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ANALYSIS OF THE SURVIVAL OF MEXICAN FAMILY BUSINESSES, THROUGH THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL EVOLUTIONARY MODEL

Daniela Ramiro Tepox¹ ORCID Link: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3431-1472

Diana Areli Mora Zimbrón² ORCID Link: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6357-4429</u>

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Summary

In this research, three models were analyzed: The model of the three circles, the three-dimensional evolutionary model and the model of the five circles, of which the main model contributed to carrying out an analysis from the birth of the company, until its continuity in the process. change of representatives, which in most cases is very complicated for companies, also in the involvement of people who play a specific role within the organization and who, thanks to the model, can be classified in each area of this and, above all, set a valuable role for them, promoting growth, not only of the company but also of the individual participants in it, managing this entire process effectively with the three-dimensional evolutionary model since it is the most complete and easy to understand.

Keywords: Family business, strengths, weaknesses and three-dimensional evolutionary model.

¹ Student of International Business Degree at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), Mexico: <u>daniela.ramiro@alumno.buap.mx</u>

² Doctor in International Business Sciences / Institute of Economic and Business Research – professor at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Mexico. Contact: <u>diana.morazimbron@correo.buap.mx</u>

ANÁLISIS DE LA SOBREVIVENCIA DE LAS EMPRESAS FAMILIARES MEXICANAS, MEDIANTE EL MODELO EVOLUTIVO TRIDIMENSIONAL

Resumen

En esta investigación se analizaron tres modelos: El modelo de los tres círculos, el modelo evolutivo tridimensional y modelo de los cinco círculos, de los cuales el modelo principal contribuyó a realizar un análisis desde el nacimiento de la empresa, hasta su continuidad en el proceso de cambio de representantes, lo que en la mayoría resulta muy complicado para las empresas, también en la involucración de personas que juegan un papel específico dentro de la organización y que gracias al modelo se pueden clasificar en cada área de esta y sobre todo fijar un rol de valor para ellos, propiciando el crecimiento, no solo de la empresa también el individual de los participantes de la misma, administrando todo este proceso de manera efectiva con el modelo evolutivo tridimensional ya que es el más completo y de fácil comprensión.

Palabras clave: Empresa familiar, fortalezas, debilidades y modelo evolutivo tridimensional.

ANÁLISE DA SOBREVIVÊNCIA DAS EMPRESAS FAMILIARES MEXICANAS, ATRAVÉS DO MODELO EVOLUCIONÁRIO TRIDIMENSIONAL

Resumo:

Nesta pesquisa foram analisados três modelos: O modelo dos três círculos, o modelo evolutivo tridimensional e o modelo dos cinco círculos, dos quais o modelo principal contribuiu para realizar uma análise desde o nascimento da empresa, até a sua continuidade no processo de mudança de representantes, que na maioria dos casos é muito complicado para as empresas, também no envolvimento de pessoas que desempenham uma função específica dentro da organização e que, graças ao modelo, podem ser classificadas em cada área de isso e, acima de tudo, atribuir-lhes um papel valioso, promovendo o crescimento, não só da empresa, mas também dos participantes individuais dela, gerenciando de forma eficaz todo esse processo com o modelo evolutivo tridimensional por ser o mais completo e fácil para entender.

Palavras chave: Empresa familiar, pontos fortes, fracos e modelo evolutivo tridimensional.



1. INTRODUCTION:

It is necessary to first define the concept of a family business upon which the present research will be based. A family business can be understood as a group or collaborative activity that is controlled and managed by one or several members of the family unit (Hershon, 2016). In this type of business, the human resources are primarily composed of family members, who have a direct influence on the positive or negative management outcomes of the main business.

This type of influence can provide the business with key opportunities and advantages or simply be a weakness for the business (Norte, 2016). Currently, a large number of family businesses fail. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2021), these businesses represent 90% of the total number of businesses in Mexico, but 37% of them have failed. Therefore, some factors that have contributed to this will be analyzed.

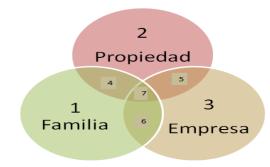
Due to time constraints, a confirmatory research approach is more feasible. By considering examples of family businesses with these conflicts, we can more effectively develop the models proposed later. This will be supported by a mixed methodology, allowing us to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data through surveys or questionnaires applied directly to these family businesses.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three-Circle models.

Next, some models based on the general theory of systems are presented, such as the Three-Circle Model, initially proposed by John Davis and Renato Tagiuri in 1982. This model explains how the systems of Family, Business, and Ownership are interconnected and details the roles of each family member, highlighting their position within the business and its human resources. This model can be seen in Figure 1, titled Three-Circle Model.

Figure 1. Three-Circle models.



Own elaboration based on (Molina, 2012).

In this model, the circle referring to the family specifically encompasses all members of the family clan. Meanwhile, the circle representing the company evokes each member who formally works within the established company, assuming that their position is based on their contribution and generates intangible value that the company can capitalize on. Lastly, the circle referring to ownership focuses on how investment and capital are organized, granting shareholders rights and obligations depending on the establishment's structure.

In this model, it can be appreciated that each member of the business can be involved in any of the fields or relationships with the business, positioning themselves without any problem in any circle or subset. Additionally, this model highlights a group of seven types of participants in the business: family members, who may not be related to the ownership of shares in the business because they do not work formally in it; the owners, who in this case do not belong to the family and do not have a position within the organizational chart; those who are not family members and are not owners but are somehow politically connected; individuals who are not owners but work in the business, like any external human resource; and finally, the owners who have ownership or shares, work in the business, but are not family members.

Although this model does not pose any inconvenience for expressing their interests, as long as everyone moves in the same direction, if these seven people do not converge in the same direction, which is more common, this model will create tensions that can negatively influence the management of the business and eventually deteriorate the relationships within the family unit. Daniela Ramiro Tepox, Diana Areli Mora Zimbrón

Three-dimensional evolutionary model

Below is the outline of the three-dimensional evolutionary model, proposed by Gersik in 1997, which integrates time as a factor of study and the changes among the business's human resources in the medium and long term. In this model, the three-dimensional space is composed of the business, the family, and the ownership, integrating the paradigm of the three evolutionary stages of ownership: the owner-managed business, the sibling partnership, and the cousin consortium. It also refers to how the different participants evolve and move between groups over time and through family stages, influenced by marriages, divorces, births, deaths, organizational changes, new hires, or new investors. These changes can sometimes be seen as direct threats to the organization or as opportunities to rethink the organization's structural strategies. It is important to consider that periods of crisis are precisely the times when the business can seize opportunities to generate growth alternatives.

Figure 3. Three-dimensional evolutionary model



Source: Own elaboration based on (Gersik K, 2003).

The Three-Dimensional Evolutionary Model according to (Gersik K, 2003) examines that in the case of the ownership subsystem, this is determined by the corresponding stage of the business unit of the controlling owner; that is, the first owner who created the business, then a sibling partnership, and finally a cousin consortium. In the family domain, four stages can be identified: firstly, the young family business; those who learn to manage the business and begin its growth. Next is entering the business, considering that entering any business sector should have as one of its primary objectives obtaining economic and financial benefits. Another phase is working together and granting power. In the business factor, three fundamental phases can be identified to explain this subset. The startup phase essentially marks the beginning of the formalization of the business project, followed by the formalization of the idea, leading to the sustainability and maturity or development phase of the company. This model also allows for the analysis of perspectives according to the evolutionary dimension of the business, focusing on ownership. In this context, the first type of owner is the controlling owner, who holds the control of the property. This control can reside in a single individual or in a partnership, typically involving family members who have significant decision-making power, such as a mother and father. There may also be other types of owners with nominal shares who do not hold authoritative functions. The second type of ownership refers to sibling partnerships, where at least two or more siblings control the company, sharing control in the management and general decision-making processes.

Finally, the third type of ownership involves cousin consortiums, where there are cases of companies or business groups in which cousins hold a significant level of control and manage the company, guided by family values and organization but also considering their own objectives. Additionally, there is the dimension of family evolution, which encompasses intrinsic variables such as the dynamics of a young business family, the contributions the family makes to the functioning company, and the various succession movements.

According to the last figure, it stands out the adults' generation with an age below 35 years old where generally there are no children, and in the case of having them, they are minors. This is understood due to their ages, making it impossible for the second generation to take on the role of the business, which simply falls to the elder owner. In relation to the factor of family members entering the business, it refers to the family generation where the parents are between 35 and 50 years old. In this scheme, there may be children in their teenage years or slightly older, from 20 to 30 years old. It is essential to have emotional intelligence to facilitate the evolution of the latter into mature age and their transition in case they integrate into the business.

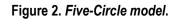
A joint work refers to when family heads are between the ages of 50 to 65 years old and their children are formally present in the business. There may be grandchildren, and therefore the company is preparing for the transfer of leadership, marking the last stage of the first generation in decision-making as this generation begins to disengage from the company. In the business evolution dimension, it involves every step from the first to the last in creation. The phases correspond to startup - birth, growth - expansion formalization, and maturity. Regarding the first, startup - birth, its initial step involves an informal organization, with the owner at the center, responsible for the entirety of the organization, from refining and consolidating the product or service, generating market entry strategies, tactical planning of each department of the business, chosen financing options, and linking the company's values with the founder's personal goals. Next is growth - expansion - formalization, meaning a much more automated work model is in place, where there can be a diversified portfolio of business or products. This phase may also involve a change of manager due to automation, and the management of the business is perceived with greater professionalism by handling different types of technology or having organizational policies.

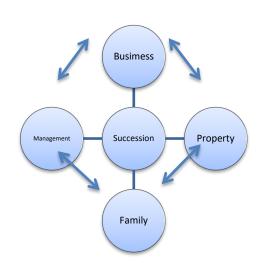
The last phase is the maturity phase, in which the organizational structure supports stability and has a stable or declining customer base. It features a divisional structure led by a team of high-level managers, well-established organizational procedures, strategic refocus, commitment from the executives and owners, and reinvestment from other family members or possibly external sources.

Five-Circle model

According to this model, which was proposed by Amat (2000), it is an extension of the previously detailed three-circle model. In other words, this model adds two aspects to the original study model. Among these additions is the management of the business, which emphasizes the importance of organization, aligning the values of the business with strategic outcomes, and leveraging the competitive advantages of the company in terms of its core activities, products, services, market suppliers, and overall segment, resources. Additionally, it considers succession, which directly influences the other four circles of the model.







Source: Own elaboration based on (Amat, 2000).

The basic spheres that compose this model can be seen in Figure No. 2, the Five-Circle Model. The corresponding family circle takes into account factors such as values, attitudes, internal relationships, communication patterns, the degree of harmony in the company's work environment, and the influence of these factors on the business. It also considers the level of commitment from family members who are collaborators in the company, regarding their willingness to continue the family or business project as it is perceived.

In this case, it depends on the family's nature whether this aspect becomes an opportunity or a weakness, potentially leading to problematic situations. Regarding the circle that refers to ownership, it describes the importance of the structure of the shares that make up the company's capital, including the level of harmony that exists among investors of different levels and shareholders, the way legal processes are handled and managed, and the true efficiency and value contribution of the members of the shareholders' assembly. Therefore, in this case, every person involved in the functioning of the company is seen as part of a whole.

Businesses should take into account the strategies used; in this case, it is important to consider the

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relationship and communication between the business and its target market, the implementation of differentiation policies derived from research and development areas, as well as the management and incorporation of different technologies according to the sector and market evolution.

The Manager Factor takes into account aspects related to staff turnover, technology, and raw materials, where family opinion is used objectively only when it is the best option for efficient management. In terms of personnel or human resources, the value contribution from the level of professionalism should be considered, as well as the policies for managing this. This includes whether there are models within the organization for staff promotion, balanced remuneration, and other related aspects.

To finish, the succession phase considers that the continuity of the company is contingent upon this decision. Therefore, it must be managed objectively, in a planned and scheduled manner, according to the company's plan for appointing the ideal person or team, in alignment with the company's long-term strategy.

The five-circle model can be considered a methodology for understanding the dynamics in which the family business operates. It covers very comprehensive areas and includes fundamental aspects necessary for any analysis. It is important to note that, like any model, it is essential to consider that over time and throughout the functioning of the business, various problems and challenges will arise that will need to be addressed as they occur.

After analyzing these models, which are both complex and fundamental to understand, we can derive individual indicators from each one, as well as from other areas of the company. The indicators presented will be the focus of this research and will serve as the basis for the methodological framework.

Model indicators

It is important to keep in mind that business models tend to become obsolete more quickly nowadays, considering the constant changes in the contemporary business world. Therefore, each structure and process must be reviewed periodically to ensure that effectiveness and efficiency remain the pillars of the family business. Due to the above, the following seven key points will be evaluated in this research.

Table 1. Key points to evaluate.		
KEY POINTS TO EV	ALUATE	
Exits barriers	Clients/changing supplier/new offers/what you offer/making the switch costly.	
Recurring income	Acquiring a product or service affects more than one commercial transaction, it will be reflected in taking advantage of and reducing costs to generate greater profitability.	
Income before expenses	Growth implies resources/customer sets the foundations/accelerated growth/without capital limits.	
Competitive cost structure	Better than any competitor/design of the model and size/changes.	
Transfer process and expenses	Do it yourself. Value chain collaborators.	
Stability	It will be able to grow/income proportional to costs and investment.	
Fragility	Competitor attacks/the most skilled is the one who achieves better results and survives.	

Table 1. Key points to evaluate.

Source: Own elaboration based on (Quejada, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the following research will be to evaluate the behavior of family businesses, understand their organization, and identify the underlying factor causing many of them to fail to survive beyond their family generations. To achieve this, we will utilize the instrument previously outlined. As stated at the beginning of this document, we aim to address this issue comprehensively until the completion of the study.

The survey will be used as the research instrument, in which it was determined that the sampling conducted, due to response time and contact with businesses, has



been non-probabilistic, specifically the consecutive sampling method.

Therefore, responses were obtained from seven companies: Agropecuaria BUGASA, Pollos a la leña Ángel, Constructora Maricruz, Motozon, Botanas Dany, CocoPizza, and Carnicería and Rastro CID.

	3.	Instrume	nts'	items	
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Items	Scale
1 Business' name.	Open
2 What does the company mean to each of you?	Open
3 What goals do you have as a family business?	Close
4 What are the personal goals of each member?	Open
5 Who is/are the owner(s)?	Close
6 What shares do family members not involved in the company's work or organization receive?	Close
7 If a member does not work in the company, do they retain their share?	Close
8 Do you discuss work matters outside of working hours?	Close
9 What are your communication mechanisms?	Close
10 How do you communicate important or strategic decisions for the company?	Close
11 Do you allow the incorporation of family members or outsiders into the company?	Close
12 How do you decide on this incorporation?	Close
13 What factors do you consider for someone to enter or become part of the company?	Close
14 In the event of the primary member of the company being absent, what mechanism would you use to determine succession of power?	Close
15 How do you resolve conflicts?	Close
16 Do you have any conflict resolution plan in place? Source: Own elaboration.	Close

Source: Own elaboration.

Once we have completed the evaluation method, the following technical form was created to organize the data we have.

Table 4. Technical form of resea

Universe	Family-owned businesses of any industry, size, whose organization is based on the family, located in Puebla.	
Sampling size	-	
Error margin	-	
Sampling method	Probabilistic	
Date of field work	March 14th – April 20th 2023	
Type of survey	Personal, through an online	
Items of	survey 16	
the		
survey		

Own elaboration.

After conducting the questioning, surveys were carried out with the companies mentioned earlier, all of Mexican origin and under the family organization scheme. The overall results can be found in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Results obtained from open-endedquestions.

RESULTS OBTAINED		
	OPEN ITEMS	
BUSINESS	What does the company mean to each of you?	What are the personal goals of each member?
Agropecuaria BUGASA	A shared dream.	Taking the company to the next level.
Pollos a la leña Ángel	Seeing the effort of so many years reflected in being independent.	To have good job performance to keep ourselves in the customer's favor, and to forge a stable future.

^{4.} RESULTS:

Business A source of income with success. Constructora which we can Economic growth. Maricruz subsist. Learning. Creating jobs. Having economic Our economic Motozon livelihood. freedom. Botanas А dream Growth, stability. fulfilled. Dany It is a brand The company is Coco Pizza that is growing growing more and through effort. more The Carnicería daily Having а CID bread. franchise.

Table 6. Results obtained from close-endedguestions.

RESULTS OBTAINED		
CLOSE ITEMS	ANSWERS	
What goals do you have as a family business?	57.1% The growth of the company so that everyone benefits. 42.9% The success of the company.	
Who is/are the owner(s)?	57.1% Mother and Father 28.6% Father 0% Mother and Father 0% Firstborn Child 0% Mother and Children 0% Father and Children	
What roles or responsibilities do family members who are not involved in the company's work or organization have?	42.9% A smaller or equal percentage than 10.42.9% They are not entitled to anything.14.3% A percentage greater than 10.	
If a member does not work in the company, do they retain their share?	57% We have other agreements. 28.6% Yes. 14.3% No.	
Do you discuss work matters even during non-working hours?	71.4% Yes. 28.6% No.	
What are your communication mechanisms?	42.9% Individually with each family member.28.6% Joint or scheduled meetings.	

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	28.6% Surprisingly through various means.
How do you communicate important or strategic decisions for the company?	 57.1% Jointly through meetings. 28.6% All participating members give their opinion. 14.3% Individually and only if it is very relevant.
Do you allow the incorporation of family members or external individuals into the company?	57.1% Yes. 42.9% No.
How do you decide on this incorporation?	 57.1% The representative decides this. 28.6% A meeting is held, and the decision is made through votes. 14.3% If it is beneficial to the company, opinions of all members are not considered. 0% Through a family council.
What factors do you consider for someone to enter or become part of the company?	85.7% The expansion the company would experience. 14.3% The monetary value it would bring to the company. 0% Simply seeking more capital, regardless of whether it is from family or not.
In case the main member of the company is absent, what mechanism would you use to take over power succession?	 0% Through a general census. 57.1% Automatically, the next child takes power. 42.9% The most qualified member for the position will take over, regardless of their generation rank.
How do you resolve conflicts?	 42.9% Each member's opinion is taken into account. 28.6% Only the main member(s) will make the best decision. 28.6% We express the conflict through a meeting and decide.

Do you have any conflict resolution plan in place?	 42.9% Yes. 0% No. 14.3% We only improvise. 42.9% We resolve according to the situation and means.
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Source: Own elaboration.

With the previous responses, an analysis of each of the questioned aspects was carried out. Referring to the Goals section; according to the survey, results indicate that 57 percent of these companies aim for common growth with shared benefits as their goal, while the rest have set their sights on the success of the company. We believe they are referring to providing their service or product in a way that customer satisfaction leads to their success. However, individually, they mostly prioritize company growth but do not necessarily prioritize stability. Regarding the aspect of ownership, it is mainly held by the first generation (Father/Mother - Father), indicating that they have not yet undergone the transition of power. This is why contributions of assets sometimes include outsiders who do not participate in the company. This, as mentioned before, impacts the roles within the company, as there are agreements in place for family members who do not participate in the organization, although in some cases, ownership is retained without any objection. As for communication, as expected, these companies primarily communicate individually, which is easier since most of the workers are family members, not just employees. However, this can affect their family bond, as it's essential to discuss work matters during exclusive hours and not constantly with family members, thus safeguarding the affectionate bond within the family and not allowing work matters to damage it.

For these family businesses, it is difficult to allow an outsider to be part of the organization in some cases. However, they may permit it under the terms set by the organization's representative, while others decide collectively. Regarding their impact on expansion, it reflects their growth. Lastly, concerning power succession, it was observed that in these organizations, power is immediately passed to the next generation in the family hierarchy without considering preparation and training. This can lead to dissatisfaction within the family and once again highlights the importance of applying Family Business Models for achieving better organization.

5. CONCLUSIONS

According to the results presented, it can be concluded that each model proposed helps us essential to organize the company accurately. However, personally, I believe that the best model for these companies is the Three-Dimensional Evolutionary Model. This model encompasses the birth of the company until its possible succession and the subsequent representatives of power. As seen, the entrepreneurial family, i.e., the creator of the company, is followed by the next generation of the family who continues to guide its growth. However, when it comes to the organization involving cousins, it becomes the most challenging phase as no other perspective is considered, leading to difficulties in sustaining the business due to lack of organization and commitment. This is indeed the area of error in many companies, as evidenced by the results indicating that most companies only improvise and few genuinely organize to make decisions collectively and proportionally. While the majority of these companies are under the ownership of the first generation, when it comes time to pass on the reins, they often only consider succession based on generational level, i.e., passing it on to the next child, without considering if they are the most suitable or if someone else is better gualified. This is the greatest challenge for these companies, as they fail to expand their vision for growth, improvement, and continuous change. Referring to our model which mentions the seven types of individuals within the family business, it helps us position them in the organization in the best way possible as it considers their future maturity. Undoubtedly, it would be the best model applied in these types of companies, as it helps us analyze them from the three main dimensions they present.

Face

Limitations

The primary limitation of this research, in general, was time, as it was broadly set for three months for both its design and the search for results. The latter was entirely dependent on the companies and influenced by the time management each of them handles in their daily operations. Additionally, another limitation is the small number of responses from the companies to which the instrument was applied. With the help of technology, there has been easy access to companies. However, due to the fact that most of the management Daniela Ramiro Tepox, Diana Areli Mora Zimbrón

of family businesses is not systematized, it is challenging for them to allocate time to external research. Furthermore, they exercise caution with confidential information, which adds another layer of complexity to their participation in such studies.

Suggestions

As mentioned, for the next research, a non-probabilistic scale was used. However, based on the results obtained, it would be advisable to obtain results within the sample range, as it would provide a comprehensive collection of studies on the behavior of family businesses. Taking as a basis a company that allowed us to study its case, it could be confirmed that the application of each model would help it improve its organizational structure, ensuring that the personnel of the company, even if they are family members, have a clear and unique role within it. Despite the trust placed in them, they cannot simultaneously cover managerial or production activities. The owner must always be the head of the structure, fulfilling their role even in adverse situations, to ensure continuity into future generations. As this company already has other branches, it is necessary to study these models as they have not managed to separate the family from the business realm. This prevents them from functioning equitably with their other non-family employees, who are required due to their current size. This situation creates a heavy and complicated scenario for each external collaborator. Therefore, when the controlling owner applies the knowledge from this research, it would lead to better organization and, above all, better functioning of their company.

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