

Sharing economy in Sinaloa: analysis and positions of entrepreneurs in the restaurant industry

Economía colaborativa en Sinaloa: análisis y posturas de empresarios en la industria restaurantera

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ABSTRACT

The current global health and economic crisis caused by COVID-19 has opened the possibility of adopting new business cooperation models to adapt to the challenges presented by the environment, one of them is the so-called collaborative economy which is managing to consolidate an economic concept with a market value of more than 100 million euros, unlike Mexico, these schemes are hardly appreciated in the restaurant industry. Based on the grounded theory and with the objective of analyzing whether entrepreneurs recognize the concept of what the collaborative economy represents from a perspective of support for the benefit of the changes that have occurred in the industry, we have examined 4 representative CEOs of organizations positioned in the gastronomic sector of Sinaloa-Mexico. The methodology used is qualitative with a naturalistic approach and the main findings are that gastronomic companies with a vision in the collaborative economy develop a more inclusive and sustainable business model to benefit society since they combine social development and economic growth.

Keywords: sharing economy, restaurant industry, COVID 19, economic model.

RESUMEN

La actual crisis sanitaria y económica mundial provocada por el COVID-19 ha abierto la posibilidad de adoptar nuevos modelos de cooperación empresarial para adaptarse a los retos que presenta el entorno, uno de ellos es la llamada economía colaborativa que está logrando consolidar un concepto económico. Con un valor de mercado de más de 100 millones de euros, a diferencia de México, estos esquemas apenas son apreciados en la industria de la restauración. Con base en

la teoría fundamentada y con el objetivo de analizar si los emprendedores reconocen el concepto de lo que representa la economía colaborativa desde una perspectiva de apoyo en beneficio de los cambios ocurridos en la industria, hemos examinado a 4 CEOs representativos de organizaciones posicionadas en el sector gastronómico de Sinaloa-México. La metodología utilizada es cualitativa con un enfoque naturalista y los principales hallazgos son que las empresas gastronómicas con una visión en la economía colaborativa desarrollan un modelo de negocio más inclusivo y sostenible en beneficio de la sociedad ya que combinan desarrollo social y crecimiento económico.

Palabras clave: economía colaborativa, industria restaurantera, COVID 19, modelo económico.

Introduction

The restaurant industry is one of the main economic sectors in Mexico, according to data from the National Chamber of the Restaurant and Seasoned Food Industry (CANIRAC, 2019), this commercial sector has an effect on 83 percent of the branches of economic activity, which implies a contribution of 1.8 percent in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Even as other sectors of the economy, this guild has been affected by the global public health problem derived by COVID 19, even several authors agree that this health crisis has led to unforeseen changes in both the socioeconomic structure and in different aspects related to the form of consumption, demographics, economy and above all, the inclusion of technology in everyday life, to such an extent that companies are looking for new strategies and business models to adapt to the challenges presented by the environment (Acevedo-Duque, Á., Jiménez-Bucarey, C., Prado-Sabido, T., Fernández-Mantilla, M. M., Merino-Flores, I., Izquierdo-Marín, S. S., & Valle-Palomino, N. (2023). These new models are now known as alternative consumption, sustainable consumption, solidarity consumption, among others that are being incorporated with similar characteristics, and precisely within the alternative consumption arises the so-called collaborative economy which has emerged changing the traditional ways of doing business and consuming, being

technology and specifically the use of internet its main driving factor.

In this context it is necessary to investigate whether entrepreneurs recognize the concept of what the collaborative economy represents from a perspective of support for the benefit of the changes that have occurred in the industry in order to adapt to the new ways of continuing to operate in the market and, above all, to know the degree of acceptance in the eyes of the owners and leaders of the restaurant industry in Mexico (Duque, Á. E. A., Díaz, R. R. G., Delard, C. G., & Sánchez, L. (2021). Based on these premises, this paper aims to construct the concept of collaborative economy from a descriptive theoretical framework, as well as the analysis of the business experience of the restaurant industry in Mexico and its approach to this new model after the crisis caused by COVID 19, which is presented in four questions to be answered: 1. Do entrepreneurs in Sinaloa know what is collaborative economy? 2. What is the degree of acceptance of the collaborative economy by entrepreneurs? and 4. To this end, a qualitative study has been carried out which contributes to offer an initial approximation to clarify the perceptions of Sinaloa restaurant entrepreneurs about the collaborative economy.

1. Overview of the Mexican restaurant industry in times of Covid-19

The restaurant industry is one of the main economic sectors in Mexico. Figures from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2019), show that, in Mexico, during 2018 economic units dedicated to the preparation of food and beverages generated 247,360 million pesos, this represented 1.1% of the country's total GDP in the same year. Worldwide, Mexican cuisine occupies one of the first places in quality and gastronomic variety (Romero, 2018).

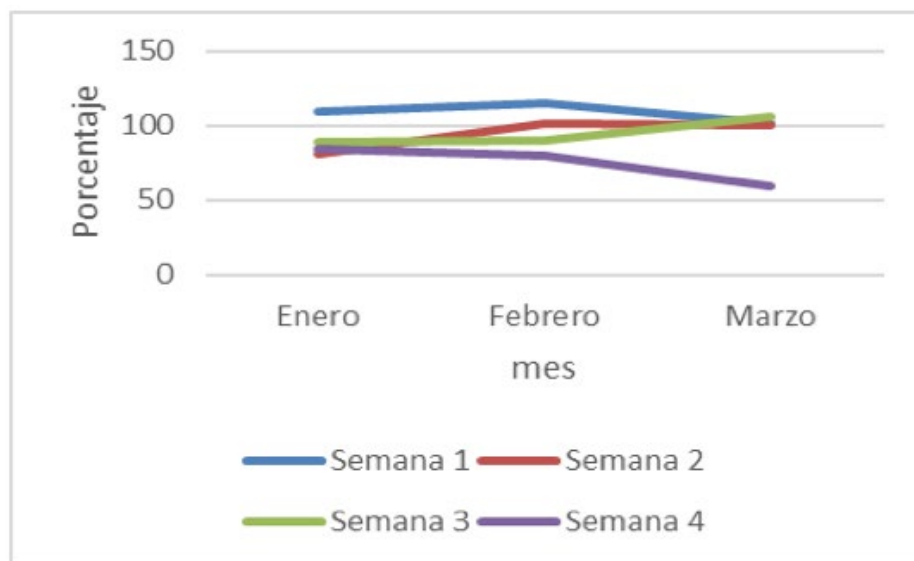
In the national context of the total number of restaurant units, 96 percent are micro, small or medium-sized establishments, according to figures from the National Statistical Directory of Economic Units (DENUE, 2017), which are the engine of growth due to their contribution to job generation. Like

other sectors of the economy, the industry has been affected by the worldwide public health problem stemming from COVID 19 (González-Díaz, R. R., Acevedo-Duque, Á. E., Flores-Ledesma, K. N., Cruz-Ayala, K., & Guanilo Gomez, S. L. 2021).

The main problem brought about by this sanitary emergency is its high rate of contagion, a characteristic that has led all nations to take an extreme solution: social distancing, a measure that has caused the closure of thousands of Mexican restaurants (regardless of their age or tradition).

According to the financial technology organization Konfío, during 2020 the restaurant sector in Mexico recorded significant declines since February of the same year, a period marked by the official start of the "healthy distance" day in Mexico (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Moving average of revenues January - March 2020



Note: the graph represents the average percentage of revenues in the restaurant industry in Mexico in the first quarter of 2020. Taken from the financial company Konfío data (2020)

With a significant rebound in revenues in the last week of January, the situation for restaurants looked positive for the year; however, it was in the second month that the instability of the sector began and in the last week of March the restaurant sector suffered a general 40% drop in revenues (Jiménez-Bucarey, C., Acevedo-Duque, Á., Müller-Pérez, S., Aguilar-Gallardo, L., Mora-Moscoso, M., & Vargas, E. C. 2021). Without a doubt this pandemic has had an immediate effect on all industries, to such an extent that it has forced thousands of entrepreneurs to rethink whether this crisis can be seen as a moment of opportunity not only for those who have survived, but for a definitive change in the traditional business models.

2. Concept and characteristics of the collaborative economy (CE)

According to Bostman and Rogers (2010); Rinne (2019); Rodriguez (2017), the collaborative economy also called sharing economy, connected consumption or exchange, can be defined as that model that allows people to access goods and services that otherwise could not or would be more difficult to afford, in a way that generates greater economic participation through the inclusion of different segments of the population (Kalia, P., Mladenović, D., & Acevedo-Duque, Á. 2022).

Unlike the capitalist system, Salinas (2019) mentions that it is an economy in which there is the possibility of using, exchanging or leasing goods or services, without the need to proceed with their acquisition where the user converges with a sustainable mentality, which seeks to save and obtain extra income, with a more efficient use of resources and which goes against environmental and social problems (Kumar, N., Kaliyan, M., Thilak, M., & Acevedo-Duque, Á. 2021).

For some authors such as Alba and Olarte, this new consumption model is also considered an emerging concept in the business and social sphere, where in recent years the emergence of new business opportunities and the generation of ideas supported by communication technologies has been raised, coinciding with the proposal of Melián et al., (2019) who mention that the CE is considered a digital labor market as it occurs through digital media which can open the doors to opportunities for social and economic inclusion (Marcano, A. I. P., Acevedo-Duque, Á., & Mora, B. S. R. 2021).

Similarly, Melián et al., (2019) state that CE promotes the creation of small business networks and the transformation of communities through the development of capabilities related to the Internet and mobile technologies, an idea that converges with Jiménez et al. , who adds that in a collaborative the resources of the economy are shared and the encounter with the other creates a capital that generates value, space for social exchange, capacity for mutual cooperation, and in the end gives rise to generate a community identity (Müller, J., Acevedo-Duque, Á., Müller, S., Kalia, P., & Mehmood, K. 2021).

In this context, it can be stated that the CE promotes a more self-sufficient economy with social and economic benefits that are achieved through the formation of business networks having as a participatory agent the use of the Internet and new technologies, these options being the best channel to reach a larger audience with greater ease of communication (Müller, J., Acevedo-Duque, Á., Müller, S., Kalia, P., & Mehmood, K. 2021).

On the other hand, Irigaray (2020) confirms that within CE there are several types of relationships between consumer and

producer that vary according to needs and products, while Bostman and Rogers (2010) distinguish three collaborative consumption systems, which are described as: 1. Product service system; allows access to goods instead of buying them 2. Redistribution markets; products with a useful life, the consumer no longer uses or stores them and makes them available to other consumers. 3. Collaborative business; includes the exchange of less tangible assets (workspaces, financing, knowledge, time, among others).

While another way of classifying CE models is the one proposed by Boston College professor Juliet Schor (2016), who states that, within the boundaries of collaborative consumption, there are great differences between platforms therefore she establishes a matrix of three criteria: the criterion of the activity, the criterion of profit and the criterion of the actors of the exchange (Tatay and Valor, 2018, Rajak, S., Vimal, K. E. K., Arumugam, S., Parthiban, J., Sivaraman, S. K., Kandasamy, J., & Duque, A. A. 2022).

3. CE in the restaurant industry and its adoption in Mexico

In Kimes' (2019) idea in the restaurant industry has developed the availability of online delivery service technology which has allowed the industry, which is in a saturated market, to "optimize order accuracy, increase productivity and improve customer relations" (Kimes, 2019). He even mentions that this development is an opportunity and a challenge for restaurants because it creates strong competition among them (Rojo-Ramos, J., González-Becerra, M. J., Gómez-Paniagua, S., Carlos-Vivas, J., Acevedo-Duque, Á., & Adsuar, J. C. 2022).

Continuing with the idea, Morillo states that the explosion of *delivery* or delivery

service is leading to the emergence of new business models in the restaurant industry and some of them even driven by the delivery operators themselves, and although the issue is not something new for the food sector, it was the arrival of the crisis by COVID 19, which was responsible for accelerating changes in digitization and delivery systems (Shah, S. K., Tang, Z., Yuan, J., Popp, J., & Acevedo-Duque, Á. 2023).

Although the collaborative economy model is relatively new, this new way of doing business can already be seen in Mexico, and although the advantages of this model have been previously mentioned, it is also relative to talk about the challenges it represents for a country where they are just beginning to adapt this economic model (Saiz-Álvarez, J. M., Vega-Muñoz, A., Acevedo-Duque, Á., & Castillo, D. 2020).

An example is what Quintero (2019) points out in reference to the range of legal regulations that this model affects in various fields: issues that correspond to competition between companies; tax obligations, and user protection, are some of the topics that are still being debated on the table and particularly in Mexico, since there are no initiatives that involve reforms to public policies with this economic model. In the case of Uber in Mexico, only in 2019 the fiscal obligation to pay VAT and ISR was incorporated and therefore to any *delivery* service provided digitally (Sandoval-Obando, E., Pareja Arellano, N., Acevedo-Duque, Á., Riquelme-Brevis, H., Hernández-Mosqueira, C., & Rivas-Valenzuela, J. 2022).

4. Methodology (materials and methods)

The qualitative research methodology recognizes the human being as a producer

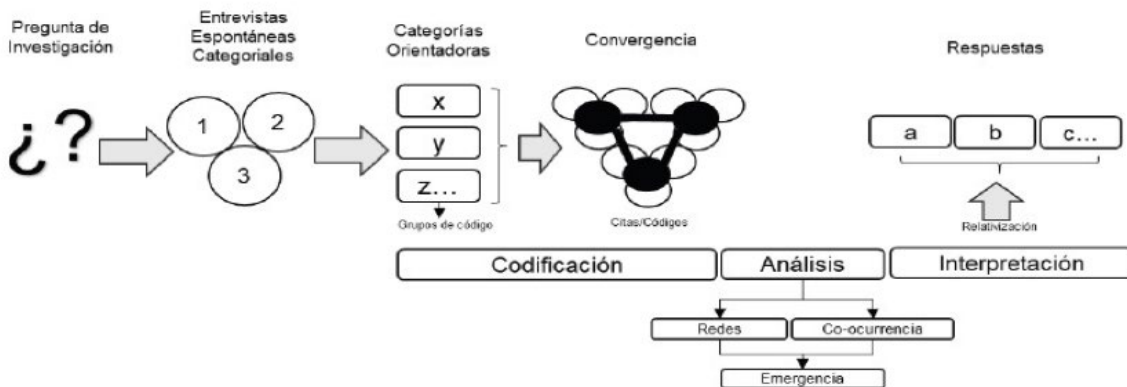
of knowledge, to understand reality through the construction of “meanings” rescuing the heterogeneity of society (Benites, González-Díaz, Acevedo-Duque and Becerra-Pérez, 2021). For this study, phenomenology and the grounded theory of Heidegger and Strauss trace an argumentative axis towards the defense of the specific character of human reality in the face of the challenges of sustainability that makes it irreducible to the categories of analysis of physical reality whose essence are objects or material things (Ullah, F., Wu, Y., Mehmood, K., Jabeen, F., Iftikhar, Y., Acevedo-Duque, Á., & Kwan, H. K. 2021).

This qualitative research with a naturalistic approach was structured following the procedure of González-Díaz et al., (2022) who configured the hermeneutic analysis in 4 phases (see Figure 3). In the same way, we emphasized a conceptual and theoretical approach based on grounded theory (Boe and Torgersen, 2018), since concepts and data relationships are continuously produced and re-examined to be considered rigorous as scientific research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

In this work, and given the heterogeneity and diversity of Latin America as a

geographical area (López, 2016; Manzano, 2016; Paolasso, 2020), we have used the semi-structured interview to contact CEOs and managers working in these ventures. The unit of analysis is Sinaloa-Mexico because its diversity and heterogeneity make the conclusions obtained in this study applicable to other regions and continents of the planet. Based on grounded theory, we collected and analyzed the discourses of 4 key informant CEOs who are representatives of the restaurant industry in Sinaloa-Mexico (Product/Service, Country) through the use of four pre-codes, as they identify the collaborative economy: Degree of acceptance (pc01), More than 5 years of experience in the field (pc02), Actors and interest groups, (pc03) Economic growth, (pc04) Knowledge in collaborative economy in the company. We supplemented these pre-codes with codes (axial coding, acxx) that were interpreted as emergent and relational functions, such as “is associated with”, “is part of”, “is the cause of”, “contradicts”, “is one” and “is the property of”, to shape a resulting proposition (rpxx). The results are shown and discussed in the following sections (Díaz, R. R. G., Duque, Á. E. A., Gómez, S. L. G., & Ayala, K. C. 2021).

Figure 3. González-Díaz et al. (2022) 5-phase hermeneutic analysis.



Stage 1. Problem Question (PP): The study responds to three key questions that challenge the different approaches to the problem and direct the direction of the research. The methodology was applied according to the informants' perspectives on each specific topic. Stage 2. Spontaneous Categorical Interviews (CCI): The construction of the CCIs is based on three approaches which direct the direction of the research for its analysis. These were applied to key informants in order to determine the guiding categories (Vergara, O., Acevedo, Á., & González, Y. 2019).

Stage 3. Guiding Categories (CO): Taking into consideration the responses of

4 key informants, from different restaurants according to the following criteria: More than 5 years of experience in the field, stakeholders and interest groups, economic growth, knowledge in collaborative economy.

Stage 4. Convergence (C): The convergence of informants is grouped according to the guiding categories by means of quotations and open codes. With this, the results were established, highlighting the substantiated information and the density of each category (González-Díaz, R., Acevedo Duque, Á., Martín Fiorino, V., & Cachicatari Vargas, E. 2022).

Table 1. *Distribution of the unit of analysis*

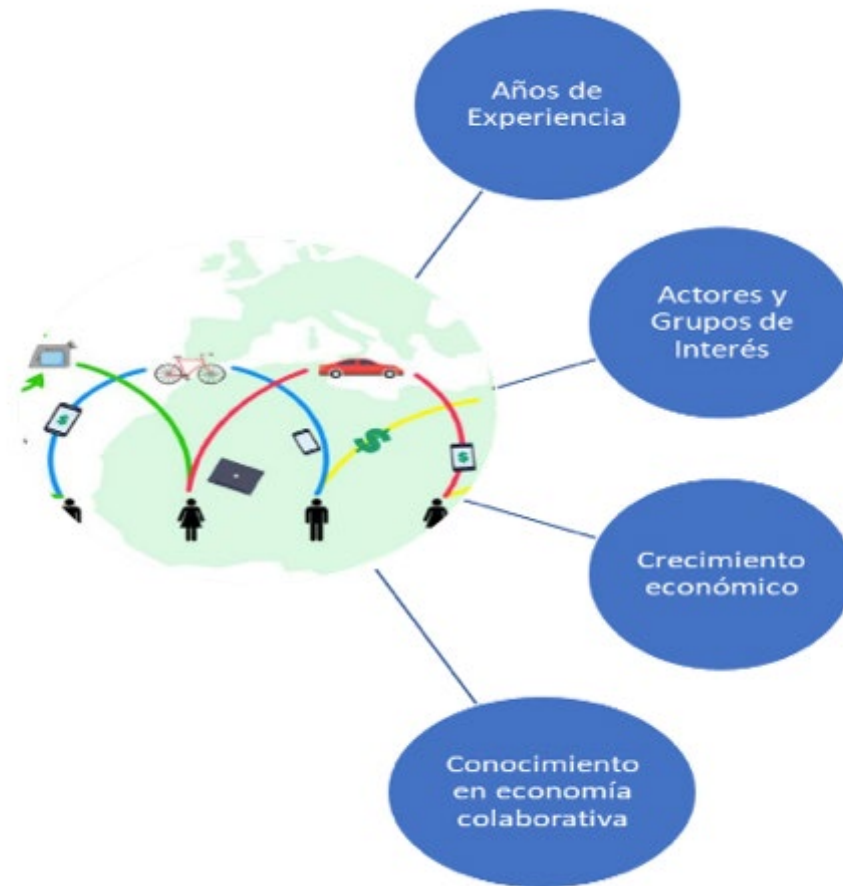
InformantsKeys	Industry	City	Years of experience	Number of branches	Number of collaborators
Virtual restaurant expert 001	Restaurant	Sinaloa	15	8	10
Restaurant entrepreneur 002	Restaurant	Sinaloa	11	12	25
Leader of the CANIRAC 003 restaurant guild	Restaurant	Sinaloa	19	22	30
Academic Expert in Entrepreneurship 004	Education	Sinaloa	13	11	20

5. Results

From the interviews analyzed below, the restaurant companies combine the benefit of the collaborative economy through important actions (economic, social and ecological) and social development to create a production model defined by the impact of the company

in four components (or factors): More than 5 years of experience in the industry, actors and stakeholders, economic growth and knowledge in collaborative economy. Business impact is monitored by standards of transparency and accountability in management (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Impact factors on companies. Own elaboration.



Results of years of experience

Work experience is the set of skills and knowledge acquired by a person or group in a specific job, or during a specific period of time. In other words, experience in the gastronomic field refers not only to the work itself, but also to what has been learned from it (Villar, M. F., Araya-Castillo, L. A., Yáñez-Jara, V. M., & Acevedo, A. E. 2019).

“The experience gained in sustaining ourselves during the pandemic crisis was vital and was a mechanism that allowed us to reinvent ourselves to continue operating.” Key informant 001.

“Actions were table reservations, pre-order request prior to arrival at the restaurant.” Key informant 002.

“Home delivery, purchases, service payments and service procedures online”. Key informant 003.

“I met an entrepreneur with few years of entrepreneurship (5) and with the desire to help him in the start-up after the crisis by COVID 19, I integrated him to work collaboratively using the same space at different times to operate.” Key informant 004.

“I consider that the restaurant industry has challenges to adapt to the new models

of collaborative economy as an example I consider that it is necessary to improve service policies, they still lack a lot in the sense that they are not being symmetrical with users and I also consider that it is necessary to legalize them at least as in other countries that have already started with the protection of users and consumers". Key informant 002 (Vimal, K. E. K., Kandasamy, J., & Duque, A. A. 2021).

Stakeholders Results

When only the economic dimension is taken into account, stakeholders of restaurant companies in Sinaloa tend to privilege interest groups, since they are the main beneficiaries of the productive aspect of the good (consumer) or service (user) offered in the market. However, when the support, social and economic dimensions of production are combined, stakeholders tend to be less powerful. This is the case in companies in this sector, where stakeholders benefit only from the support and economic dimension, and stakeholders take advantage of the social and economic dimension of the business model:

"Our company aims to provide healthy and inclusive food, create opportunities in the world of work for our employees in situation, and solve problems related to environmental impact by recycling waste." Key informant 003.

Likewise, stakeholders influence the State as explicitly as recognized in the following statement from another key informant:

"We have strengthened the mission of private, social and governmental projects. When we created our company, we realized that all projects with collaborative thinking needed reliable stakeholders." Key informant 001.

"In his business vision, he shares that today's markets are no longer children, nor are the big restaurants, now the goal is to simplify as much as possible and reach the customer as quickly as possible with the same quality that you know how to do in the restaurant." Key informant 004.

"In the same way, he considers that he fully agrees with the benefits it brings to the industry and some of them recognize that this type of economy facilitates the control of the processes in the operation of a restaurant and that it is a system that generates confidence in the participants, both the consumer who is making use of the product and the supplier who provides the service or good. The development of societies is closely linked to their capacity to apply knowledge in the field to face the challenges of an increasingly complex and demanding world". Key informant 002.

Economic growth results

More significant economic development does not necessarily imply greater human development because the factors that affect human development do not have the same impact on economic growth. Therefore, increasing per capita GDP is not enough. Still, it is necessary to improve living conditions, respect for the environment and increase social welfare (Amate and Guarnido, 2011). Therefore, the social contribution made by companies in the gastronomy industry contributes to boosting economic growth and human development, as seen in the key informants:

"I am super open to this concept in fact in this place we are incubating something for the mornings and the program here from a start was made for the evening trying to reach new clients" Key informant 003.

“To begin with, have an open mind that you can have the same point of sale in one place where you can have more than one kitchen or more than one line of food” Key informant 002.

“Our goal is to solve people’s needs to generate wellness, health and quality nutrition, to generate shared value through good practices and fair trade. We also apply a responsible and innovative approach in the generation of sustainable businesses and products to promote a healthy planet through productive practices with low environmental impact.” Key informant 004.

“I firmly believe that every time, as people live faster and faster and have less time, I think we have to find a way to reach them, which in this case can use home service platforms, small point of sales, or whatever you can think of, we have to implement it” Key informant 001.

Knowledge results in collaborative economy

Companies in the gastronomy sector are generally interested in obtaining certification in any of the three areas (recognition and quality) to improve their corporate image, strengthen their brand in the market and attract new clients and partners. By way of example, the following statements from key informants are included:

“Companies face the challenge of remaining relevant in the new digital environment. In this process, they need to minimize their risks, optimize their opportunities and, above all, deliver on their collaborative strategy leveraged on the right technology, through business-focused software testing. As a result of this business strategy, we have enabled and enhanced our competitive advantage in the

digital transformation of enterprises.” Key Informant 001.

“In reference to the knowledge of the collaborative economy, indeed I do know it and some of its characteristics mostly highlight the use of digital marketing in cooperation networks and also that they carry out a distribution of delivery of orders, we fully agree with the benefits it gives to the industry and we recognize that they are a type of economy that facilitates the control of the processes in the operation of a restaurant, besides it is a system that generates confidence to the participants both the consumer who is making use of the product and the supplier that provides the service or good”. Key informant 002.

“The truth is that I do not recognize that it is a collaborative economy in the gastronomic sector, however, I think I recognize some of its characteristics such as cost reduction, financing opportunities, recognition, and scope”. Key informant 003.

“Of course I recognize it, collaborative economy or consumption is an economic model where users take advantage of new technologies to lend, buy, sell, share or rent goods and services.” Key informant 004.

6. Discussion of results

According to our results, the collaborative economy in the gastronomy industry is based on social and economic factors that reduce the centrality of the market, especially when combined with knowledge dimensions and interest groups. The idea, complements Sharma et al., (2018), who conducted 24 interviews with leaders in this industry to verify that they generally change their practice settings as they go through assessment and reassessment processes to achieve recognition and some certifications.

Exogenous factors, such as the size and sector of the company, and endogenous factors, such as the nature of the company and the business strategies they pursue to maximize their impact on society, are affected when companies are transformed into gastronomic sales companies. These adapt to the market and comply with an inductively derived theoretical framework based on three basic components: affordability, interpretability and social references. As a result, organizations change and positively impact administrations, as they are able to make good practices a reality.

The components in the gastronomic world are actions or efforts recognized worldwide inserted in the cooperative model and the social and food economy. Our contribution is how they combine, articulate and contextualize their management through a collaborative economy. The collaborative economy model in the gastronomic industry renews the activity of the company and explores how these activities can have external effects that stimulate economic welfare beyond the boundaries of the organization (Stephan et al., 2016). In this way, the creation of shared value (CSV) developed by Porter and Kramer (2011) crystallizes in the search for a new capitalism that transcends shared responsibility (Muñoz-Martín, 2013). This fact opens the discussion on new forms of social resignification of business (Bocken et al., 2014; de Bakker et al., 2020).

7. Conclusions

Based on the discourses related to business practices carried out by companies in the gastronomic industry in Sinaloa, the combination of productive management skills, good corporate reputation and shared responsibility policies, linked to the economic, social and ecological benefits

of the company contributes to achieving recognition that strengthens the corporate image of the organization.

The findings provided by our research confirm, more broadly, that these companies use market laws based on the collaborative economy to respond to the economic, social and environmental problems faced by companies in this industry. As a result, gastronomic companies can develop a more inclusive and sustainable economy in partnership with other companies in the same industry. The results are consistent with those recently identified in other countries.

This study has extended existing research on the collaborative economy in the restaurant industry beyond organizational issues, consumer behavior, market convenience and responsible consumption. Restaurant companies are now facing an adverse scenario triggered by the SARS-CoV-2 health crisis (COVID 19). They are learning from the adaptations that organizations are implementing to maintain business activity in contexts of social distancing, quarantine and teleworking. Given its economic advantages and social impact, it is foreseeable that the creation of restaurant businesses will gradually increase, once the economic effects of this pandemic disappear. As a result, these socio-economically related enterprises may be one of the main pillars of the post-crisis COVID.

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