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Management Indicators for the Organisational Sustainability of Associative Productive Ventures

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Abstract: Associative enterprises linked to the social economy continue to be an important economic alternative for small producers, generating decent work opportunities for people excluded from the formal labour market and contributing to sustainable development. The social and economic importance of this type of initiative has prompted several scientific publications on its success factors, leaving a gap in its practicality, raising the question: How can success factors of associative productive ventures be integrated into management indicators that promote their organisational sustainability? The aim is to define and prioritise management indicators that promote associative productive ventures through the analysis of key success factors. This study was carried out using a combination of BSC management methodology and AHP multicriteria decision making, based on a bibliographic review of success factors and the criteria of experts including managers of consolidated production associations in Quito-Ecuador. The results show that the indicators of participatory leadership, technical training and labour integration are the most relevant in the consolidation of associative productive ventures, prompting the conclusion that the prioritisation and integration of business and social management indicators would boost the organisational sustainability of associative ventures.

Keywords: associative entrepreneurship; social enterprise; key success factors; balanced scorecard (BSC); analytic hierarchy process (AHP)

Citation: Guananga, L.A.; Poveda-Bautista, R.; García-Melón, M. Management Indicators for the Organisational Sustainability of Associative Productive Ventures. *Sustainability* **2023**, *15*, 16166. https://doi.org/10.3390/su152316166

Academic Editors: George Saridakis, Bochra Idris, Yazid Abubakar Abdullahi, Sandra Sookram and Stephan Weiler

Received: 13 September 2023
Revised: 8 November 2023
Accepted: 11 November 2023
Published: 21 November 2023

Correction Statement: This article has been republished with a minor change. The change does not affect the scientific content of the article and further details are available within the backmatter of the website version of this article.

1. Introduction

Associative enterprises of social and solidarity economy, considered as private economic initiatives that operate under doctrinal principles to satisfy needs collectively, are shown to be a viable alternative for popular segments. This is especially true in times of crisis, where large amounts of capital are not required for productive activation, but rather the contribution from the work of the members.

Social enterprises of this nature have attracted the interest of researchers, academics, government, entrepreneurs and professionals from different disciplines due to their potential to address social problems such as poverty [1]. Despite being formed with scarce resources, they are good generators of income and work mainly in periods of long economic recession, given their capacity to create social capital and restore solidarity in their communities [2–4], contributing to democratising systems of social welfare and economic development.

The growing interest of governments in this type of entrepreneurship is evidenced in the Madrid 2007 agreement [5], where representatives of European countries are committed to generating policies to support entrepreneurship under social economy models, as a formula for the creation of inclusive employment and a more just, equitable and sustainable society, which is related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 8 [6], and various public initiatives that promote a more inclusive sustainable development, involving the broadest strata of society [7].

The enterprises linked to the social and solidarity economy are constituted with private capital and seek mainly to generate employment, providing the opportunity for workplace

inclusion for social groups excluded from the formal labour market, fostering labour dignity and solidarity under sustainable economic growth.

These ventures arise from the recognition of collective needs, using the market to generate job opportunities and prioritising social objectives over financial aims [2]. These ventures are presented as a mechanism to generate social value, which is a marked trend in recent years, abandoning the traditional business venture that focuses on achieving a tangible economic value [8].

Economic initiatives under traditional social economy models such as cooperatives and associations assume principles of redistribution and reciprocity, promoting a social and solidarity economy compatible with the market [9], where associations, which constitute a secondary level of solidarity that exceeds the domestic productive unit, link ideological-cultural and economic dimensions to satisfy needs collectively [10].

In Ecuador, associative production enterprises of the Popular and Solidarity Economy (PSE), related to social and supportive economy, have increased in recent years, registering 5640 organisations in 2012 and 16,185 in 2021, which represents a threefold increase in 9 years, also showing a significant participation of women and senior citizens, according to data from the Superintendence of Popular and Solidarity Economy [11].

The productive associative enterprises EPS in Ecuador that make up the so-called real EPS sector arise mostly as associations, maintaining a concentration of 82% compared to cooperatives or other community forms that account for 18%; these organisations are mainly engaged in textile and agricultural production, as well as in the provision of transportation and cleaning services [11]. It is important to note that the productive sectors of textile and agriculture, where the organisations of popular and solidarity economy (OPES) have greater participation, also represent the main economic sectors that contribute to the non-oil national GDP [12].

The EPS sector is present nationwide, with the largest number of organisations being located in the most populated provinces with the highest concentration of poverty. It is known that 69% of these organisations originate in rural areas with more than 50% of the population living in poverty, where the associates, who in addition to having scarce resources also have a low level of education, are motivated to start and maintain this type of organisation due to the lack of employment and the possibility of productive solidarity [11].

The productive, commercial and financial activities undertaken by these types of enterprises to satisfy needs through the market involve business management actions, which, when weak or scarce, constrain organisational sustainability and consolidation.

In the area of associative ventures, sustainability, which includes the organisational capacity to survive autonomously once a process of institutional support has been completed [8], and organisational consolidation, which shows good performance in the start-up of the venture [13], demonstrate the administrative capacity to generate financial and social results that strengthen the continuity of the organisation, avoiding the desertion of its members and organisational disintegration [14].

Organisational sustainability, which is related to achieving a viable business over time [15], involves a balance between the economic, social and environmental spheres, where the temporal, intergenerational and transgenerational components lead to privileging one sphere over the other [16]. Knowing the dimensions or criteria that should be privileged in the entrepreneurial phase in current situations would boost the organisational sustainability of social and solidarity economy productive associations.

The interest in the sustainability, consolidation and development of associative enterprises of social and solidarity economy has given rise to several publications on the success factors in this type of initiative. Pending the practicality of these factors through relevant management indicators according to organisational conditions, the research question arises: How does one integrate success factors of associative productive enterprises in management indicators that favour organisational sustainability? From which these specific questions arise: How are management indicators defined based on success factors? How are relevant indicators determined for the sustainability of associative productive ventures?

Success factors, if properly managed, are variables responsible for the achievement of an organisation's objectives [17], allowing it to take advantage of actions and strategies of successful cases, strengthening internal factors that develop strengths and take advantage of opportunities in the environment.

From the managerial approach, analysing and managing the internal success factors according to the different functional areas are considered as strengths or strong points for the company that can have a positive impact on the success of the creation and further development of the company [18–20], demonstrating that the development and survival of business initiatives does not depend so much on having a good business idea, but on its proper execution and management [21].

Strategic management with appropriate indicators for the cooperative sector that rescue its philosophical basis of mutuality, autonomy and trust would make it possible to operate organisations on the basis of service management and social recognition towards organisational consolidation [22].

Management indicators are quantitative expressions of performance, which, when applied systematically and comprehensively, enable organisations to achieve their strategic objectives, under key and interdependent areas of performance [23]. The selection and prioritisation of these indicators are essential for their proper application, where a single indicator such as financial performance cannot capture the complexity of its progress, and the excess of measures distracts and saturates [24,25].

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC), developed in 1992, establishes a comprehensive business management follow-up through functional management perspectives and indicators that allow directing actions towards the achievement of the vision and mission; it communicates and promotes better organisational performance [26], considered as the most widely used strategic management tool to improve organisational performance [15], the BSC can be adapted to specific situations of each organisation.

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) methodology, which has become the most widely used multicriteria method for prioritising decision alternatives in organisational environments [15], allows us to identify the most relevant elements for better decision making [27], which complements the BSC methodology, generating a systemic ordering of relevant indicators for organisational sustainability and development.

The combination of BSC-AHP methodologies proves to be appropriate for the definition of key organisational performance indicators, reducing subjectivity [28], suggesting its application in the search for organisational sustainability [15], mainly in enterprises where resources and knowledge are scarce.

The business and social objectives, shared ownership and administration that characterise productive associative ventures of social and solidarity economy require different management indicators that are still weak in the sustainability and development of this type of social enterprises [29].

The absence of management information limits the sustainability and consolidation of an associative enterprise; the lack of clarity of activities and objectives aimed at achieving the organisational vision generates mistrust, confusion and loss of commitment to the associative initiative.

The aim of this research is to define and prioritise management indicators that promote the sustainability of productive associative ventures through the analysis and integration of success factors, allowing the managers of these ventures to promote relevant actions in the organisational consolidation and generating confidence in the partners and people interested in the progress of these ventures.

The divergence between economic and social goals involved in the performance of associative productive enterprises in the social and solidarity economy promotes the combined application of BSC management methodologies and AHP multicriteria decision making to define and integrate management indicators based on the analysis of success factors, demonstrating in this research the feasibility of systemically integrating relevant business and social indicators in the sustainability and consolidation of the aforementioned enterprises.

2. Research Methodology

The present study, which aims to define and prioritise management indicators that promote the sustainability and consolidation of associative productive enterprises of the social and solidarity economy, is based on a bibliographic review of key success factors identified in specialised publications and registered in the Scopus database in the last 10 years.

The research was developed under a mixed approach, applying the qualitative method in the first instance, through which management indicators were defined supported by a literature review, semi-structured interviews with experts and content analysis. The definition of indicators was carried out under the integral functional structure offered by the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) methodology.

Secondly, management indicators are ranked using the multicriteria Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) methodology, under a quantitative approach, supported by a questionnaire distributed to experts.

The definition of indicators under the combined BSC-AHP technique based on success factors is considered more effective than the traditional ones, because it allows working with variables of organisational experiences in similar conditions, maintaining a hierarchical systemic order; where the integral systemic model proposed by the BSC methodology is considered one of the greatest innovations in the field of organisational performance management techniques [30]. The AHP methodology has become one of the most widely used multicriteria methods for prioritising decision alternatives in business environments [31–33].

The AHP multicriteria decision technique allows the integration of expert judgements under a hierarchical model, assuming independent criteria under paired comparisons and generating weights under a matrix model, thus prioritising elements and reducing subjectivity [34], which was considered convenient for the development of this research.

A total of ten experts collaborated in the work, six of whom were managers of consolidated production associations that were running for more than 5 years and four of whom were consultants in business management with at least 5 years' experience in accompanying associative productive enterprises, who, working in institutions supporting productive associations and cooperatives, are witnesses to the consolidation or disintegration of enterprises related to the social and solidarity economy.

The association managers represent productive groups with more than 20 associates between the ages of 20 and 80 years old, most of whom possess limited economic resources and low levels of education; being an association of producers, the associates directly influence the administration, generating shared decisions, which was considered in data collection and interpretation.

Data were gathered through literature review, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires distributed to experts, with whom two meetings were held to define and prioritise indicators that were processed using the AHP multicriteria technique, which is explained in greater detail in the indicator hierarchy process.

2.1. Definition of Management Indicators

The bibliographic review of key success factors that support the definition of indicators was carried out considering publications in international journals specialising in social economy and in the Scopus database. This resulted in 58 success factors, to which are also added those from research studies carried out in the local Ecuadorian environment, adding up to a total of 61 success factors.

The bibliographic review of success factors was carried out in chronological order, maintaining as inclusion criteria publications published in the last ten years and related to social and solidarity economy enterprises; international publications that do not appear in Scopus-based journals are excluded.

The authors Sanchís et al. (2015) [35], after bibliographic research, carried out an empirical investigation of 39 active cooperatives set up between 2008 and 2011 in the Valencian community. In their conclusions, they highlighted five key internal success factors,

citing them as strengths of the cooperatives studied, as follows: customer satisfaction and loyalty, environmental protection, quality improvement, worker participation and working environment, specifying that the most important variables were developed from three perspectives: customers, environment and workers.

For their part, the authors Garrido and Zambrano (2019) [36], after identifying some determining factors of the entrepreneurial process through different theories, analysed their influence on or relationship with the improvement of organisational performance, highlighting five highly influential success factors: previous experience, attractiveness of the sector, relations with agents in the environment, level of training and contractual form.

Authors Kasparian and Rebón (2020) [37], pinpointed 34 success factors through the application of semi-structured interviews with key informants from ten recovered and consolidated enterprises that comprised associative enterprises of workers who undertook the ownership of a business and which had been in existence for more than four years; in other words, they were in the stage of organisational consolidation after the foundational phase and start-up.

Bettina et al. (2020) [38], through qualitative research based on in-depth interviews with eight social entrepreneurs with businesses up and running for more than three years and belonging to the Lebanese Social Enterprises Association, identified 7 key success factors, noting that previous experience and social networks had the highest impact on the entrepreneurial process.

Notably, the local research published by Coba et al. (2016) [39], sponsored by the Research Unit of the Faculty of Accounting and Auditing and the Institute of Popular and Solidarity Economy, established eight success factors through a literature review and interviews with 117 key informants from associations in the Tungurahua province immersed in the flagship programme of popular and solidarity economy in Ecuador designated '*Hilando el desarrollo*' (Spinning development).

Barragán and Ayaviri (2017) [40], through mixed methods research on entrepreneurship in the village of Salinas de Guaranda, defined four success factors: community organisation, solidarity economy, leadership and entrepreneurial culture. In addition, they reported that entrepreneurship contributed significantly to local development, generating sources of employment that improved the standard of living of the population based on equity, community participation and a supportive economy.

Once the success factors were obtained through the bibliographic review, we proceeded to group them under the perspectives offered by the BSC methodology, establishing preliminary codes that, based on semi-structured interviews with experts, defined representative indicators.

The proposed methodology made it possible to define 21 management indicators of the 61 success factors referred to in the bibliographic research, the relationship with local management practices expressed by the managers of the enterprises, technical criteria of the experts and content analysis.

Table 1 shows the success factors from a financial perspective obtained from the literature review, where the factors related to "access to finance" are the most common, confirming their importance in expanding the productive and commercial capacity of the associations, which is why, after an analysis, this indicator is incorporated with the same name as these factors.

The empirical study revealed that in local practice and in most cases the factor "differentiated remuneration criteria" is associated with the "equitable redistribution of income", given that in the case of small producers who receive remuneration for their productive participation, they expect a net income equal to or above the basic salary for all partners.

Table 1. Success factors and indicators in the financial perspective.

No.	Key Success Factors	No.	Management Indicators
1	Access to legal tenure of real estate and machinery.	1	Increasing associative resources.
2	Type and magnitude of resources.		
3	Low investment requirements.	2	Capitalisation of investments.
4	Capitalisation policies: maintenance of machinery and investments.		
5	Access to credit.	3	Access to financing.
6	Access to financing.		
7	Differentiated remuneration criteria.	4	Representative income redistribution.
8	Accounting control.	5	Accounting control.

Table 2 shows the positioning of the brand named in different ways is the one with the highest concurrence in the client perspective, in view of which the experts show their agreement in the determination of the mentioned indicator, while also showing interest in the follow-up to the access to markets that can be generated through the sales growth indicator.

Table 2. Success factors and indicators in the clients' perspective.

No.	Key Success Factors	No.	Management Indicators
9	Direct sales.	1	Sales growth.
10	Access to contracts with public institutions.		
11	Access to contracts with private companies, networks and alliances.		
12	Good previous positioning of the good or service in the market.	6	Brand positioning.
13	Own brand main product.		
14	Positioning as a cooperative brand.		
15	Competitive product in the market.		
16	Attractiveness of the sector.		
17	Customer satisfaction and loyalty.	8	Satisfied or frequent customers.

The process perspective shown in Table 3 details a balance between factors of innovation, quality and product diversification, establishing management indicators under these headings after the corresponding analysis.

Table 3. Success factors and indicators in the processes perspective.

No.	Key Success Factors	No.	Management Indicators
18	Civic innovation.	9	Process innovation
19	No significant interruption of production.		
20	Quality improvement.	10	Quality compliance
21	Status of the original production unit.		
22	Product diversification.	11	Diversification of products and production sites
23	Location in an area favours productive or organisational advantage.		

In the learning perspective shown in Table 4, education and training are presented as the most concurrent factors, and these factors are incorporated under the technical training indicator considering the experience of experts and corresponding analysis.

Table 4. Success factors and indicators in the learning perspective.

No.	Key Success Factors	No.	Management Indicators
24	Retention of skilled workers.	12	Professionalisation of technical areas
25	Incorporation or training of professionals.		
26	Education and training.	13	Technical skills training.
27	Business skills training and previous experience.		
28	Educational level.		
29	Entrepreneurial culture.		
30	Previous experience.		
31	Relevance of work regulation rules and compliance devices.	14	Consolidation of labour regulations
32	Contractual form.		
33	Leadership and cultural inclusion.	15	Participative leadership
34	Leadership.		
35	Flexibility in working conditions.		
36	Adequate working environment.		

According to the experts' criteria, the participatory leadership indicator that could be developed through interaction and learning would allow the development of better working conditions and working climate that are presented as success factors in this perspective.

Table 5 shows the social perspective with the highest number of critical success factors, demonstrating that the sustainability of associative social and solidarity economy enterprises is highly dependent on social management.

Table 5. Success factors and indicators in the social perspective.

No.	Key Success Factors	No.	Management Indicators
37	Continuity of a group and/or project in the legitimate management of the cooperative.	16	Labour integration
38	Cooperative project that gives relevance to economic management.		
39	Integration policies for the labour collective.		
40	Organisations of recovered enterprises and/or cooperatives.		
41	Trade unions.		
42	Short or low conflict.		
43	Participation of workers.		
44	Motivation for social entrepreneurship.	17	Strengthening PSE principles.
45	Action with solidarity economy.		
46	Community organisation.		
47	Participation with the community.		
48	Environmental protection.	18	Environmental protection.
49	Exchanges with other cooperatives.	19	Inter-cooperation with the solidarity economy sector
50	Sharing resources.		
51	Knowledge sharing.		
52	Service concession.		
53	Production and marketing by associating.		

Table 5. *Cont.*

No.	Key Success Factors	No.	Management Indicators
54	Reciprocal relationships with neighbours and local institutions.	20	Institutional relations
55	External advice.		
56	Social networks.		
57	Relations with agents of the environment.		
58	Programmes with educational establishments and science and technology organisations.		
59	Redistribution processes from the State.	21	Access to state-run programmes.
60	Political support.		
61	Positive economic context of the branch in the post-recovery stage.		

Factors linked to labour integration actions, strengthening of popular and solidarity economy principles and inter-cooperation are the most common, with these indicators being established according to the criteria of the majority of experts.

Labour integration, which involves social inclusion practices, evidences the active, committed and solidary participation of members despite their limited economic and social capacities. The members, being owners and workers, adapt and share workspaces to involve the majority of their members, strengthening the organisational social capital and interrelating success factors such as the continuity of work groups, consolidation of the cooperative project, integration policies and low levels of labour conflicts.

The treatment and analysis of success factors allowed the identification of a total of 21 indicators, which are prioritised to improve their applicability.

2.2. Hierarchisation of Indicators Using the AHP Method

Once the indicators were defined according to the analysis of critical success factors, they were assessed and ranked using the AHP multicriteria method, supported by a questionnaire distributed to the same experts with whom the management indicators were defined.

The methodological combination of BSC and AHP makes it possible to order and assess perspectives and indicators as criteria and subcriteria, maintaining a systemic and integral order under the hierarchical structure matrix presented in Figure 1.

The hierarchical structure matrix is designed taking into account the objective of prioritising management indicators of associative ventures that support their sustainability and consolidation, organising criteria and subcriteria according to perspectives and management indicators.

Once the hierarchical structure for the present research was defined, the experts' judgements were collected through the distribution of a questionnaire designed with the comparative methodology and scale of Saaty [41], which facilitates the assessment of importance by experts and data processing, as shown in Tables 6 and 7.

As an example, when viewing the first row of data in the matrix, it can be seen that an expert considers that the customer criterion has a very strong importance compared to the financial criterion to achieve the objective of sustainability and organisational consolidation; this is a process that was repeated in all the criteria and subcriteria raised in the model.

Once the data were entered into a matrix of paired comparisons and normalised to 1, the eigenvectors or relative weights could be obtained for each of the criteria and subcriteria. In the case of the example presented, the social criterion would be the most important 52%.

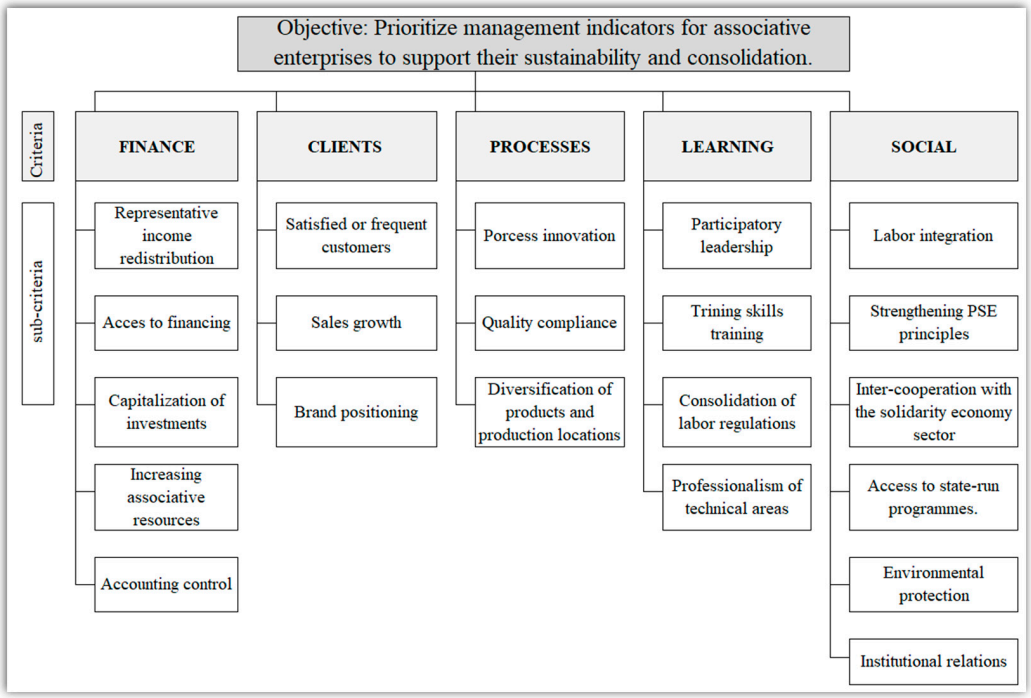

Figure 1. Hierarchical structure.

Table 6. Criteria importance rating matrix.

Criteria	Scale of Saaty									Criteria
	Extreme	Very strong	Strong	Moderate	Equal	Moderate	Strong	Very strong	Extreme	
C1. FINANCE	9	7	5	3	1	3	5	X	9	C2. CLIENTS
C1. FINANCE	9	7	5	3	x	3	5	7	9	C3. PROCESSES
C1. FINANCE	9	7	5	3	1	3	5	X	9	C4. LEARNING
C1. FINANCE	9	7	5	3	1	3	5	7	X	C5. SOCIAL

Table 7. Matrix of paired comparisons and data normalised.

	C1. FINANCE	C2. CLIENTS	C3. PROCESSES	C4. LEARNING	C5. SOCIAL	VALUE
C1. FINANCE	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.07	0.04
C2. CLIENTS	0.28	0.09	0.22	0.07	0.08	0.15
C3. PROCESSES	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.07	0.04
C4. LEARNING	0.28	0.26	0.30	0.22	0.20	0.25
C5. SOCIAL	0.36	0.62	0.39	0.65	0.59	0.52
	1	1	1	1	1	1

The SuperDecision software facilitated the mathematical process for the generation of values for each criterion and sub-criterion, after which, by averaging the values generated by all the experts, a normalised limit matrix could be obtained, which can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Normalised limit matrix.

Level 1: Perspectives	Local Value	Level 2: Indicators	Level 1 Value	Level 2 Value
SOCIAL	33.9%	Labour Integration.	31.1%	10.5%
		Strengthening PSE principles.	18.8%	6.4%
		Inter-cooperation with the solidarity economy sector.	16.7%	5.7%
		Access to state-run programmes.	16.3%	5.5%
		Environmental protection.	9.5%	3.2%
		Institutional relations.	7.6%	2.6%
LEARNING	28.4%	Participatory leadership.	43.6%	12.4%
		Technical skills training.	39.7%	11.3%
		Consolidation of labour regulations.	11.4%	3.2%
		Professionalisation of technical areas.	5.3%	1.5%
PROCESSES	14.7%	Process innovation.	52.7%	7.8%
		Quality compliance.	37.8%	5.6%
		Diversification of products and production locations.	9.4%	1.4%
CLIENTS	15.4%	Satisfied or frequent customers.	49.7%	7.6%
		Sales growth.	34.3%	5.3%
		Brand positioning.	16.0%	2.5%
FINANCE	7.6%	Representative income redistribution.	27.4%	2.1%
		Access to funding.	25.6%	2.0%
		Capitalisation of investments.	20.5%	1.6%
		Increasing associative resources.	15.5%	1.2%
		Accounting control.	10.9%	0.8%
TOTAL	100%			100%

The normalised limit matrix presents the weights per independently valued element, and the multiplication of the level 1 weights corresponding to perspectives and indicators allows obtaining a level 2 valuation that represents the hierarchy of management indicators towards the sustainability and organisational consolidation of productive associative enterprises of popular and solidarity economy.

Both level 1 and level 2 scores allow resources to be focused on priorities, maintaining a holistic hierarchical sense of management as presented in the research results.

3. Results

The outcomes achieved through the combined application of BSC-AHP enabled us to define and identify the main management indicators that would facilitate the application of success factors systemically to promote and evaluate the sustainability and development of associative productive enterprises related to the social and solidarity economy. These main indicators are presented in hierarchical order in Figure 2.

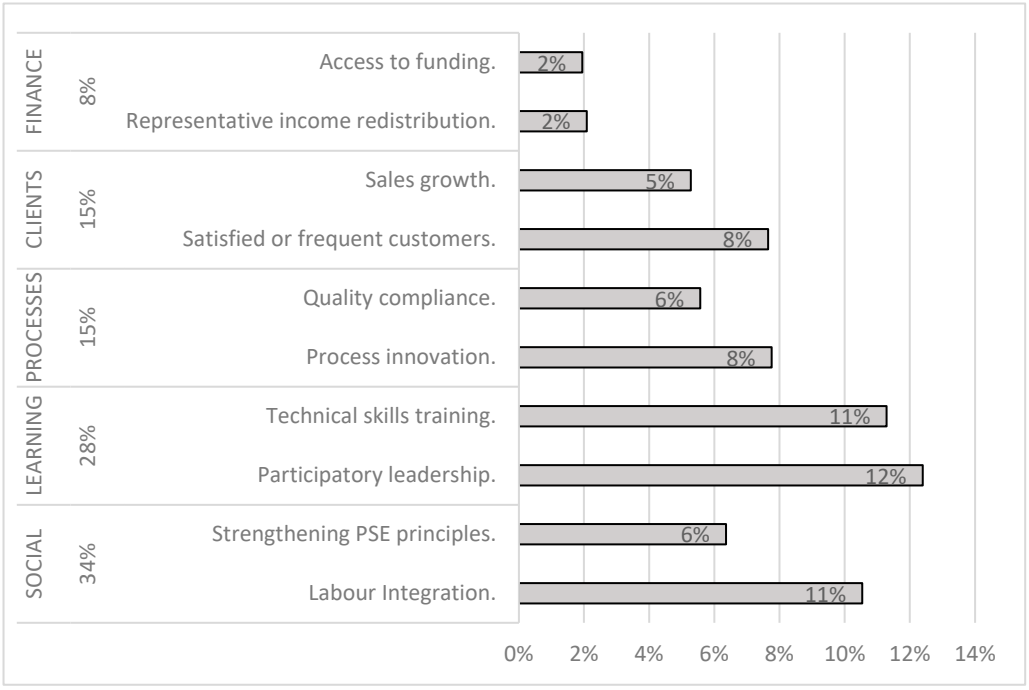

Figure 2. Hierarchisation of management indicators.

Social and learning perspectives were the highest rated, with 34% and 28%, respectively, representing the priority focus of attention and action in the start-up phase of the venture.

The indicators of participative leadership, technical training and labour integration appeared as the most relevant to achieve organisational sustainability in associative ventures, proposing a greater managerial and administrative interest in these fields of strategic action.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The BSC-AHP methodological combination developed in this research demonstrates the importance of integrating determining factors of social and business management for the sustainability and consolidation of productive associative ventures, a result that coincides with that published by Amézaga et al. (2013) [42], who in their research affirm that an associative initiative may have a good business plan, but low cohesion and social capital that would limit its prosperity, and, similarly, an organisation may have consolidated the trust and commitment of its members, but poor financial management will lead the organisation to failure.

The priority of criteria or perspectives carried out in this study shows that the sustainability and consolidation of associative productive enterprises depends mostly on social and personnel management, mainly due to the particular characteristics of shared ownership and administration not subject to capital contribution or accumulation; a result that is related to that published by Dávila et al. (2018) [43], who point out that this type of organisation generates a special regime of ownership and distribution, seeking economic surpluses mainly to improve the conditions of the members.

Labour integration, determined as the main management indicator in the organisational sustainability of associative ventures, promotes the active and committed participation of producer members, involving the practices of solidarity, trust and commitment of the members that reinforce the organisational social capital and encourage collective work, strengthening cohesion and social capital; this is a result that coincides with that published by Espinosa et al. (2018) [44], who noted that, in associative productive organisations, the involvement of everyone through committees and commissions sensitises the effort to improve production and generate a solid structure for collective action.

Labour integration, which in the case of small producers could also be interpreted as business integration, reinforces the collective identity and social motivation that would drive the sustainability of associative enterprises. This result is in line with Ouyang et al. (2023) [45], who state that enterprise integration raises the entrepreneurial spirit and social awareness of small entrepreneurs, motivating and engaging working partners to find their way out of poverty.

An example of this indicator is the Asotexaba association, where the adaptation of spaces and assignment of lighter work for senior citizens generates greater participation and commitment from associates, who perceive the social value created.

The workplace integration of people with social or labour vulnerability, such as the elderly, people with disabilities or people with low levels of education who participate in this type of entrepreneurship, is also an indicator for government entities that seek to support these socio-economic initiatives, which has a direct impact on access to markets or availability of resources.

The strengthening indicator Principles of Popular and Supportive Economy provides the philosophical support for collective action, involving participatory management, shared risk-taking and prioritisation in the generation of collective benefits, principles that strengthen and promote associative initiatives. This result coincides with that published by with León-Serrano et al. (2020) [46], when they point out that the more productive activities are integrated based on PSE principles, the more favourable socio-economic growth will be in the associative sector.

The participatory leadership indicator, which can be quantified by the number of partners involved in decision making, is considered by experts as fundamental to consolidate participatory management. Bettina et al. (2020) [38], present similar results, highlighting leadership as the main factor of successful social enterprises due to the ability to motivate followers on normative rather than profit-driven grounds, as well as bridging the gap between various stakeholders.

Participatory leadership, also related to inclusive leadership, allows us to strengthen organisational social capital, a result that coincides with that published by Rogozínska-Pawełczyk (2023) [47], who points out that inclusive leadership places greater emphasis on cultivating, collaborating in and developing reciprocal relations in the organisation.

Kasparian and Rebón (2020) [37], also stressed the importance of achieving objectives and goals under democratic conditions, developing institutional and organisational mechanisms relevant to the materialisation of the business project.

Technical training appears as another main management indicator, which suggests maintaining ongoing follow-up of trained personnel in each of the operational areas, promoting the development of technical skills to enhance organisational processes that would improve the organisation's commercial and financial conditions. This result coincides with that published by Kasparian and Rebón (2020) [37], who highlighted the importance of training in technical skills as a significant element in the consolidation of associative initiatives, noting that in addition to having resources, it is important to manage them properly. Similarly, Aroca et al. (2017) [48], in their local research results, also determined that one of the main factors in business closures is the level of knowledge related to the line of business, which even exceeds the availability of financing.

The practical contribution of this research is establishing that the definition and prioritisation of indicators revealed through the methodological combination of BSC and AHP enables managers and consultants to activate an integral and systemic strategic management of the enterprise. This would encourage associated producers to fortify their technical knowledge and social links, which would enable them to improve their production processes and achieve quality standards, thus increasing customer satisfaction and sales, which would have an impact on the generation of representative resources for their partners, thus promoting the sustainability and consolidation of associative productive ventures.

Regarding the limitations of this research, it can be mentioned that the study focused on defining and prioritising indicators for productive associations, opening up the opportunity to develop similar studies for productive cooperatives or other types of enterprises or organisations wishing to define and integrate indicators based on success factors.

The definition and prioritisation of indicators considered the criteria of experts linked to the agricultural and textile activity, so that the research process can be replicated or directed to other economic sectors interested in management indicators relevant to organisational sustainability.

The results of this research invite the monitoring of social and solidarity economy-related enterprises under defined indicators that reveal the particularities generated in the organisational sustainability and consolidation.

The possibility also arises of exploring the adaptability of the indicators resulting from this research to other types of organisations or sectors in order to counteract, modify or consolidate a model or management tool appropriate to social and sustainable ventures or projects.

The recognition of social enterprises and interest in developing management tools for organisational sustainability raised by this study opens up research opportunities to promote economic initiatives that promote sustainable development.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the definition of business and social management indicators based on success factors, as well as their prioritisation under an integral, hierarchical and systemic management methodology, will allow managers and advisers to promote and evaluate relevant activities in the sustainability and consolidation of associative productive ventures.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, L.A.G. and R.P.-B.; methodology, L.A.G. and M.G.-M.; software, L.A.G. and R.P.-B.; validation, R.P.-B. and M.G.-M.; formal analysis, L.A.G. and R.P.-B.; investigation, L.A.G. and M.G.-M.; resources, L.A.G. and M.G.-M.; data curation, L.A.G. and R.P.-B.; writing—original draft preparation, L.A.G. and R.P.-B.; writing—review and editing, R.P.-B. and M.G.-M.; visualization, R.P.-B.; supervision, M.G.-M.; project administration, L.A.G.; funding acquisition, R.P.-B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by Central University of Ecuador, grant number R-006-2019.

Informed Consent Statement: Written informed consent has been obtained from all the respondents of this study.

Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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