**ABSTRACT**

This paper is an attempt to analyze some of methodologies and models used to identify the most important factors to promote competitiveness on different levels: international, national, regional, industrial, and under a systemic and cluster approach. The purpose is to support the design of an appropriate model to analyze competitive performance of a local industry in Mexico, specifically the candy industry.

The results are useful to understand the areas of opportunity present in the candy industry and allow proposing strategic actions to promote competitiveness. The goal of this article isto propose a strategic agenda to strengthen the competitiveness factor that makes the cluster approach distinctive among others, namely the role of actors and linking businesses.

This paper presents partial results of research of a doctoral thesis analyzing the case of the candy industry from the point of view of industrial clusters. The research is relevant considering that it presents a methodology for measuring the degree of functionality of a productive activity considered as “outstanding” in a local economy under international operation standards, which is not common in studies of developing countries.