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State of the art on organizational longevity: a systematic literature review

Estado del arte de la longevidad organizacional: una revisión sistemática de literatura

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Abstract

Low business longevity is a worldwide phenomenon afflicting multiple organizations that operate in disparate economic conditions, across various industrial processes, different in size and disparate cultural environments. The opening and internationalization of the economy, as well as the problems associated with the environmental crisis, exacerbate this situation. The ability to adapt and strategic renewal of organizations thus become a fundamental capability to survive in times of globalization and competitiveness. The paper's objective is to present the state of the art of organizational longevity based on a Systematic Literature Review in two databases (WOS and Scopus) with the help of two software specialized in bibliometric analysis and scientific mapping (Bibliometrix and VOSviewer). Organizational longevity is a growing and consolidating field since it addresses a core problem within management, economics, and the social sciences in general: survival. A trend starts to emerge, which hints at connections between the longevity of organizations and the corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices that they engage in.

Keywords: Organizational Longevity; Strategy; Systematic literature review; Corporate Social Responsibility.

Resumen

La baja longevidad empresarial se constituye en un fenómeno global que aqueja a múltiples organizaciones que operan en condiciones económicas disimiles, en diversos procesos industriales, de diferente tamaño y en entornos culturales dispares. La apertura e internacionalización de la economía, al igual que los problemas asociados a la crisis ambiental, agudizan esta situación. La capacidad de adaptación y renovación estratégica de las organizaciones se configura como una habilidad fundamental para sobrevivir en tiempos de globalización y competitividad. El objetivo del artículo es presentar un estado del arte del concepto longevidad organizacional a partir de una Revisión Sistemática de Literatura en dos bases de datos – WOS y Scopus-, con la ayuda de dos softwares especializados en análisis bibliométrico y mapeo científico – Bibliometrix y VOSviewer. La longevidad organizacional es un campo en crecimiento y consolidación puesto que aborda uno de sus problemas centrales al interior de la administración, la economía y en general para las ciencias sociales: su supervivencia. Empieza a emerger una corriente que propone conexiones entre la longevidad de las organizaciones y las prácticas de responsabilidad social empresarial (RSE) que desarrollan.

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Palabras Clave: Longevidad Organizacional; Estrategia; Revisión sistemática de literatura; Responsabilidad Social Empresarial.

1. Introduction

The assumption that has underpinned classical thought systems[1] in Administration states that companies must endure over time (Kwee, 2009), even to some extent, it is based, at least tacitly, on the fact that a company is an institution inherent to the current economic system and fundamental to the fabric of modern society (Scott, 2003). In this way, an adequate indicator to identify its success or failure, as well as that of its leader(s), is associated with its longevity in the market (Costanza, Blacksmith, Coats, Severt, and DeCostanza, 2016). According to Hannan and Freeman (1984), from the company's perspective, long-term survival is a crucial requirement since nothing legitimizes them more than their longevity.

Nevertheless, the evidence shows that companies tend to perish quickly in many cases. Confecamaras' reports (2016, 2017, 2018) on business demography present data on mortality rates in countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As shown in Table 1, their figures indicate high failure rates averaging between 20% and 30% in the first year and around 50% before the fifth. In general, Belgium and European countries lead the low mortality statistics, the United States is seventh, and Mexico closes the list with a rate close to 70% during the fifth year. The rest of Latin American countries see an akin reality. Argentina's and Chile's rates fluctuate at 50% after the fifth year, while it is around 60% in Colombia, as Table 1 will show. This behavior "remains regardless of the sector that the companies perform in" (Confecamaras, 2016, p. 29).

Table 1. Business survival in OECD countries

COUNTRY/TIME	Business survival during year one	Business survival in year 3	Business survival in year 5
Belgium	92.0	98.4	82.2
Finland	80.2	57.8	63.5
Austria	88.5	69.2	59.7
Slovenia	90.2	65.6	56.6
Luxembourg	89.3	70.6	55.2
France	77.9	66.4	51.5
U.S.	79.4	61.9	51.0
Spain	76.4	55.1	49.5
Chile	85.2	63.0	49.4
Argentina	-	60.1	49.1
Netherlands	83.1	61.3	45.3
Norway	83.7	53.4	43.6
Colombia	78.3	61.0	42.9
United Kingdom	86.3	49.6	39.7
Germany	76.8	50.2	39.6
Mexico	67.0	-	35.0

Source: Author own elaboration based on Confecamaras, 2017.

[1] Classical Administration refers to Taylor, Fayol, and Weber, and the authors who assume their postulates to build their theories.

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Per Ben-Menahem, Kwee, and Volberda (2013) and Daepp, Hamilton, West, and LMA (2015), the fundamental cause of mortality lies in the companies' inability to adapt to the variations of the environment in which they operate; in other words, they fail to harmonize and synchronize the External Rate of Exchange (ERE) with the internal rate of exchange (IRE). Along the same lines, Ahmad, Omar, and Quoquab (2019) argue that this trend is due to the increased business complexity that stems from this phase of development of the capitalist economy, and they assert: "Even the average firm age has decreased significantly in the past few decades because most firms fail to adapt to the increasing complexities" (p. 1).

Thus, the low longevity problem is a global phenomenon afflicting multiple organizations operating in dissimilar economic conditions, engaged in different industrial processes, in disparate cultural environments, different in size, and, at different times, in their life cycles. It varies as to endurance and the type of company affected in each country and/or region, yet there are features to the phenomenon that essentially replicate themselves and allow finding common elements. The opening and internationalization of the economy, as well as the problems of environmental pollution, serve as catalysts that exacerbate this situation, for the number of competitors that boost the rate of technological change increases and a civil society, more demanding and vigilant of organizations, is configured.

From the standpoint of Napolitano, Marino, and Ojala (2015), all companies tend to disappear, but their ability to adapt is the key to surviving and competing. For Scott (2003), endurance, like responsibility and reliability, are core capabilities of organizations being developed and managed by their leader. Kwee, Bosch, and Volberda (2011) affirm that the essential function of the Administration is to ensure that the business system survives as long as possible by stimulating strategic renewal processes and adaptation to the environment. Grashuis (2018) asserts that an organization's ability to adapt and learn is the key to explaining longevity. In the words of Montuori (2000), the role of the leader is to keep the organization healthy and in continuous learning, the leader being the agent that facilitates said behavior.

Burgelman and Grove (2007), meanwhile, state that "top management designs strategy-making process, the means with which the leadership style exerts its influence on corporate longevity" (p. 967). Mayfield, Mayfield, and Stephens (2007) occupy themselves with the relationship between organizational strategy and longevity in the *comics* industry in the USA and conclude that the leaders' decisions are linked with company likelihood of survival. Along a similar path, Schneider and Somers (2006) and Schmitt, Barker III, Raisch, and Whetten (2015) maintain that a leader is a transformational agent in learning organizations, a catalyst that directs the organization. Thus, the role of the leader may favor company longevity or not since they direct how company members relate to one another and interact with other interest groups in the unfolding of their life cycles; that is, they are those in charge of aligning IRE with ERE.

This issue turns out to be fundamental for administration professions and disciplines, and even for the economy and society in general (Burgelman and Grove, 2007; Box, 2008), to the extent that the ratio between the company creation and shut-down rates is an indicator that allows understanding the behavior of the economy and measure leader performance; on the other hand, there is the importance of companies in the society of organizations (Scott, 2003; Chanlat, 1988; and Dèry, 2004) as a provider of goods, services, and employment for a vast majority of the population.

Organizational longevity is a field of knowledge undergoing consolidation[2] according to data retrieved from Scopus, the earliest publications appeared in the 1970s, while in WOS (Web of Science), the earliest records date back to the 1990s. Because it is a field of knowledge in development, it has yet to resolve specific dilemmas. For example, there is no agreement on the key factors that achieve maximum survival nor a consensus on

[2] The data retrieved from Bibliometrix show a growth rate in publications in the field of 4.68% in Scopus and 3.72% in WOS.

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why it is crucial to study corporate longevity (Kwee, 2009). Napolitano *et al.* (2015) even go so far as to ask why companies should survive in the first place, given that the goal of long-term survival could jeopardize short-term profitability.

2. Methodology

This paper is framed within the author's doctoral dissertation proposal. Its objective is to present a state of the art on the concept of organizational longevity based on a Systematic Literature Review in two databases (WOS and Scopus) with the help of two software specialized in bibliometric analysis and scientific mapping (Bibliometrix and VOSviewer). The purpose of a Systematic Literature Review is to provide the grounds on which research will be built; hence, its objective is to plan, summarize and understand the context of the authors and the publication trends exiting on a thematic area or phenomenon of particular interest (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016; Parris and Peachey, 2013; Dzikowski, 2018; Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017). According to Velásquez (2015), a Systematic Literature Review allows "clarifying the state of the art, identifying research trends, supporting new research, identifying important variables, establishing the importance of a research problem or phenomenon of interest" (p. 9).

Saunders *et al.* (2016) define it as "a pre-planned, comprehensive strategy to locate, critically appraise, analyze, and synthesize existing research that is relevant to clarifying a research question..." (p. 74); this means that there is an underlying prior intention linked to a research process. Consequently, it is a planned process that demands a series of phases: searching, cataloging, ordering, analyzing, criticism, and information synthesizing. For their part, Klassen, Jahad and Moher (cited by Parris and Peachey, 2013) define it as "a review in which there is a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic, and those that are found are evaluated and synthesized according to an explicit default method" (p. 380).

The Systematic Literature Review process begins with the planning of the search strategy; according to Saunders *et al.* (2016), this is the decisive phase in the entire Systematic Literature Review process since the very outcome of the research depends, to a great extent, on its rigor and relevance. Zupic and Câter (2015) posit that a Systematic Literature Review needs to be designed on the basis of defining process-underlying questions, for which they develop a course of action according to the interest of the researcher and the phase of the research, in this case, our interest is, per the foregoing lines, to build a state of the art.

Thus, our guiding questions were: what are the primary and relevant authors, documents, countries, journals, institutions, and areas of knowledge for the field of interest? What degree of similarity or articulation exists among authors, countries, and institutions? What are the dynamics of production and quality of publications in the field? What are the primary schools or approaches? What is the level of cooperation among the academic community? What are the main trends and emergencies?

The process starts with exploring the optimal components (descriptors) for a search equation (S.E.)[3] in the **WOS** and **Scopus databases.** The documents and/or authors that come up in the top 20 are analyzed according to Scopus-offered statistical data since what is relevant to the deed to be carried out is getting to know the field's structures. The results are analyzed and interpreted in light of the five bibliometric methods proposed by Zupic and Ĉater[4] (2015): citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-author analysis, and co-word analysis. The state of the art interprets the results through a document that accounts for the origin, evolution, and main theoretical perspectives and trends in the field.

[3] TITLE-ABS-KEY ("corporate longevity" OR "firm longevity" OR "business longevity" OR "company longevity" OR "enterprise longevity" OR "organization* longevity" OR "organizational survival" OR "organizational long-term") AND PUBYEAR > 1999.

[4] These authors' work explores a path that combines bibliometric elements with elements from scientific mapping, and this allows analyzing the performance of authors, institutions, and countries, as well as reveals structures and dynamics in the field of management and organizations. They resort to five methods to carry out their work.

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3. Result and discussion

3.1. Systematic Literature Review Findings

Organizational longevity is a relatively young topic of interest in administration, economics, and social sciences in general. The earliest Scopus documents date back to the ‘60s and ‘70s, and WOS documents date back to the ‘90s; however, the field has progressed in its production and citation dynamics in this century. This situation results in the initial outlines of its underlying conceptual, intellectual and social structures being configured.

This is a dynamic field[5] with scattered efforts that only offer a clear glimpse of two dominant theoretical perspectives, but there is no consolidated academic community to it. Its frequency of publication per author is low, with three documents in Scopus at most and only one per author in WOS. There are scattered efforts and low collaboration and co-authorship among the members of the academic community that make it up, especially between journals and institutions, as well as low rates of collaboration and bibliographic coupling.

On the other hand, a solid shared basis of co-citation was found as to the authors to whom they resort for a theoretical lens; the two leading schools are both supported by three core authors: Hannan, Freeman and March (Chart 1 and Chart 2) (Figure 1). And as for critical documents, three by Hannan and Freeman (the first three) and one by March[6] (Figure 2) there are two different schools of thought: one originating in the United States (USA), specifically at Stanford University, and another in Europe, mainly in Rotterdam, and a third timidly emerging with authors from South Korea and the USA, who base themselves on the theoretical postulates of the first school and add March’s proposal. The North American School led by Burgelman and Grove and the European School by Volberda and Kwee are regarded as more robust.

There are also glimpses of two theoretical currents through identifying key authors and documents. The first one is based on the adaptive perspective of organizational ecology, and the second is on the selective perspective of exploring and exploiting resources and organizational capabilities; even a third is outlined: co-evolution. It is relevant to remember that March’s 1991 work, which traces the second current path, is grounded in the work of Hannan and Freeman, evidence of solid theoretical roots and a shared intellectual structure.

Likewise, there is a high concurrence in keywords that makes for a conceptual structure that is gaining maturity. Innovation is the key term in both databases, followed by leadership, administrative/organizational learning, organizational longevity, and strategy. These make up the conceptual structure of the field and shed light on the cohesion that the field is beginning to come into, which shows more clearly in the state of the art.

The countries that produce knowledge are the same, with the USA being the standard-bearer. As for the sources, three coincide in the databases selected for our analysis: *Strategic Management Journal, Business History* and *Nonprofits, and voluntary sector.* As far as institutions are concerned, only Stanford University happened to coincide.

To summarize this portion, it can be said that there are no robust and significant collaboration networks among authors from different perspectives or among institutions from different countries to develop joint studies. Except for the network emerging from the work of the Rotterdam authors, no other significant relationship came up. These are weaknesses in a field under construction and indicate a lack of cohesion within its academic community. Perhaps these are some of the main reasons the field has yet to be consolidated.

[5] During the nineties, 58 research papers were published in Scopus, but it genuinely took off at the beginning of this century, with a record 426 papers so far this century. As for WOS, there are 18 results for the 1990s and 112 for the last two decades.

[6] By Hannan and Freeman: The population ecology of organizations (1977), American Journal of Sociology; Structural Inertia and Organizational Change (1984) and American Sociological Review; Organizational Ecology (1989) published by Cambridge Harvard University Press; and by March: Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning (1991) published in Organization Science.

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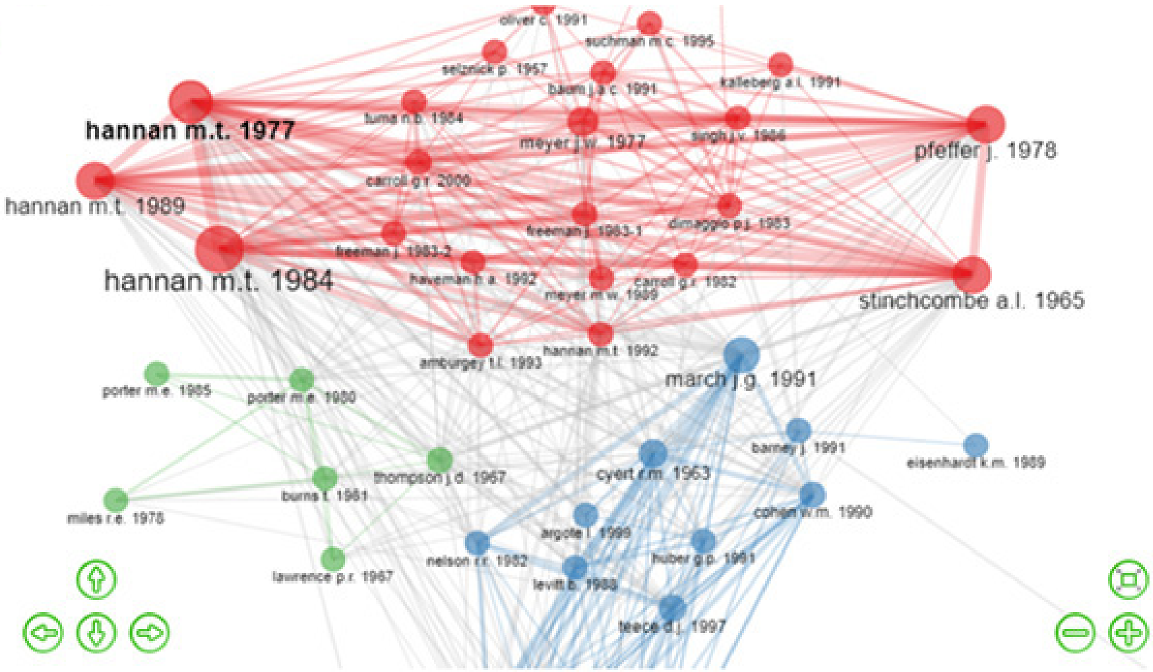
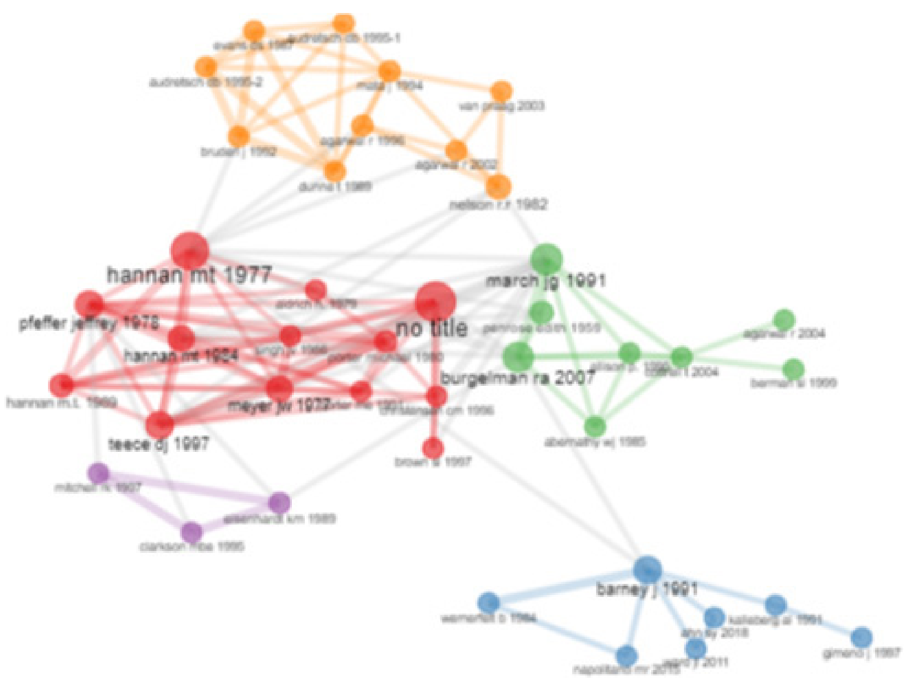
Figure 1. Network of document citations - Scopus



Source: Bibliometrix software.

Figure 2. Network of document citations -WOS



Source: Bibliometrix software.

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3.2. State of the Art: origin and evolution of the field

The reviews by Riviezzo Skippari and Garafano (2015) and Napolitano *et al.* (2015) account for literature reviews intending to build a theoretical body that will help understand the evolution of the field and trace an evolutionary pathway. Riviezzo *et al.* (2015) explored the last 30 years' worth of publications in the field and selected 142 *papers* to carry out a bibliometric analysis, and found out that most of the works are empirical and only 12 are conceptual (8%), 52% used quantitative methodological approaches, 25% involved qualitative studies and 13% performed mixed studies. They conclude that this is a field of work with multidisciplinary and hybrid research approaches.

The name of Arie de Geus (1997) often comes up as a seminal author in this field with his proposal for *The Living Company.* In it, he states that companies have a personality that helps them or not to coexist harmoniously with the groups that they affect in the performance of their core activities that help them maintain a position of market leadership; they value people's new ideas and hold their capital in a way that allows them to govern their future. In other words, they exist to last. Living companies have four characteristics: a strong sense of internal cohesion, tolerance, financial conservatism, and sensitivity to the environment.

Napolitano *et al.* (2015) confirm Geus as the founding author and organizational ecology as the theoretical support that gives rise to the field. Not to deny the relevance of Geus's work, Ben-Menahem *et al.* (2013) refer to Hannan and Freeman's 1984 work as the initial paper on the field. For their part, Driel, Volberdaa, Eikelboomb, and Kamerbeek (2015) cite the 1994 work of Collins and Porras as a visionary book and place it in the same line as Geus's, whereas Volberda and Lewin (2003) and Piao (2014) refer to March's 1991 work as the theoretical lens that guides their work. Results from Bibliometrix and VOSviewer show that Burgelman and Grove's (2007) *Let Chaos Rule, Then Control Chaos - Time and Time Again: Managing Strategic Dynamics for Corporate Longevity* (2007) is now a standard benchmark for authors and schools in the field.

Riviezzo *et al.* (2015) showed some common characteristics in their explanatory models concerning entrepreneur environmental, organizational and personal aspects, and they add that a fourth characteristic comes to light when focusing on family businesses specifically on succession processes. Explanatory models concerned with *environmental* characteristics focus on the influence of differences in the survival rates of new businesses, the effects of adverse environments on organizational mortality, or access to external resources and capabilities and their impact on organizational longevity. Those who study *organizational* aspects focus on strategic choices, innovation, and corporate governance models, the organizational structure, organizational culture and values, organizational age, and size. As for *entrepreneur* characteristics, the following stand out: variables at the individual level such as gender, initial motivation and enthusiasm, age, education and experience, and levels of awareness and openness.

3.3. Perspectives and Theoretical Trends

In light of the findings and results of this Systematic Literature Review, some questions emerge and are intended to serve as a reason to draft the lines that will follow, not to make final judgments: How is organizational longevity defined? Does it refer to Duration in time or to a capability of organizations? What role do leaders play in this matter? Is there a connection between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and company longevity?

Organizational Longevity. For Ahn and Park (2018), Montuori (2000), Kwee (2009), Volberda and Lewin (2003), and Driel *et al.* (2015), organizational longevity denotes long duration, continuity, old age, and endurance over time; hence, these authors understand it as "the sustained existence of a certain commercial entity, including its activities being continued after having merged with another company under equal conditions" (p. 1277). Ben-Mehanen, Kwee and Volberda (2013), Napolitano *et al.* (2015) and Ahmad *et al.* (2019) believe that longevity is an organizational skill that is affected by

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internal and external factors and developed to a great extent by their leaders. Kwee (2009) thinks of it as an organization's ability to renew itself strategically in a sustained manner over time.

Montuori (2000) understands it as an organization's ability to maintain its continuity or durability through strategic renewal over time. According to this author, long-living companies are usually driven by age, yet age itself is a relative measure to define company longevity; in other words, an organization's ability to adapt and learn is the key to survival. This condition the author calls a healthy organization, that is, an organization that feeds off itself and learns to survive.

The leader is an agent of change in learning organizations, a catalyst that transforms and directs the company system. Consequently, to the extent that organizations are complex systems that adapt to their environments (Schneider and Somers, 2006; Bohórquez, 2013), an alignment between the two turns out to be an input to their competitiveness, that is, their longevity has to do with endurance, and this, in turn, with the strategy that its leader chooses to face environmental changes.

Strategic Renewal: Sustainable? or incremental? Strategy and organizational longevity studies present two theoretical perspectives: environmental selection and organizational adaptation (Driel *et al.*, 2015). The first sustains that environmental factors are imposed on the company, factors to which it can react; little can the leader interfere in what happens prior to the production process, aside from strengthening organizational resources. The second states that a company can influence its environment by incorporating new knowledge into its life cycle that is, innovation. In this scenario, the leader plays a relevant role in helping to create and implement the organizational capabilities that favor the necessary conditions for the company to survive and grow.

Burgelman and Grove (2007) bring the complex adaptive systems perspective into the field to address the issue of longevity and find the type of leadership existing in the company is crucial.

> Aligning potentially divergent strategies and keeping them aligned through the induced strategy process is in itself a demanding task. … The appropriate balance of induced and autonomous strategy processes at different times in a firm's evolution can be thought of in terms of linear combinations of the two processes, with varying weights on each over time, and neither of them becoming zero. Finding the correct weightings for each period is top management's ultimate challenge. The process to change these weights can be characterized by an exhortation to let chaos reign during times of non-linear change management and then stop the chaos, but, as we have learned, never quite (p. 978).

Along the same lines of theory, Agarwal and Helfat (2009) assert that strategic renewal implies a fundamental transformation in a company's life cycle: "… it includes the process, content, and outcome of refreshment or replacement of attributes of an organization that have the potential to substantially affect its long-term prospects" (p. 282). These authors distinguish two different types of strategic renewal: the discontinued and the incremental. The first one only reacts to a situation that forces to do so; the second one is part of a process planned out by the firm's leaders and involves the organization as a whole.

Mayfield *et al.* (2007) shed light on the significance of the relationship between organizational strategy and longevity in the U.S. *comic*s industry[7] this means that the leaders' decisions affect their chances of survival. Volberda and Lewin (2003) suggest that the key to organizational longevity is to manage internal rates of change (IRCs) so that they are equal to or exceed external rates of change (ERCs), that is, identify the influences from the environment and decide how and when to change, and thus adapt to survive.

3.4. Co-evolution

Kwee (2009), after presenting the two existing theoretical perspectives to study organizational longevity, proposes a third way

[7] The ANOVA results yielded a relationship significance with a p-value of less than 0.001 (p. 102).

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in which both are integrated: co-evolution. This call Volberda, Bosch, Ben-Meharem, Driel, among other authors, answered. It poses feedback loops between internal and external factors in order to align them and thus increase the chances of survival. In this regard, Driel *et al.* (2015) sustain that "the conceptual framework of Co-evolution considers the interaction between company evolution and its competitive environment, which encompasses the institutional and extra-institutional environment and the competitive dynamics that emerge from that relationship" (p. 1279).

Ben-Mehanen Kwee and Volberda (2013) develop the concept of absorptive capacity as an input to understand the alignment between IRCs and ERCs. Business failure, per these authors, is the result of an inability to adapt; hence, strategic renewal is akin to the ability to self-renew. Absorption capacity materializes organizational learning in procedures that lead the company to set sustainable competitive advantages over time.

> … the literature on longevity suggests that long-living companies should have a tolerant management style and a decentralized structure in place, a strong sense of identity, and follow a conservative financial policy that allows them to strike a balance between exploring new opportunities and exploiting existing activities in their changing selection environment Driel *et al.,* p. 1281, (2015).

3.5. Sustainable Corporate Longevity

Ahmad *et al.* (2019) maintain that most of the existing research shows exceptional cases, companies whose life in the market goes beyond the average age and add that research on what allows a company to survive longer is relatively limited. For these authors, "good performance alone is not enough to predict company life expectancy. Multiple internal and external elements mediate business longevity" (p. w3). Hence, beyond age, longevity refers to a company's ability to adapt to changes in the environment, wherefore the process must remain in place if the organization is to survive; this they call *Sustainable Corporate Longevity* (SCL). Thus,

these authors seek to develop and validate a robust measurement scale for SCL. To that end, they resort to a mixed methodology and a sequential exploratory strategy. The qualitative phase began with an exhaustive literature review that allowed them to identify 21 aspects that determine a company's ability for longevity. Then, they used the Delphi with a 16-expert panel to achieve content validity and adequacy. After four rounds, they came to a consensus for the convergence of 11 general topics, on the basis of which the instrument was developed. The quantitative phase consists of two studies with separate data sets. There were 200 company responses for exploratory factor analysis and 271 responses for the confirmatory factor analysis.

The literature review identified that the critical determinants of SCL are adaptation, flexibility for change, and innovation; with customer satisfaction being the most critical driver of SCL, since financial profitability is not enough for company endurance, leaders must lead the business system towards adaptation and sustainability. In this way, SCL is the ability of a company to survive and is underpinned by internal and external elements. The internal elements the organization can control, and here the leader plays a vital role, whereas the external ones the company cannot control; yet their behavior and trends must be known in order to choose the best possible alternative. For Ahmad *et al.* (2019), "Organizational success largely depends upon the ability of its leaders to anticipate the future needs and challenges and devising the right strategies accordingly" (p. 3).

Survey results derive a five-factor SCL structure: Strategic Outlook, Customer Focus, Learning and Growth Outlook, Internal Capabilities, and External Forces. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.89 to 0.90, proving the internal consistency of the SCL scale reliable. Ahmad *et al.* (2019) proposal adds to the body of knowledge by broadening the existing conceptual framework on SCL and operationalizing the construct for the first time.

3.6. Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Longevity

Sahut, Bouleme, Mili, and Teulon (2012) affirm a relationship between long-surviving

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companies and corporate social responsibility practices. According to these researchers, such a relationship expresses those social changes that translate into new demands on companies, for they are no longer only expected to make profits but to do so respecting social norms and agreements, and also that their production processes be as least impacting as can be, and to compensate interest groups for impacts suffered. In other words, there are connections between organizational longevity and sustainability practices that materialize through CSR. These authors identify six characteristics of long-living companies: strong, leader-created organizational culture, fair assessment of human capital and its performance dynamics, adaptability, controlled growth, financial prudence, synergies with interest groups, and good governance.

Ahn and Park (2018) argue that CSR eases company survival because it becomes a sustainable competitive advantage since it increases its social capital with its primary interest groups and improves legitimacy with secondary interest groups. Per these authors, economic performance is not akin to survival; hence, they intend to gear longevity studies towards a point other than economic performance, for which they study 259 CSR actions in 8 long-living companies in South Korea. For these authors, Geus's proposal inspires the "Dynamic Process Model," which aims to link CSR with long-term company survival.

This theoretical model contains four variables: the independent is the CSR principles, and the dependent is survival. Mediators: social capital and moral legitimacy. The independent variable assumes 7 CSR principles as the analysis criteria that operationalize the core components of the Model. Social capital has to do with an organization's trust and relatableness with its interest groups, and social legitimacy is understood from the consequential, procedural, and personal perspectives. As a dependent variable, survival is modeled in two ways: improved economic performance and reduced threshold. In addition to the four foregoing variables, the Model contains two main processes: relational social capital and moral legitimacy. Through these processes, CSR positively influences company survival.

4. Conclusions

Low organizational longevity is a crucial issue for the managers' community, both for the professional and disciplinary fields, due to their relevance to the fabric of daily life in today's society. Future economic and social scenarios predict that this phenomenon tends to become ingrained and translate into unemployment, poverty, pollution, and further degradation of life's ecosystems. CSR results yield evidence that suggests the existence of relationships between the longevity of organizations and the CSR activities they engage in during their life cycles. These provide them with capabilities that help enhance the conditions that prolong their staying in business with high levels of competitiveness.

Scientific mapping identified the theoretical organizational ecology approach at the base of the field. Two paths fork out of it that seek to differentiate how to define and understand organizational longevity: one eminently financial criteria-based, whereas the other contemplates qualitative aspects for studying and measuring. Organizational longevity is known to go beyond economic performance. This aspect is not necessary to survive since company success is not just akin to and measured through monetary aspects; stable and lasting relationships in each life cycle phase are required for a company to fulfill its missionary purposes.

It is a young and dynamic field of knowledge that becomes strengthened the more research emerges, which displays overtones of an intellectual structure with a common ground in authors that are grounded in the works of Hannan and Freeman from the '70s and '80s, and that of Burgelman and Grove from this Century's 00's decade. The conceptual structure highlights terms that appear coherent and logically articulated into the exposed narrative and fall into the research agenda resulting from CSR, which accounts for convergence with CSR. The main weakness of the field is rooted in its lack of networks and collaboration between journals, authors, and institutions interested in this topic.

Strategic renewal, that is, the ability of an organization to align-align itself with the environment in which it operates and

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thus maintain or enhance its competitive advantage, is a crossover point for the various theoretical perspectives of the field. From this point of view, organizations adapt to the environment and make the environment adapt to them; that is, there is a feedback loop that affects the system and its environment. The co-evolutionary approach implies an active leadership role since the leader directs and offers inputs for making decisions concerning some process and/or procedure in which companies see themselves immersed in the course of their life cycles.

Leadership processes gain unparalleled relevance in this context, to the extent that it is the leaders who define and implement liaisoning strategies with their stakeholders, which favor harmonious and sustainable co-evolution, thereby strengthening internal and external capabilities and skills, and leading to explore the characteristics and potentialities of their environment in order to increase their chances of survival. CSR favors this end by creating sustainable competitive advantages underlined by legitimate and transparent relationships with the players that companies interact with in the course of their life cycles.

5. Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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