

Proposal for A Conceptual Model of Organizational Viability for Foundations in Spain

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Abstract

Foundations are organizations that are part of the Third Sector while playing an important social role, acting as amplifiers of assistance for the benefit of minority groups, as well as first-line aid organizations in times of crisis. This paper seeks to identify the aspects that influence the organizational viability of foundations in Spain using qualitative research techniques by which key informants in the sector were interviewed through the use of semi-structured questionnaires. Responses were analyzed in a matrix structure, obtaining the keywords in order to summarize the information and concepts provided. Then, this content was analyzed using ATLAS.ti software, obtaining a “word cloud”, which served as an inspiration to propose a conceptual model. This model, as its main result, seeks to reveal the aspects and particularities of foundations in Spain, taking into account internal and external characteristics, their immediate environment, and the regulations and norms. Finally, the challenges to be faced by the sector are presented, encouraging support entities such as universities, research centers, and second-order organizations, together with the Public Administration, to take action in those gaps that must be avoided.

Keywords: *Foundations, Management, Organizational Structure, Strategy, Organizational Viability, Conceptual Model.*

Introduction

In the 1990s, it was outlined that the Spanish nonprofit sector required a modernization project, including a new legal institutional framework that would facilitate the autonomous and complementary development of the social sector. In addition, the creation of a centralized registry or statistical office in collaboration with the autonomous communities would make it possible to monitor the evolution and changes in the sector. Also, the creation of evaluation mechanisms or forms of social auditing would make it possible to know the distribution of the social sector to the production of welfare and the promotion of social participation, according to Salamon (1991).

Recognized in this field are foundations, according to Chaves (2017), organizations immersed today in the so-called third sector. Characterized by the social action work they perform and born from the initiative(s) of individuals and/or groups with specific sensitivities to needs that are not addressed or have no place in the public or private sector. A statement that coincides with citizen perception studies, where it is revealed, “61% of the Spanish population thinks that foundations act with more agility and attend to different situations with greater diligence than the Public Administration” and “57% think that foundations contribute to the development of society as a whole” (SIGMADOS, 2017, p. 61).

Four decades have passed since Salamon's diagnosis. At present, the sector has State and specific legislation in some Communities, as well as in particular areas of patronage, tax incentives, accounting, and investments. Efforts have been made to give greater powers and capabilities to this sector. There are still shortcomings, according to Monzón and Antuñano (2018), the management of this type of organization can be complex since in some respects their Law can be diffuse and broad. Some authors indicate “it is complicated to have an adequate knowledge and approach to the problems of foundations, with legislation still pending implementation and development” (Ibáñez Carpena & Benito, 2019). There is no consolidated information on the sector and the protectorates, responsible for promoting, supporting, and supervising them, are far outstripped in capacity.

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Foundations, like other types of organizations, must face a changing environment and greater social demands every day, but given their particularities in terms of benefiting social groups, they must have instruments and tools to support their management.

In this context, this study arises with the aspiration of exploring both internal and external aspects that allow this type of organization to maintain its functioning and operation, being able to adapt to a dynamic environment and maintain its existence. In other words, they are organizationally viable, a viability that will depend on the organizational structure and strategy that these organizations adopt (Beer 1985; Espejo and Reyes 2011; Narvarte, Álvarez and Baeza 2014).

Structure that in the case of foundations is regulated by law, where there must be a governing body called the Board of Trustees, as established by Cuñat et al. (2008), which functions as a collegiate and representative body, among other functions; a group where strategic decisions are made, according to García and Olmos (2020). We also find the management team, in charge of materializing the foundation's activities.

And strategy by adopting an attitude in this regard, which considers appropriate decisions that allow them to achieve their objectives effectively and efficiently in an increasingly turbulent environment, according to García and Olmos (2020).

The general objectives are:

Identify the aspects that influence the organizational viability of foundations.

Conduct an exploratory analysis of the factors that affect the organizational viability of foundations and build a conceptual model.

Establish a scope of study for future research.

The specific objectives:

Explore the characteristics and behaviors of the internal environment of the foundations.

Explore the characteristics and behaviors of the external environment of the foundations.

The methodology used in the study is mainly qualitative in nature. In the words of Arias (2012), "Exploratory research is that which is carried out on an unknown or little studied subject, so that its results constitute an approximate view of that object, i.e., a superficial level of knowledge" (p. 23). It will be structured based on 6 stages, with semi-structured interviews as the main research resource, interviewing key informants, informants that have been selected according to their vast experience, relevance, and knowledge in the world of foundations, both from management, support, and strategy, as well as in academia and research (Yuni & Urbano, 2006).

These interviews will be analyzed in depth, and a content analysis software called ATLAS.ti will be used to generate a result called "word cloud" that synthesizes in a cloud image the most mentioned words in the interviews, with size distinctions according to the frequency of their use by the informants (Quintero, 2020; Gallardo, 2020). With the results of the analysis of the interviews, grouping categories will be established, called dimensions, which will be the basis for the construction of a conceptual model that accounts for the understanding of the factors that influence the decision-making and management of foundations, their environment, the relationships they establish and the situation they face.

Among the findings, it is evident that there are challenges to be addressed by the entities that support foundations, who are called upon to contribute with studies, quantification, characterization of the sector, and empirical research on the situation of foundations, to provide tools that allow them to be more effective in their work. In addition, the Public Administration itself should be an entity that contributes to this

direction, either by financing research and/or promoting the development of the foundation sector with policies and regulations following its needs. As Marcuello and Marcuello (2017) state, “If a goal is to be achieved, it is necessary to check the steps that have been taken, those that are being taken, and those that remain to be taken” (p. 220).

In the current context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, institutions that serve vulnerable groups such as foundations should be the most strengthened and prepared, since they play an essential social role that is exacerbated in times of crisis. As a sector, they are required to respond to social demands with quality, flexibility, speed and timeliness.

Spain, already in the economic crisis of 2008, according to Chaves (2017), supports the most disadvantaged. This time will not be the exception; therefore, it becomes urgent and a priority to provide them with tools, instruments, and strategies to strengthen their management and guide them in the search for organizational viability.

Methodology

The methodology used to carry out this study is fundamentally qualitative in nature and is divided into 6 stages, which have been established to facilitate and organize the structure of the research, as described below:

- Survey primary and secondary information about the foundations.
- Selection of interviewees considered as key informants.
- Contact and planning of key informant interviews.
- Analysis and systematization of information.
- Development of a conceptual model.
- Discussion of results and presentation of proposals.

The first stage will consist of the search for information through appropriate sources, as suggested by the authors:

In all areas of knowledge, the primary sources most consulted and used to develop theoretical frameworks are books, scientific journal articles, and papers or papers presented at conferences, symposiums, and similar events, among other reasons, because these sources are the ones that systematize the information to a greater extent, go deeper into the subject they develop and are highly specialized (Hernández et al., 2014, p. 65).

Also at this stage, two interviews were conducted with experts in the field of foundations, to orient the focus of the study and inquire about the areas or fields of foundations in which the research could contribute. These interviews also suggested names of those who could be key informants.

Through the collection of information, it was possible to deepen the identity aspects, characteristics, and fundamental aspects of the foundations, which are found in Chapter I, as well as to outline and sketch the areas and dimensions to be addressed in the key informant interviews, with the contribution and guidance of the experts.

A second stage, and in parallel to the first, consists of identifying, selecting, and contacting potential interviewees; informants who will be key to the understanding and analysis of the foundational aspects, who have been selected according to their experience, relevance, and knowledge. The selected interviewees

are involved with the foundations from different spheres, for example: from academia, management, and direction tasks, and also as representatives of second-order entities of the foundations, considering the characterization of the interviews presented by Yuni & Urbano (2006), since these key informants can provide descriptions and information on the reality of foundations considering their experience in the field, with real situations and facts, as well as account for timeless aspects, being able to have an integral vision considering the past, present and the visualization of the future anticipating the next challenges, and therefore, will allow having a systemic vision of foundations.

The third stage consisted of contacting potential interviewees by e-mail and telephone, 6 people were pre-selected, and were informed about their background, confidentiality, and that the information they would provide would be used in this Master's thesis, achieving 4 interviews. Of the 4 key informants, 3 were female, 1 male, and 3 interviews were conducted in person, 1 in the city of Valencia and 2 in Madrid. The fourth interview was conducted by telephone; the key informant was in Barcelona. The interviews were conducted between the end of February and July 2019.

Regarding the planning of the interviews, and in order to learn about the common patterns of management and governance of the foundations, through the third stage, areas or dimensions to be consulted in semi-structured interviews are elaborated; as a qualitative technique used for the development of the conversation, bearing in mind as stated by Yuni & Urbano (2006), an initial list of topics to be addressed, to gather the necessary information, but always leaving spaces for the interview to formulate questions that were not foreseen but relevant to the conversation and the information provided by the key informants. Finally, the guidelines for conducting the conversation in the interviews were drawn up, highlighting aspects such as:

- How do foundations operate and are they managed?
- How are foundations perceived?
- Characteristics of governance in foundations
- Management characteristics and styles in foundations
- The social impact generated by foundations

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for later analysis, being this material gathered in audio of more than 6 hours and a document of more than 60 pages long, to systematize the information obtained.

The fourth stage, analysis, and systematization of the information obtained in the interviews, consists of three steps. First, each interview was examined in depth, extracting the most representative concepts and phrases from each interviewee, and organizing this information to identify keywords about the stated objectives. The second step consisted of using a computerized data analysis tool.

For this second step, different programs were reviewed: NUD*IST, Aquad 5, Etnograph, WinMax pro, MAXQDA, and ATLAS.ti, all created to analyze qualitative data. The latter, due to its functions, was selected for use in this study. It is a software designed to analyze data from different types of files; launched in 1993 by German developers, it presents different tools to analyze content stored in written documents, audio, videos, and images (Gallardo, 2020; Quintero, 2020).. For this research, the “word cloud” tool was used, which will be responsible for visually showing the frequency of words in a document and thus analyzing the data collected from the key informant interviews.

As the last and third step of the information analysis, with the results of the organization of keyword (s) and the “word cloud” as inputs, we proceeded to establish grouping categories, which will be called dimensions. As a result, a final matrix structured by dimensions was obtained, with the information obtained from the interviews, thus completing the fourth stage.

With the results of the analysis and systematization of the information, the fifth stage begins, to elaborate a conceptual model as an instrument for representing the information obtained. as mentioned by Arenas Campos (2005). This author mentions that, through concept or mind maps, it is possible to conceptually organize themes associated with a discipline or specific topics.

Finally, in the sixth stage, the discussions arising from the research findings and orientations of proposals for action in the established dimensions and categories will be presented.

Results and Analysis

In this section, the information obtained from the interviews will be analyzed and systematized in three steps. The first step will consist of structuring the information transmitted in the key informant interviews into matrices, which will allow a better understanding and organization of the information collected to identify the concepts and/or keywords that are representative of their subsequent organization. The matrices will have the following structure, being differentiated by the interviewee, according to the nomenclature M1, H1, M2, and M3, as presented below:

Ask	Interviewee	Excerpt from the Interview	Concepts/Keywords
	M1		
	H1		
	M2		
	M3		

Matrix 1. Model Interview Matrix

Source: Own elaboration.

Question	Cod.	Excerpt from the Interview	Keywords
How was The Platform born?	M1	The Third Sector Platform was established in 2012, we are a practically new entity, but we have a lot of history behind us with a very experienced ONCE or Red Cross. The social demand had changed, and social entities had to adapt and try to respond to all the social problems that existed with much less income and with less and less political response and with less and less support. One of the problems we social entities have is funding, which is practically public, there is very little private funding and with the crisis there were cuts. The State made very substantial cuts to social entities, to subsidies and this had consequences on the entities, it was a time of crisis where the social demand was increasing, and where there were many people in vulnerable situations, we saw that we were not doing anything, that we were in a tremendous moment and that what we needed was to unite. It was necessary to articulate the sector, to have strength and cohesion, to have a political voice that was transversal, that brought together the problems of the Sector. We sought to address the cross-cutting issues that affect the entities, we gave a lot of regulatory impetus. One of the first things we did was to promote the Third Sector Law, which has articulated the Third Sector. It is a small Law, it is brief, it is not the Law of maximums that we aspired, but it is the beginning, sometimes you have to start walking.	Financing. Legal framework. Social demands. Political Advocacy

How would you describe the relationship with the social economy?	M1	We have a very good relationship, we are collaborators, the social economy has its own idiosyncrasy, but we have common objectives, we have collaboration agreements and we are now working on the 2030 agenda.	Common objectives Third Sector/Social Economy
How is the problem of financing being addressed?	M1	A central issue is financing, we have to think about the future, we cannot live on subsidies, we have to try to have a medium/long term security, even look for other ways of collaborating with the Administration. We do not have the responsibility of Public Policy, but we do accompany them, we try to accompany them up to where they cannot reach, we can reach them to cover them, but we have to look for alternatives. One way of dealing with the issue of financing is the “X” of the Corporate Tax, which is free for the companies, there is a part of this tax that goes to social issues and to the entities. This is already established in the General State Budgets, what happens is that the regulation has to be developed, they have already enabled the box from the Ministry of Finance, but the regulation is missing. Without the regulation it is not possible, it is necessary to establish the groups that are going to take part, the entities and if these entities are state entities, if they are working in more than 5 Autonomous Communities, it is a chore, that is what we are working on.	Regulations and legal norms
And in terms of impact, how do you measure or establish it from The Platform?	M1	The platform does so from the most cross-cutting issues of the associates. The Third Sector is a generator of employment, gross domestic product, cohesion of society and also avoids a greater impact of inequality. We start with an action plan that we have to execute. We see the impact through the evaluation of the results of these actions, then we create a work strategy, everything is organized, but the problem of the Platform is that we represent many entities and this slows down the work.	Employment generator. Social cohesion. Reduction of gaps.
What is the impact of volunteer work?	M1	Volunteers are committed, dynamic people, they always have ideas, volunteering implies working in a different way, not so rigid, much more flexible, since they are always innovating, they are continuously training. Volunteering is a fundamental pillar and in times of crisis where there have been cutbacks there has also been a greater social demand for Third Sector entities, volunteering was the key. The number of volunteers increased in times of economic crisis, many needs were met through them, that was incredible, at a time of anguish and great concern, in the face of the reality that existed, major problems that sometimes social entities were overwhelmed with cutbacks, well there was the volunteering, they played a role of social cohesion in a time of economic crisis in Spain that “eye” I do not know how the reality would have been, now the number of volunteers has decreased, but in times of crisis there was an exponential increase. Volunteers bring cohesion, they work as a team, very horizontal and this is permeable to the organization itself.	Commitment . Flexible and innovative work. Fundamental pillar

How is your visibility in society?	M1	We are very distant from society; we are not identified. Social entities identify us, those who work in the sector know what the Platform is, in general society does not even know what the Third Sector is. Here there is a great work on the part of the Third Sector from the Platform to make visible, to generate recognition, social legitimacy, although society recognizes the work of social entities, and knows that without them there are many things that would not be covered and they feel very accompanied in many aspects, but then as a collective, as Third Sector, it costs more, there is no visibility yet, and in detriment there are entities that have made mistakes or bad practices, they are punctual cases and have generated an exponential negative effect for the Sector.	Lack of knowledge of the Third Sector. Significant negative effect of punctual errors to the Sector.
And with the government?	M1	One of the impacts that the Platform has achieved is to participate in the Civil Dialogue Commission. This Commission, through the Third Sector Law, creates an institutional forum for permanent dialogue, positioning social issues. Now the governments have the obligation to convene the Commission, to present social issues to us, this is already legitimacy.	Permanent participation in the Civil Dialogue Commission. Existence of the Third Sector Law
And in relation to social impact, how do you measure it?	M1	The Platform does not measure the social impact of its member entities, but rather measures the normative impulse, when it began it was necessary to obtain institutional legitimacy, first we were able to press for the establishment of the Third Sector Law, that is already an impact through institutional regulation. Also, our participation in the Civil Dialogue Commissions, with a permanent institutionalized forum for direct participation with the Government. Now we are working on improving the regulations of the Third Sector Law. We are not dedicated to direct impact, but there are certain transversal demands of the sector, which are raised and studied through the Permanent Commission, they begin to be a priority and we propose them to the Government to raise the social reality. So, we do it the other way around, social impact starts from the demand, from the real needs, and we respond from the political incidence, here we are a transmission channel, taking to the Ministries to expose them.... We are a channel of transmission, taking them to the Ministries to tell them: "listen, the social reality we have right now, which is pressing, is this and right now you are not doing anything" and from there, we start to work.	Regulatory impetus. Relaying social demands
What do you think is the government's perception of the work of social entities?	M1	All the governments that have been part of democracy in Spain have a recognition, sometimes to a greater or lesser extent. There is a recognition to disability, childhood, poverty issues, social entities, what happens is that sensitivities are different, political priorities are different and sometimes, social issues are secondary for governments, but in recent years with the crisis there have been governments that have given greater importance, I will also be fair in that. Social policies and the vision of this country have been changing, public policies have been changing thanks to social entities, we have positioned and lobbied to dignify the lives of people and advocate for their rights. At the end of the day, to create a more egalitarian, more	Recognition by governments. Crisis. Influence on public policies due to the influence of social entities. The crisis has influenced it,

		inclusive, fairer world, where at least there are more opportunities.	as a result of the needs. Legal regulations
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Matrix 2. Interview M1

Source: Own elaboration.

Ask	Cod	Excerpt from the Interview	Keywords
What is your opinion about the organizational management models adopted by foundations?	H1	A distinction should be made depending on the size of the foundations. According to existing studies, most of them are small and I think they follow a rather decentralized and anarchic model, not very professional. The larger ones, I understand, follow a more centralized model.	Centralization. Decentralization. Professionalization
What problem(s) do foundations have in terms of their management?	H1	Many have governance problems: The Board of Trustees, managed by the Patrons, is a free body, which does not charge, with all its best will, does not gamble its money and often has to fulfill the foundational will, but lacks professionalism.	Professionalism Board of Trustees
In relation to organizational management models, he believes that there are some that are better suited to the nature of foundations.	H1	I am not an expert in organizational models, so I would not know how to answer. The only thing I can contribute is that foundations always depend on a decision-making body, which is the Board of Trustees, usually quite outside the management of the foundation and not very professional, although there are foundations (the larger ones) that are structured through some specialized board of directors and areas, but the smaller ones are more anarchic and decentralized.	Unprofessional Board of Trustees
What adjustments should be necessary in foundation governance.	H1	The Board of Trustees of foundations should be made up of people who are more professional in the area of activity of the foundation, or if they are not, they should be guided by advisory bodies to help them make decisions. In those that have a patrimony that must be managed to generate income to finance the foundation, seek professionals to manage the patrimony. In addition, they	Professionalization of the Board of Trustees and management

		should appoint a professional governing body in the activity they develop.	
What are the tensions between management and the Board of Trustees?	H1	<p>The understanding between management and the Board of Trustees is complicated. The Board of Trustees has a very important role in decision making, for example, the action plan is made by the management, but if the Board of Trustees wants to say no, for next year I would like to do this activity, I would like to do this other one, you have to look at the economic means that the foundation has, if the foundation does not go further because it does not have the economic means, the Board of Trustees must be aware, these are entities that do not resort to external financing, almost none, that is, it is rare that you see indebtedness in any foundation, because either income is generated, which there are many ways to generate it, to carry out these activities, or they are simply not carried out. If there is no financial capacity to carry out what the Trustees expect, then what will happen? You have the problem of being inefficient because many times you want to cover more than you can really do and in the end you do nothing or you cannot focus on what is most important.</p> <p>The problem of the Trustee, as I mentioned before, is that being a Trustee is a free position, you can be a trustee of this foundation, but that requires legal knowledge, responsibility, approval of the action plan and you have to know how to understand. It is the management that has to say, these are our economic means and according to these economic means we can reach this far, you cannot foresee more because then you will not be able to do it. There will be all kinds, there are foundations with Trustees who are very expert and therefore know, but you find in the great majority of foundations that the problem is in the Board of Trustees, that the Board of Trustees is not a specialized Board, it is not a professional Board of Trustees, as the management can be, and there you find a problem between both organizations. In the end, the one who approves is the Trustee, no matter how much the management establishes strategies, the one who approves activities is the Trustee, so if many times there is no understanding or the Trustee is not a specialist, there can be a problem in the management of the foundation, even in the AEF together with the University, there is a School of Trustees to educate them.</p>	<p>Management marked by the work of the management and the Board of Trustees. Specialized Board of Trustees. Training support for the Board of Trustees. Action plan</p>
How should the action plan be established?	H1	In principle, the action plan has to start from the management, which would have to establish it according to the mission of the foundation. The Board of Trustees has to approve it, but it must start from the management as a guide, I believe and I would like to think that the management has internally much clearer what the action plan then puts, that is to say, that it has some lines, not in	Strategy. Action plan

		the short term because the plan is annual but in the medium/long term, they have a general mission, they have a strategy, thinking in the long term and their plans with their objectives.	
What relationship would you establish between: the annual plan, the strategy, the management and the Board of Trustees?	H1	<p>I think that unfortunately these organizations have a problem of general strategy, they do not have one and as their funding is always via donations/subsidies, it depends on that what I do every year, if they do not give me anything I do not do anything... so there is no global strategy, it is a problem of the management, because for the Board of Trustees there is a general mission at the end of the day. The action plan is annual, you are thinking about what I am going to do next year, and from there with the resources you can obtain you think, but the logical thing would be that there should be a general strategy, not to give blindly, the idea is that there is a general and long term strategy, at least in the medium term, logically agreed with the Board of Trustees. It is true that in foundations the idea of making it compulsory has been criticized; in the short term they are obliged to elaborate an action plan with an established model, to approve it and then see if it has been fulfilled and include it in the report, but it helps them to have a planning, a medium/long term organization.</p> <p>The current law on foundations dates back to 2002, the previous law dates back to 1994 and mandated a budget, there has always been this obligation on the part of the legislation to force them to do so, in any other type of organization it is assumed that they will do it in one way or another, not in a standardized way, with their strategy, they will have to have a management, they will have to make plans, budgets, etc. And why are these entities obliged to do so? Well, I think they are obliged because if they were not obliged, there would be no strategy, neither the Board nor the management would have a long term strategy, so, even if they take it as an obligation, and in the end they are not very professional to develop this kind of things, at least they are obliged in this legal format that is available. This does not happen in the big foundations, if not in the small ones, because they would not make any strategy, nor any action plan as a way, they would simply go on doing as there are resources and when there are no resources they would not do, and many of them would remain inactive because they do not have a planning either, simply if this year there is no income, as they have given me the grant, then this year we do not do anything. So, they do not have strategies, and the obligation of the action plan by Law, is motivated by that, by a lack of the Trustee or the strategy management.</p>	Action plan drives strategy. Planning. Lack of strategy from the Board of Trustees/management.

How volunteering should be considered in the strategy.	H1	In my opinion, volunteering should be taken into account, given that its management should be a fundamental part of the HR strategy, always aimed at the non-profit activities they carry out, never in relation to the professional management of the foundation. Foundations pursue purposes of general interest that require specific activities to be carried out to achieve them. Volunteers are needed for these activities, and counting on them is of great importance for the foundation, and their management is vital. But this does not mean that volunteers are used in the management of the foundation in all its aspects, only professionals. In small foundations, which are most of the sector, volunteers are included in the management of the foundation, which leads to a clear inefficiency in its operation.	Inclusion of volunteering in strategy. Establish the relevant areas of volunteering
What would be the possibility of establishing standard indicators?	H1	When the current changes were made to the obligations of the foundations, it was thought to stipulate minimum compliance indicators to be incorporated in the action plan, but there was a fear of standardizing and imposing indicators because it seems that they are also setting their objectives to the entity. It would be good to standardize a little because in each activity there are indicators according to the objective of the activity that would allow us to measure in an adequate way and also at a global level of several entities. What I always see in foundations, when I have attended courses to support the development of plans or strategies, is that they tell you how to set the objective, which indicator to use or which beneficiaries I have, how to quantify them to see the impact and they themselves do not know how to do it, since these are their objectives, they have to have them clear, they have to look at both their beneficiaries and to measure your compliance, it is very important that they have it clear, but in the end, well... they make the case that they do, finally they have to make the action plan, they approve it and then it goes to the accounting report, so from there, they do not put too much emphasis on it.... they do what they do, finally they have to make the action plan, they approve it and then it goes to the accounting report, so from that point on, they do not put too much effort into it. If they did it in a correct way, it would be much easier. But if I go to the action plan of many foundations, and to their annual accounts, and every time I open one, I see nothing but mistakes and I see things that have no meaning, that have little consistency and strategy, in short, they have given it little thought.	Impact of the Action Plan. Indicators. Objectives. Basic standardization

What is meant by impact and what is the measurement parameter?	H1	<p>First, the impact must be defined, and then we must see how to measure it. The Practical Guide for Impact Measurement and Management is not really a measurement of impact; impact goes much further. Analyzing the action plan considering: objectives, activities, and measurement indicators in order to achieve what was planned, can be a way of approximating the impact on the beneficiaries that you planned, although this is not really an impact measurement.</p> <p>The problem with the action plan, in my experience, is that since it is a mandatory document that has to be done, it is not really thought of in a meaningful way, its importance is not considered, because finally what you have to do, and then see if you have complied and on top of that you have to do the accounting to see if you have complied or not, I think they do not do it in a serious way as it should be done. But well, it is a way of trying to measure the impact and at least say, I meet my objectives, my indicators and from there do studies with foundations, looking at approaches, measurements, it is the only way I can think of.</p>	Objectives. Indicators. Beneficiaries, Action Plan. Impact. No research
How is the social impact generated by foundations measured?	H1	<p>Social impact is an issue of great concern to us in the Association and we are looking at how to measure social impact. The guide is a very preliminary study, but we are trying to work a little with the social sector, the foundation sector, to measure the impact, to measure how far we can go, it is complicated, very complicated. But we are looking at how to measure the impact of the activities. We have to try to carry out initial impact measurement studies, and the Association is working on this, thinking about how we could measure the impact, it is complicated.</p>	No impact measurement structure
In relation to the organizational management of foundations, what inputs would you consider.	H1	<p>There is a need to incorporate an asset management area, in those foundations with real estate or financial assets it is very necessary to have a professional management that maximizes management efficiency.</p> <p>On the other hand, I consider fundamental everything related to project management, and volunteer management (including recruitment and training). In your case, it is also an important area that is dedicated to seeking the necessary resources to finance the activities (grants or donations, fundraising, commercial activities, or own activities, but charging for them, etc.).</p> <p>Finally, although I do not know if it is valid, I believe that what a foundation as a non-profit entity must always be clear about is its “mission”, that is, what is the purpose it pursues, and what are the activities it will carry out to achieve it. It must be aware of its available resources and how to use them in its activities to achieve those goals.</p>	Professional management: asset management, projects, fundraising, volunteering. Strategy

Matrix 3. Interview H1**Source:** Own elaboration

Ask	Cod	Excerpt from the Interview	Key words
What factors in the organizational management models of foundations generate the greatest impact or best performance?	M2	First of all, the training of the foundation's top management. The structuring of strategic processes and having a strategy. I therefore recommend professionalization. The factors for foundations to move forward are that they are professionalized, and that they are managed in a professional manner.	Strategy. Professionalization. Formation of the Board of Trustees.
How does the strategy relate to this action plan, and what do you see in practice?	M2	The world of foundations is so wide because there are from foundations that have been in existence for five hundred years, such as hospitals, to two-person foundations. So in practice, we observe a great dispersion, from foundations that are organized and managed as private companies and that have strategic planning and an organizational capacity and are results-oriented, to very small foundations where I know nothing of all this and where what is needed is to train those responsible for these foundations to professionalize the foundation. What I would tell you, what I observe, is everything. From very professionalized foundations to foundations that are not professionalized at all.	Professionalization in its management
In terms of social impact, is there a difference between a foundation that is more professionalized and one that is less professionalized?	M2	The truth is that I do not know, I have not done any research on the matter, it would be very bad... to think about the case of the one I know and the other one... There is little research in this field, but to say something without having a minimum of scientific evidence, I do not dare to say what social impact I observe.	Unknown, little research.
How do these less professionalized ones approach action plans?	M2	In those that are less professionalized, there is a range, the action plans are often made in a reactive way as they go along, and there is no long-term planning, so they go along. They are very clear about the foundational purpose, because they all have it, by definition they know what is the purpose, the mission of the foundation. So what they are doing, is around this, the actions that they think they have to do. This is the action plan of the less professionalized ones. Among the less professionalized there are those that are not professionalized at all and there are also those that have a minimum. Because either the founder has experience or whatever and makes a mini strategic plan, sometimes what also happens is that they dedicate very little time. I would say that the less professional a foundation is, the more its action plans are reactive to the opportunities it sees and the needs it encounters.	Short-term planning according to objectives. They work according to opportunities and needs.

What do you think this foundation space is lacking in terms of impact, action plans and professionalization?	M2	On the one hand, it lacks training, a lot of training. On the other hand, the world of foundations is a very little-known world socially. Many people are told, “Hey, what is the difference between a foundation and a commercial company? And they don't know. In many occasions, they confuse foundations with cooperatives. Everyone says that foundations are not for profit, people are more or less clear about that. But this great ignorance of the world of foundations makes it more complex for them to raise funds.	Training. Visibility. Fundraising
In Catalonia, what are the advantages of having an integrated information structure?	M2	If there are more records, on the other hand, there is also the Coordinadora Catalana de Fundaciones. I am in the board that groups six hundred foundations and that just recently presented a study on the levels of fundraising in Catalonia for foundations, fundraising in general, and this on the one hand, and then, on the other hand, there is a registry of foundations in the Generalitat de Catalunya, that all foundations are obliged to present their accounts and to present their reports, and they are also very supervised from the point of view of the Treasury, from the point of view of the operation and the registry of foundations itself.	Existence of Coordinadora Catalana de Fundacions. Fundraising. Presentation of plans and accounts
What is the relationship between the Board of Trustees of the foundations and those in charge of management? What are its characteristics?	M2	There is a wide dispersion. There are Boards of Trustees that really control the general management or accompany the general management, they have good systems of management control, monitoring the strategy, of monitoring the numbers, and above all watching over what a Board of Trustees has to watch over in a foundation, which is that the mission is fulfilled, that the foundation does not waste its assets, that is basically the function of a Board of Trustees. What happens in reality? Well, there is a bit of everything. There are Trustees that even have an executive president, without being paid, because the president of a foundation cannot be paid, nor can the members of the Board, but without being paid he performs very executive functions, and on the other hand you find other foundations where the Board meets every four months and practically does not know what is going on, these are the big differences that exist. I would say that there is no difference between the big and the small ones, both the big and the small ones have very professionalized Boards of Trustees, and others where the Board of Trustees meets for a coffee and while having a coffee they comment. But I would say that within all this, this is evolving, it is becoming very professionalized. I attended a conference and I was a speaker at the conference organized by the Coordinator on fundraising issues and I was very pleasantly surprised by the professionalization that is taking place, this is changing.	Management linked to the supervision of the Board of Trustees. Professionalization of the Board of Trustees and management. Strategy. Fundraising
And this change, to what factors	M2	This change is due to a series of factors, one of which is that the administration itself is more vigilant in the foundations, auditing those of a certain size, etc. It also	Increased surveillance. Training offer.

can it be attributed?		occurs because there is more training on offer and because it is easier, there are very affordable training offers at very affordable prices. It also happens because when they start to look for money, to do fundraising, they realize that they have to do it in a professional way, so they try to get advice, to ask questions, to document themselves. And then, as always, the fact that there are big foundations creates a kind of spin-over mechanism, so that the small ones end up trying to do what the big ones do, it is a whole set.	Fundraising. Best practices.
Comments, annotations		From the Coordinadora, we are always emphasizing that there is a lack of research on foundation issues.	Sector strengthening. No research.

Matrix 4. Interview M2

Source: Own elaboration

As a second step, and with the support of the data analysis software ATLAS.ti, the contents of the key informant interviews were examined using the “word cloud” tool, obtaining the result presented in image 1, where the most representative words (in terms of size) of the key informant interviews in relation to the foundations are visually explained.

As can be seen, the terms most frequently used by the interviewees were: foundations, Board of Trustees, management, impact, direction, plan, strategy, governance, activities, professionalization, volunteerism, sector, indicators, fundraising, collaboration, support, measure, team, objectives, research, crisis, among others.

**Figure 1.** Word cloud Key Informants

Source: Own elaboration.

In the third step, and with the results obtained in the interview matrices and the word cloud, grouping categories are established, establishing possible dimensions, such as: strategy, management, organizational structure, action and control plan, volunteering, external supervision, support entities and collaboration.

These results are presented in Matrix 6, where each dimension is associated with the corresponding response of the interviewee, ordering them by codes according to the identification of each interviewee and the corresponding row of the matrix where their responses were presented. The matrix will have the following structure as presented below:

Dimension	Code interviewee
Strategy	M2.7
Management	H1.1, M2.2, M2.7, M3.3, M3.9

Matrix 5. Dimensions Matrix Model

Source: Own elaboration

Where, in the matrix, code M2.7 is interpreted as interviewee M2, and from her interview matrix, row 7, being the same structure for all codes.

Dimension	Code interviewee
Strategy	H1.5, H1.6, H1.7, H1.12, M2.1, M2.4, M2.5, M2.6, M2.7, M2.8, M3.1, M3.2, M3.3, M3.4, M3.5, M3.7, M3.9
Management	H1.1, M2.2, M2.7, M3.3, M3.9
Organizational Structure	H1.2, H1.3, H1.4, H1.5, H1.12, M2.1, M2.5, M2.7, M3.1, M3.3, M3.4, M3.5, M3.7, M3.9
Action and Control Plan	H1.9
Volunteering	M1.5, H1.8, M3.6
External Supervision	M1.3, M1.9, M2.6, M3.1, M3.2, M3.8
Support and Collaboration Entities	M1.1, M1.2, M1.4, M1.6, M1.7, M1.8, H1.5, H1.10, H1.11, M2.3, M2.9, M3.1, M3.8

Matrix 6. Dimensions Matrix

Source: Own elaboration

At this stage of the research, and with the previous results, it only remains to establish the conceptual model (See Image 2), as a graphic representation of the concepts, relationships, needs, and understanding of the foundations and their operation, to maintain their existence, to establish a horizon of action that allows them to maintain their activity benefiting generic groups of people and achieving higher standards in their management.

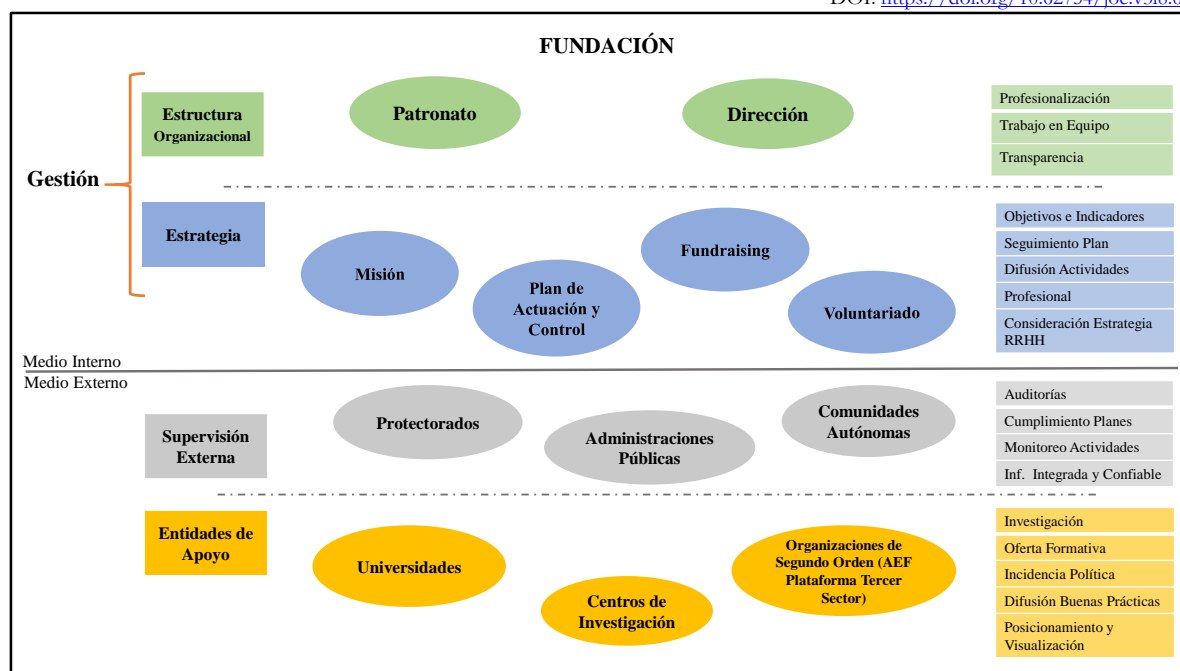


Figure 2. Conceptual Model: Foundations and Aspects of Organizational Feasibility

Source: Own elaboration

Discussion and Conclusions

This section will present the correspondence between the objectives set for the research and the results, discussions, and suggestions arising from the work carried out.

Chapter I

The foundation sector in Spain is characterized by having generic groups of people as beneficiaries; by being made up of a growing number of organizations concentrated in those whose annual income is less than 500,000 €. For being an alternative way to generate and promote employment, mobilizing an average of 400,000 employees, and of great scope, in addition to the social purposes they pursue, they have a direct impact on the most vulnerable groups of society, serving more than 35 million beneficiaries by 2014.

Despite the important social and economic role and the growth of the sector, there is much to be done in terms of statistical knowledge and quantification, although there are efforts to gather this information, the complexity of obtaining it lies in the heterogeneity of the sector, with differences in the actors, the motivations of foundations, the modes of financing, and the fields of action they address. This, added to the dispersion and lack of consolidation of information from foundation registries, since they may be of a state or autonomous nature.

Chapter III

In general terms, and as a product of the exploratory study, the results are not conclusive, but rather point to the establishment of a systemic view of the foundation sector, a view that includes aspects of structure, strategy, and environment, to cohesively face environmental disturbances and achieve the foundational objectives. This holistic view seeks to integrate aspects that are fundamental to the organizational viability of foundations, aspects that are brought together in the conceptual model of foundations.

Model built from the analysis of interviews that were key to the development of the research. The information provided by the interviewees, together with the literature review and previous studies, were the basis for the distinctions made by the researcher.

Therefore, the aspects identified in the conceptual model as influencing organizational viability are established in two environments, internal and external, which are associated with dimensions or areas that are relevant to the development of the foundation's activity. Three main areas coexist in these two environments: management (including organizational structure and strategy), external supervision, and support entities.

The management area is subdivided into two dimensions. The first is the organizational structure, which considers the Board of Trustees and the management of the foundation as the driving forces and the people responsible for achieving the foundation's purpose. This work must be professionalized; it is not possible to think of maintaining an existence in the environment without having the necessary technical tools for the fulfillment of its functions. Likewise, the work and initiatives established in the foundations must be under the concept of teamwork, where there is fluid communication, joint, informed, and coordinated work. The transparency with which this structure acts is also essential, publishing on time the information on the activities they carry out and the resources they obtain, with a double intention, firstly to project their image in society and secondly, as a placating effect of the negative impact caused by specific cases of malpractice in foundations.

The second dimension immersed in management is the strategy, which will be determined by the articulation of how they establish, design, project, and implement: the action plan, fundraising, and the work of the volunteers, all of this having the mission and the foundational purpose as a transversal axis.

As part of this strategy, it is vital to establish objectives and indicators for long-term compliance, depending on the organizational structure, beyond those that must be presented in the action plan, in order to be a road map for the foundational activity, so that they have a guiding character and, based on this road map, the annual action plans should be established and formulated accordingly.

The imposition of the formulation of the action plan has been counterproductive in those foundations that are less professionalized, and without a long-term vision, and has led them to be reactive from year to year, establishing the course of action based on the plan that they design in a forced manner, without greater perspectives.

Fundraising as a fundraising mechanism is becoming more professional, which is an opportunity to generate competitive advantages for those foundations that have made use of this tool and are looking for alternative contributions.

As for volunteers, their work is exalted, they are the visible image and bearers of the foundation's message, and they are the ones who evangelize in society the role of these entities, therefore, it is suggested to have associated policies: integrate them, train them, capacitate them, make them part of the foundation and avoid rotation (know-how is lost).

In the external environment in supervision, we find the entities that by their nature are oriented to have a normative and regulatory role, with the capacity to be amplifiers and/or reducers of this organizational model through the establishment of public policies that may benefit and/or hinder the conditions of the sector.

Here are the Protectorates, Public Administrations, and Autonomous Communities, which by regulation are in charge of auditing, controlling the fulfillment of the action plans, safeguarding the fulfillment of the foundational purposes, and monitoring the foundational activities, among others.

A very sensitive aspect of the sector that should be urgently addressed is keeping the foundations' records up to date; this is of vital importance in order to begin to establish the sector's statistical basis and carry out representative quantitative analyses. This is an aspect that is considered deficient and must be avoided; the sector urgently requires statistics and integrated and reliable information.

Supporting entities can be channels for dissemination, training, and research and include universities, research centers, and second-tier organizations, such as the AEF or the Third Sector Platform. They become amplifying agents, disseminating good practices, generating political incidence, and positioning the sector.

In conclusion, the conceptual model represents the aspects that were extracted from the research analysis, considering contextual, legal, and internal aspects and the characteristics of the Spanish foundation sector, thus responding to the proposed objectives.

In the 19th century, the physicist and mathematician Sir William Thompson wrote one of his most famous quotes:

“What is not defined, cannot be measured.

What is not measured cannot be improved.

What does not improve, always degrades”.

Well, it is time to measure in the foundation sector, it is urgent to have validated statistical information and statistical certainty.

It is necessary to know the real size of the sector, the effective active foundations, the areas of activity, the number of beneficiaries, and distinctions of the vulnerable groups that are reached by their actions, there is much to be done, it is a pending task to be addressed by researchers, universities, study centers, support entities and the Public Administration itself.

Afterward, it will be possible to measure the impact associated with the management of the foundations and to evaluate and compare the results, as well as to carry out deeper organizational analyses.

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