

Sustainable Strategic Management in Service-Based SMES in Córdoba, Colombia

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Abstract:

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the service sector, located in intermediate regions such as Córdoba, Colombia, sustainability and competitiveness are fundamental priorities. Strategic management emerges as a decisive approach to addressing current challenges, including digitalization, operational efficiency, and the promotion of sustainable development. This aligns with the principles of the Córdoba 2052 Competitiveness and Productivity Agenda.

The study stems from a research project in Managerial Sciences, conducted within the Business Administration program at Universidad del Sinú. Its central aim is to identify the critical factors that influence sustainable strategic management in service-based SMEs in the Córdoba region. The methodology follows a quantitative approach, through the application of structured surveys to 120 formally registered business managers. Instrument validity was ensured by expert judgment, and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.85.

The results highlight three key findings. First, there is a clear need to strengthen managerial competencies in strategic planning, with an identified improvement margin of 20%. Second, the integration of sustainability criteria into operational processes is limited, as only 45% of respondents reported applying this approach consistently or frequently. Third, technological constraints continue to hinder digital transformation, with approximately 50% of companies showing restricted implementation of digital tools. These findings reveal structural gaps in the managerial capacity of SMEs to adapt to dynamic environments.

Based on this analysis, several strategies are proposed: strengthening data-driven decision-making, building multidisciplinary management teams, integrating environmental sustainability, adopting accessible digital tools, and promoting business learning networks. These proposals contribute to narrowing strategic gaps and effectively implementing policies aligned with the Córdoba 2052 vision.