenclever (2010), debates about the SFBs innovative capability emerge from the fact that they are different from other type of businesses, because their capability is not easily acquired as a resultant of their tacit, accumulative, and localized character in relation to their technical and scientific knowledge. In other words, it is necessary for the SFB to implement organizational learning as a fundamental strategy to acquire knowledge towards a sustainability focus, in order to develop competitive advantages in medium and long terms (Perez & Cortes, 2007).

Research about the competence of the SFB was observed, as stated by Saldivar, Garcia Valenciana and Roa (2012, p. 1152), from two focuses:

1. From an external focus, referring to the macro-economic environment. Here, these businesses have low inherence in markets due to their low capability of competitive reaction, due to their scarcity of resources. In that sense, La Rovere and Hasenclever (2010, p. 4) assess that "...grand enterprises are the ones who count with more resources to enter into the competitiveness development field, in contrast with familiar enterprises that depends on external groups in order to obtain necessary resources".
2. From an internal focus, which encompass all derived problems from their own management within the specific economic sector where they interact.

SFBs, then, must analyze both focuses in respect to their capability to understand and assimilate them. This would help them to find an answer to those external and internal worlds, that will disembogue in a *must have* competitive management (Cardona & Gutierrez, 2010). Furthermore, that capability to generate a sustainability focus in the SFB before those changing scenarios becomes part of that essential answer, especially if it wants to successfully confront competitors.

Competitiveness in the SFB is directly related to the generated sustainability focus as an answer to those changing scenarios. A sustainability focus is developed when it emerges as a capability to recognize and account realities from its environmental, economic, and social impacts, and afterwards is incorporated into its strategic planning (Aras & Crowther, 2009). To Hernani and Hamann (2013, p. 292), "...the competitive pillars, according to enterprises sustainability, are the social, environmental and economic factors".

Porter and Kramer (2006) mention that all businesses must adopt strategies directed towards a sustainable focus development, that will adapt to a reality full of challenges and opportunities to generate competitiveness, showing the fact where those two concepts in the SFB are directly linked. They both conform a symbiotic relation that suggests the idea of not conceiving one without the other. Sustainability in a business, as stated by Hernani and Hamann (2013, p. 294), is "...founded in the value creation for the entrepreneur through activities that promote the available resources usage and exploitation into a focus of economic development, directed towards competitiveness".

It is important to determine if SFB owners are aware of such situation, because when spoken about an SFB, it evokes an image of un-professional structures, obsolete management processes, and small non-efficient businesses (Monteferrante, 2006). Nevertheless, "...familiar enterprise is the dominant entrepreneurial figure in the economic structure of most of occidental countries" (Millan & Marin, 2014, p. 1056). Thus, its importance is justified.

SFB owners, due to their authoritarian leadership tendency, do not develop a capability to understand and assimilate the urgency to generate a sustainability focus, which inhibits the opportunity to be competitive (Millan & Marin, 2014; Giovaninni, 2010). In addition, such authoritarianism could be observed when the owner holds for himself, or his family, all administrative positions and decision-making, denying the possibility to perform those activities to any external person (Giovaninni, 2010).

Through this way, a non-sustainable decision-making emerges and is centered on the SFB owner or in his family members. being the only ones who manage the business. Also, they lose every possibility to acquire new innovative ideas from someone outside the family, that will direct the business to be sustainable and competitive. Thus, such problematic requires a continuous learning in terms of a sustainability focus in order to develop new competitive management and leadership forms for the SFB (Lungu, Caraiani & Descalu, 2013).

According to Saldivar *et al.* (2012, p. 1152), "...in 97% of the cases, (business) failure is due to the owner's deficient management. The success of an enterprise is strongly conditioned by the knowledge of its owner". Therefore, the owner's decision-making must direct him to define a renewal and change type of management vision, substituting the traditional type of management vision, assuring wellbeing and stability to the family through time. Also, it turns the SFB to become sustainable and competitive at the same time (Betancourt *et al.*, 2011).

Sometimes, SFB owners make arbitrary decision-making seeking for a short-term benefit, product of a traditional management vision, losing therefore the long-term benefit of the renewal and

change management vision. That will infringe a negative impact to the SFB, impeding it from being sustainable and competitive. As an example, Bianco (2007, p. 19-20) mentions the following situation:

[...] Additional ways to obtain spurious competitive advantages are related to environmental degradation, the exploitation of subsidized credit lines, the practice of price discrimination policies to obtain profit in local markets thanks to high protection or undetermined delivery of subsidies to inefficient producers. In all those cases, non-sustainability in them is more than clear, being by the depletion of natural or financial resources in order to maintain such policies.

Per the above mentioned, while SFBs are being held hostages of a competitive strategy based on a short-term traditional management vision that will keep them isolated from other kind of businesses, they will confront several difficulties to adapt to those continuous, and more frequent, changes taking place at local and global markets, not only discovering the fact where their owners' competences frequently do not adjust to all the needs imposed by those markets; in most cases, they turn themselves into an obstacle for competitiveness (Medina, Armenteros, Guerrero & Barquero, 2012; La Rovere & Hansecler (2010).

### III. THE SFB IN THE MEXICO CONTEXT

Small Familiar Businesses, as stated by Anaya (2012, p. 30), "...strongly contribute to wealth, employment, and new job creation in most of the countries. Their future expectative seem optimistic, because they will keep playing their important key role in economies, due to their flexibility, decision-making ability, and search for quality". In contrast, SFBs almost always confront several difficulties form diverse natures, that outcome as failed positioning attempts into the commercial market context, and, consequently, failing to improve society's quality of life (Jimenez, Muñoz & Fuentes, 2015).

Therefore, the relation between sustainability and competitiveness in SFBs is very justified transcendental topic in terms of relevance and importance for the economy of nations. In Mexico, this situation reflects no difference, because "...they constitute, as in any country, the predominant group of enterprises and in some cases, they surpass 90%" (Hernani & Hamann, 2013, p. 293). "In Mexico, a majority of firms, as in most developing countries, are considered family businesses" (San Martín *et. al.*, 2012, p. 12).

In Mexico, familiar small and medium businesses constitute the 97% of all enterprises. They generate 78.9% percent of the population's employment opportunities, and from that 97%, 82% are SFBs. These statistics were generated by Mexico's National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI, 2016). The above mentioned could be interpreted as a clear indicator of these SFBs importance. Subsequently, it justifies at the same time

the necessity to consider them as what they really are: the base of the Mexican economy.

Nine of each SFBs are instruments of auto-employment for Mexico's population (INEGI, 2016). According to Macias (2008), these enterprises only generate 3, 775 dollars a month per occupied person. This is in comparison to the grand enterprise that generates 21, 469 dollars, being 5.7 times more. Therefore, the SFBs show very un-encouraging results.

According to Cardozo, Velazquez and Rodriguez (2012), another remarkable data about SFBs actual situation is that one of every hundred of these businesses created, ninety of them will not reach the two-year mark, being an extreme mortality index. This fact is also explained by the existing high rotation rate in established businesses. Most of this type of established businesses die and disappear in less than two years, but at the same time a large quantity of new businesses is being created and established. To Diaz, Corona and Mayett (2012), only two of every ten of these businesses resist all negative effects derived from internal and external crisis, while the rest disembody in business closure.

The lack of sustainability and competitiveness in Mexico's SFBs detonate their high mortality rate. Thus, this became more acute with the economic opening that begun in 1982. According to Molina, Armenteros, Medina, Barquero and Espinoza (2011), the Mexican market is no longer protected by custom and non-custom barriers that allow enterprises to develop a positioning in a specific market. Today, with added value and lower prices, they must compete with products from outside the country.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

The present research conducts an exploratory and transversal approach, with the main objective to analyze SFB's reality in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua Mexico. This is a qualitative study that pretend to identify all proper characteristics of the SFB owner's management type of vision in relation to its sustainable decision-making focus. The purposive sample comprehends a total of twenty automotive service SFBs located in Ciudad Juarez. Requirements demanded to determine the purposive sample of the SFBs were: 1) strategic decision making in hands of the family, mostly the owner, 2) the property of the business belonging to the family, and 3) the business capital belonging to the family. To select the participants, a search was made for business owners with knowledge and experience related to the topic of interest. A non-probabilistic purposive sampling form was determined, based in the criteria mentioned above, which also included specialized knowledge in this research topic, the capacity and willing of participants that would be more susceptible to contribute with accurate and adequate data, in terms of relevance as in its depth.

To collect all information data, twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with the same number of SFB owners (Table 1), due to their full knowledge about the business activities and family, among their

management and direction skills. Interviews were conducted from march, 2018 through november, 2018.

**Table 1. Information from businesses part of the sample**

Interviewee	Business Activity	Geographic Location
1	Auto Parts Store	North
2	Auto Parts Store	North
3	Body Shop	North
4	Body Shop	North
5	Auto Parts Store	North
6	Automotive Repair Shop	Northwest
7	Auto Parts Store	Northwest
8	Auto Parts Store	North
9	Automotive Repair Shop	North
10	Automotive Repair Shop	North
11	Automotive Repair Shop	South
12	Machine Shop	South
13	Auto Parts Store	North
14	Auto Parts Store	South
15	Machine Shop	Northwest
16	Auto Parts Store	Northwest
17	Body Shop	South
18	Diesel Repair Shop	South
19	Machine Shop	Southeast
20	Auto Parts Store	Southeast

Source: Own elaboration in 2019.

## V. FINDINGS

Table 2 reflect all sustainable focus and management vision factors identified in the interviewee's commentaries. Therefore, this conceptual framework holds and provide all success factors by articulating the sustainability philosophy into accessible competitive strategies for SFB owners (Enriques & Richardson, 2004). These factors include the optimal usage of internal and external resources (sustainable

focus) such as financing, business structure, values, employees, and city infrastructure; and the efficient achievement of organizational goals in terms of effectiveness of its internal processes (management vision), such as vocation, know how, cooperation, communication, decision making, leadership, business image and competition. Furthermore, these factors will determine SFB owners to direct their businesses towards sustainability and competitiveness or not.

**Table 2. Sustainable focus and management vision identified factors**

Interviewee	Sustainable Focus factors	Management Vision Factors
1	Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, High cooperation, High communication
2	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, High cooperation, High communication
3	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
4	Conformity with city infrastructure, Bank financing, Problems with family members, Family values	High service vocation, High know how, Participative leadership, Changing image, High cooperation
5	Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, High cooperation, High communication

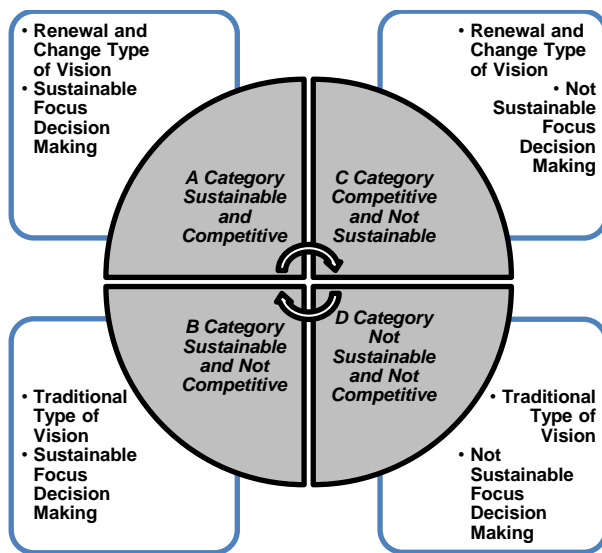
<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Sustainable Focus factors</b>	<b>Management Vision Factors</b>
6	Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
7	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
8	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
9	Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative leadership, Changing image, High cooperation, High communication
10	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation
11	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, High cooperation, High communication
12	Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Fight competition, High communication
13	Conformity with city infrastructure, Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
14	Conformity with city infrastructure, Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
15	Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
16	Conformity with city infrastructure, Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
17	Conformity with city infrastructure, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties	High service vocation, High know how, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
18	Conformity with city infrastructure, Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
19	Conformity with city infrastructure, Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication
20	Bank financing, Like the familiar structure, Problems with family members, Family values, Family ties, Problems with employees	High service vocation, High know how, Participative decisions, Participative leadership, Changing image, Fight competition, High cooperation, High communication

Source: Own elaboration.

**VI. OWNERS' MANAGEMENT VISION AND SUSTAINABLE DECISION-MAKING FOCUS. THEIR LINK TO SFBS COMPETITIVENESS**

Sustainability and competitiveness developed by the automotive services SFBs in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico will depend directly according to the relation between the owner's management type of vision with his sustainable decision-making process focus. In concordance with the above mentioned, this research presents a relation between them in a diagram, where four categories represent that relation. Here, the SFB could be classified as shown in Figure 2. In the diagram, the owners' management type of vision is combined with his kind of decision-making process in the SFB.

**Figure 2. Categories according to type of vision and decision-making**



Source: Own elaboration.

However, these categories have been identified as the ones that could classify the SFB according to its proper characteristics. These characteristics are described in the four categories represented in the diagram, product from the relation of the owners' management type of vision, and his kind of decision-making according to SFBs perceived owned resources.

1. *A Category* (Sustainable and competitive): In this category, the owner possesses a

renewal and change management type of vision, besides a sustainable decision-making. The SFE then develop a competitiveness towards sustainability. This leads to access to a major quantity of internal and external resources.

2. *B Category* (Sustainable but not competitive): In this category, the owner possesses a traditionalist management type of vision, but demonstrates a sustainable decision-making. The SFB has achieved sustainability but has not successfully confronted competitors. It only conserves a small portion of the market, thanks to the differentiating factor provided by its traditionalism. However, this impedes it from having access to some external helpful resources.
3. *C Category* (Competitive but not sustainable): In this category, the owner has a renewal and change type of vision but presents a non-sustainable decision-making. The SFB has confronted competition with success, thanks to all changes made in the business. However, its sustainability is compromised because the owner has not prepared his descendants to run the SFB in the future. This impedes the development of necessary internal resources.
4. *D Category* (Not sustainable nor competitive): In this category, the owner has a traditionalist type of vision, along with a not sustainable decision-making. The SFB has a compromised sustainability because the owner's descendants are not involved in its activities. Therefore, the SFB has not been successfully confronting competitors due to its obsolete products, processes, and image. This impedes the access to necessary internal and external resources.

For better understanding, specific characteristics composing all four categories are enlisted in Table 3 below. Likewise, the above table could be used as a comparison tool between categories, to visualize all convergences and divergences between them.

It could be determined that the owner's developed management type of vision could notice all resources owned by the SFB. Thus, this will increase or diminish in relation to the kind of decision-making he took. In addition, from this relation will emerge the way in which the owner's possible successors could be incorporated to SFB activities.

**Table 3. Characteristics of each category**

A Category		B Category		C Category		D Category	
1.	High service vocation	1.	High service vocation	1.	Low service vocation	1.	Low service vocation
2.	Conformity with city infrastructure	2.	Un-conformity with city infrastructure	2.	Conformity with city infrastructure	2.	Un-conformity with city infrastructure
3.	High know how	3.	High know how	3.	Low know how	3.	High know how
4.	Participative decisions	4.	Autocratic decisions	4.	Participative decisions	4.	Autocratic decisions
5.	Participative leadership	5.	Autocratic leadership	5.	Participative leadership	5.	Autocratic leadership



A Category		B Category		C Category		D Category	
6.	Changing image	6.	Traditionalist image	6.	Changing image	6.	Traditional image
7.	Bank financing	7.	No financing	7.	Bank financing	7.	No financing
8.	Fight competition	8.	Do not fight competition	8.	Fight competition	8.	Do not fight competition
9.	Like the familiar structure	9.	Do not like the familiar structure	9.	Do not like the familiar structure	9.	Like the familiar structure
10.	Problems with family members	10.	Problems with employees	10.	Problems with family members and employees	10.	Problems with family members and employees
11.	Low family ties	11.	High family ties	11.	Low family ties	11.	Low family ties
12.	High communication	12.	High communication	12.	Low communication	12.	Low communication
13.	High cooperation	13.	High cooperation	13.	Low cooperation	13.	Low cooperation
14.	High family values	14.	High family values	14.	Low family values	14.	Low family values

Source: Own elaboration.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Sustainability will provide the possibility to succeed before competitors. Also, it could be understood as that result from a group of innovation and technological processes, where all actors involved are interacting within a determined context. Those actors could be enterprises, organizations, or institutions linked to technical and organizational transformation.

Due to the importance that SFBs have on national and local markets, and the actual competitive environment in Mexico, to remain in customer's preference could and should be enough motivators for SFB owners to develop a preoccupation to be sustainable. Therefore, a competitiveness that will allow them to stay active in the market through time should be sought for.

Some families that converted themselves in local entrepreneurs have adopted their own concept, reaching their permanence in the market. They have not always succeeded being competitive. Some of them have grown, some others have only maintained themselves, while the rest small-down and perish.

This present research shows that it could be used as an instrument by the experts in the field, that are dedicated to sustainability and competitiveness studies, in a search for business success and failure causes. It is expected that this research help SFB owners to improve their management activities in order to, if based on a sustainable decision-making, provide its permanence through time. The above, due to an adequate management type of vision, it will upgrade the SFB positioning before competitors.

It must be considered that, by adopting a process of a renewal and change management type of

vision in the SFB, the owner defines the emergence of new ideas. To leave behind all those obsolete (traditional) ideas could be hard for some owners. This is one of the reasons why the analysis of these processes could provide them with valuable information about the opportunity to take these practices into action.

If it has been affirmed that SFB needs to be competitive to survive, its owners must not be guided by mere goal achieving or profit obtaining thoughts at the moment of decision-making, forgetting the moral support they need from family and employees. Familiar business roles must be able to co-exist. This will help to prevent a diminished involvement in the SFB activities by underestimating valuable resources for the business.

Nevertheless, it is important for SFB owners to determine strategies based on a sustainable decision-making in order to deal with the context where they carry out their commercial activities, because all offerings (resources) from a city will position businesses, in relation with their suppliers, customers, competitors, among others, in a way that inevitably will provide opportunities, and threats, that could be translated into strategic possibilities (Lawrence, 1999).

Although this research has been centered on a concrete practice, a more enhanced vision would manifest that sustainable decision-making is necessary. SFB and non-SFB owners should, however, confront organizational pressures that will direct their future and their business future. This is the basic reason this sustainable decision-making must be considered if they don't want to be "left behind" or disappear from the market.

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