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Business competitiveness: A predictive model of innovation and quality in Peruvian small and medium-sized enterprises

Competitividad empresarial: Un modelo predictivo de innovación y calidad en las pequeñas y medianas empresas peruanas

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Abstract

In a highly demanding business context, such as that of small and medium-sized companies, competitiveness is crucial for their market longevity, and organizational strategies focused on innovation and quality become essential elements. The objective of the study was to determine the predictive capacity of the innovative organizational approach (IOA) and quality management (QM) on business competitiveness (EC). It was developed using a quantitative, non-experimental, predictive, and cross-sectional approach, employing structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) on a sample of 150 participants from the service sector. The results show a significant and positive relationship between the variables. The IOA had a direct impact on business competitiveness (b = 0.492) and QA (b = 0.568); similarly, QA also had a positive influence on competitiveness (b = 0.409), both of which were significant (p = 0.001). Positive predictive significance values were achieved for both variables, particularly for competitiveness (Q^2 = 0.512), which contrasts with the proposed model. In conclusion, the empirical evidence indicates that both innovative organizational approaches and quality management are key predictors of MSE business competitiveness. The study in question offers a valuable and replicable model for refining business strategy in emerging economies. Its contribution is relevant for the design of organizational policies aimed at the sustainable development and competitive success of the sector.

Keywords: Management, leadership, innovative organizational approach, business competitiveness.

Resumen

En un contexto empresarial altamente exigente, como el de las pequeñas y medianas empresas, la competitividad resulta crucial para su permanencia en el mercado, y las estrategias organizacionales centradas en la innovación y la calidad se convierten en elementos esenciales. El objetivo del estudio fue determinar la capacidad predictiva del enfoque organizacional innovador (EOI) y de la gestión de la calidad (GC) sobre la competitividad empresarial (CE). Este se desarrolló bajo un enfoque cuantitativo, no experimental, predictivo y transversal, empleando modelos de ecuaciones estructurales (PLS-SEM) en una muestra de 150 participantes del sector servicios. Los resultados muestran una relación significativa y positiva entre las variables. El EOI tuvo un impacto directo sobre la competitividad empresarial (b = 0.492) y sobre la GC (b = 0.568); de igual modo, la GC también influyó positivamente en la competitividad (b = 0.409), siendo ambas relaciones significativas (p = 0.001). Se alcanzaron valores positivos de significancia predictiva para ambas variables, en especial para la competitividad (Q^2 = 0.512), lo cual contrasta con el modelo propuesto. En conclusión, la evidencia empírica indica que tanto los enfoques organizacionales innovadores como la gestión de la calidad son predictores clave de la competitividad empresarial de las MIPYMES. El estudio en cuestión ofrece un modelo valioso y replicable para refinar la estrategia empresarial en economías emergentes. Su aporte es relevante para el diseño de políticas organizacionales orientadas al desarrollo sostenible y al éxito competitivo del sector.

Palabras clave: Gestión, liderazgo, enfoque organizacional innovador, competitividad empresarial.

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Introduction

Currently, companies worldwide are experiencing rapid growth and evolution due to technological advances and recurring changes in market demands (Javaid et al., 2024). Digitalization, combined with globalization and competitiveness, has prompted organizations to rethink and adapt their business models to remain relevant in the market. As a result, more than 60% of companies in countries such as the United States, Japan, and Germany have achieved performance improvements by integrating innovation and quality management (QM) into their organizational strategies. (Rashid & Kausik, 2024) (Newton et al., 2021). The innovative organizational approach (IOA) involves linking values, practices, and structures that enable greater agility in decision-making and directly impact competitiveness. This approach, aligned with factors such as effective quality management, improves the ability of MSMEs in competitive, agile, and dynamic markets to compete and stand out from traditional business models (Aguado et al., 2022; Ancaya et al., 2023) (Ore et al., 2020).

The literature links IOA with KM, the latter representing a fundamental pillar in the global business landscape, which is recognized as a determinant of competitiveness and success (Lepistö et al., 2023) (Pariona-Luque et al., 2023). In other words, the optimal development of products or services can directly influence the ability to meet customer demands and expectations, as well as strategic positioning in a market characterized by high levels of dynamism and demand (Saunila et al., 2023; Sulivyo & Maya, 2023). In this sense, KM should no longer be considered solely as an operational tool, but as a systemic approach that has a significant impact on the competitive advantage and sustainability of organizations, especially micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

In addition to KM, another element linked to IOA is business competitiveness (BC); this factor involves not only the optimization of internal resources, but also the integration of new technologies and quality practices that improve processes and organizational performance. In this way, the adoption of IOA facilitates the implementation of more competitive processes in organizations, in addition to the ongoing challenge of KM in emerging markets (Alneyadi, 2023; Chen et al., 2020; Valaskova & Nagy, 2023). From this perspective, the link between KM and innovation is of significant value to organizations. The former plays a crucial role in facilitating a culture of continuous improvement, while the latter provides elements that enable flexible and efficient adaptation to new challenges, fostering greater innovation and competitiveness (Bataineh et al., 2024; Grace Tetteh et al., 2024; Ndou et al., 2024). Both variables are strongly related, as effective KM cannot thrive without openness to innovation, which fosters adaptability and continuous improvement.

The literature review has revealed a limited number of studies focusing on IOA related to GC (Idris & Durmuşoğlu, 2021; Wongsansukcharoen & Thaweepaiboonwong, 2022). This makes it impossible to determine the ability to predict CE in MYPEs in developing countries such as Peru. However, there are studies on the relationship between QM and CE, which show it to be a determining and key factor for competitiveness, especially in international markets (Nguyen et al., 2018) and highlight the importance of integrating quality into organizational processes (García-Fernández et al., 2022) (Uribe-Hernández et al., 2023). Despite the growth in research addressing variables such as QM and CE, there are clear limitations about Peruvian MSMEs; in particular, IOA has not been comprehensively explored as a predictor of CE, and this, combined with the minimal number of studies linking IOA to QM, represents a research need. Furthermore, many of the studies have focused on developed economies, so the conclusions obtained are not always applicable to companies in developing countries (Chindea et al., 2023) (Uribe-Hernandez et al., 2023). For this reason, this study represents a step forward and a search for organizational improvement.

In Peru, a significant gap exists in research on the relationship between IOA, KM, and CE in MYPEs. Although studies on competitiveness in general are being conducted, the connection between these factors and competitiveness is insufficient, according to the Latin American literature explored (Thomran et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). For this reason, it is necessary to conduct research that delves into how these factors (EIO and QM) interact and specifically contribute to improving CE. In this way, the study aims to provide recommendations on practices that enable MSMEs to enhance their organizational strategies, optimize processes, and strengthen their competitiveness in highly dynamic markets (Aguado et al., 2022). The current organizational environment, characterized by volatility, competitive pressure, and rapid technological change, forces MSMEs to face structural challenges to remain competitive. Although there is extensive literature on CE, little attention has been paid to the integrative role of IOA as a basis for developing

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sustainable competitive advantage strategies (Wang et al., 2025). Furthermore, despite advances in the application of KM models, significant gaps remain in understanding their barriers and limitations within the service sector in developing countries. In this context, its value lies in articulating constructs that have been poorly integrated until now, as well as in its practical applicability to improve organizational performance. Similarly, the research draws on existing literature on IOA linked to KM to improve understanding of how these two factors interact and influence the variability of CE in the Peruvian context (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). The study offers a comprehensive approach that has been little explored in previous research. Although 99.5% of companies in Peru in 2023 were MSMEs and nearly 30% (29.5%) are concentrated in the capital, which represents the geographical area with the highest representation (ComexPeru, 2024). Este artículo se estructura en la primera sección con la revisión de la literatura sobre el IOA, la GC y la CE en las MYPEs. In this sense, the study aims to determine the predictive capacity of the innovative organizational approach and quality management on the business competitiveness of MSMEs in the commerce sector of Metropolitan Lima.

Theoretical framework

Innovative organizational approach (IOA)

It is linked to the set of principles, strategies, and practices that determine how an organization structures its processes, manages its resources, and directs its efforts towards competitiveness and sustainability (Hael et al., 2024; Kozioł-Nadolna & Beyer, 2021). In this way, it is aligned with the culture, leadership, and strategic management of organizations as fundamental axes for value creation and performance (Santos, 2024). Theoretically, it acts as a key determinant of competitive advantage, as it allows companies to differentiate themselves through efficient internal processes, innovation, and structured decision-making (Král & Králová, 2016).

Quality management (QM)

This involves systematic procedures for planning, executing, and controlling an organization's operations (Mohedano et al., 2023). This preventive and comprehensive approach ensures quality in all aspects and is adapted to each sector to establish specific performance evaluation frameworks (Nasution et al., 2023; Permana et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is not limited to the quality of a product or service, but also to the methods used to achieve it (Bakhtiar et al., 2023; Stravinskiene & Serafinas, 2020), improving national and international standards (Zhen & Song, 2021). Similarly, Total Quality Management (TQM) theory seeks to maximize quality by eliminating randomness in customer satisfaction (Al-Ababneh, 2021; Gaitero et al., 2021; Harianto & Zainol, 2022). Additionally, the Quality Management Model (PDCA) fosters continuous improvement through its four-stage cycle (plan, do, check, and act) (Akanmu et al., 2020; Antwi & Darkwa, 2022). In this way, areas for improvement are identified and actions are taken to achieve excellence in processes and products (Bungatang & Reynel, 2021; Fauzi, 2021; Mohedano et al., 2023).

Business competitiveness (BC)

This is an organization's ability to face the challenges of its environment and outperform its competitors (Caisaguano-Pujos et al., 2022; Maya et al., 2022). It involves recognizing and efficiently utilizing the competencies that distinguish it in the market (Vrabcova et al., 2022) and the ability to adapt to environmental changes (Ahmed & Streimikiene, 2021; Tamayo & Caiche, 2024). It also requires constant evolution in strategy, structure, and processes to maintain competitive advantage (Kaczmarek, 2022; Ni et al., 2021), which must be sustainable in context and over time (Blanco-Ariza et al., 2020; Tiwari, 2022). Companies must develop strategies and policies to differentiate themselves, identify market opportunities, continuously improve, and foster innovation (Corboș et al., 2023; Kenyon & Sen, 2021; Macedo et al., 2021; Salas-Arbeláez et al., 2023). In this regard, according to the Theory of Competitive Advantage, countries should focus on producing and exporting goods in which they are most efficient (Osagie & Ukwuoma, 2022). Based on the data described above, the following hypotheses are formulated: H1: The innovative organizational approach has a positive impact on business competitiveness; H2: The innovative organizational approach has a positive influence on quality management; and H3: Quality management has a positive impact on business competitiveness.

Methodology

Research design

The study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, and predictive approach, following the model proposed by (Ato et al., 2013; Raj et al., 2023) with an inferential

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scope, and proposed the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model. It was also cross-sectional (Cvetkovic-Vega et al., 2021), as the evaluation was carried out at a single point in time, specifically in 2024.

Instruments

The measurement instruments for this study were developed using a rigorous methodological approach to ensure the conceptual validity, theoretical relevance, and contextual appropriateness of the items associated with the GC, IOA, and CE variables. To this end, a systematic review of scientific literature indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and SciELO was conducted, selecting studies and models that had been widely validated in organizational settings.

The innovative organizational approach variable was based on Grabowska & Saniuk (2022) and Chikán et al. (2022), who highlight the approach as a structural factor in performance consolidation. The instrument includes three dimensions: innovation orientation, digital transformation, and learning culture. The final scale had four Likert-type items, written to reflect the current practices of MSMEs.

For the quality management variable, the contributions of Yahiaoui et al. (2022), Godinho et al. (2021), Amaya et al. (2020), and Parasuraman's SERVQUAL model were used. Based on these theoretical references, three fundamental dimensions were identified: leadership commitment, customer focus, and continuous improvement. The final scale had four Likert-type items, adapted to the Peruvian business context.

In the case of the business competitiveness variable, the instrument was designed based on studies by Barría-González et al. (2021), Quesada et al. (2018), Ochoa et al. (2019), Caller et al. (2022), and M. L. Martínez et al. (2020). These authors approached CE from strategic perspectives, which enabled them to define two key dimensions: organizational strategy and innovation, comprising four items.

Table 1.
Operationalisation

Variable	Dimensions		Items
Innovative Organizational Approach	Innovation Orientation	EO1	The organization's policies promote a work environment that facilitates innovation. [Las políticas de la organización promueven un entorno de trabajo que facilita la innovación.]
	Digital Transformation	EO2	The organization implements new technologies in its business model. [La organización implementa nuevas tecnologías en su modelo de negocio.]
	Learning Culture	EO3	The work system facilitates collective learning within the organization. [El sistema de trabajo facilita el aprendizaje colectivo en la organización.]
		EO4	Employees have the capacity to empower themselves in their roles to enhance organizational learning. [Los colaboradores tienen la capacidad de empoderarse en sus roles para mejorar el aprendizaje organizacional.]
Quality Management	Leadership Commitment	QM1	The organization considers that quality is more important than price. [La organización considera que la calidad es más importante que el precio.]
		QM2	There are clearly defined quality objectives for the organization. [Existen objetivos de calidad claramente definidos por la organización.]
	Customer Focus	QM3	The organization seeks ways to improve its products/services for customers/users. [La organización busca formas de mejorar sus productos/servicios para los clientes/usuarios.]
	Continuous Improvement	QM4	The organization sees continuous improvement as a competitive advantage. [La organización ve la mejora continua como ventaja competitiva.]
Business Competitiveness	Organizational Strategy	EC1	All employees know the strategic objectives of the organization. [Todos los colaboradores conocen los objetivos estratégicos de la organización.]
		EC2	The organization's strategy is regularly reviewed and updated to adapt to a changing environment. [La estrategia de la organización se revisa y actualiza regularmente para adaptarse a los cambios del entorno.]
	Innovation	EC3	Innovations have improved the organization's competitiveness. [Las innovaciones han mejorado la competitividad de la organización.]
		EC4	The organization adopts new technologies or work methods. [La organización adopta nuevas tecnologías o métodos de trabajo.]

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The instruments were validated by three experts in the field of business sciences, who evaluated the clarity, relevance, and significance of each item, yielding an Aiken V consistency of 0.89. A pilot test was conducted on 25 individuals who met the sample inclusion criteria. The reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was a = .885.

Sample

A non-probabilistic method was employed to estimate the sample (Reales et al., 2022), utilizing the Soper®digital calculator to obtain the necessary data for the structural equations. The expected effect sizes (.30), the desired statistical power level (.80), and the number of latent (3) and observed (12) variables were considered, with a probability index of .05 (Soper, 2024). Thus, a minimum of 119 merchants from the city of Lima were established.

The inclusion criteria were a) active merchants in the service sector, b) residing in Lima, c) having been in business for at least one year, d) over 18 years of age and voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study. The exclusion criteria were a) not actively involved in commercial activities at the time of the study, and b) those whose type of business was not relevant to the research objectives. After data cleaning, the sample consisted of 150 participants between the ages of 20 and 65, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Gender	**f**	**%**
Male	76	50.7
Female	74	49.3
Age		
18-25	2	1.3
26-35	69	46.0
36-45	43	28.7
46-55	29	19.3
56-to more	7	4.7
Sector		
Industrial	29	19.3
Comprehensive well-being	68	45.3
Business and finance	13	8.7
Technology	21	14.0
Transport and communication	11	7.3
Tourism	8	5.3
Position		
Manager	60	40.0
Area manager	43	28.7
Team leader	27	18.0
Supervisor	20	13.3

Data processing and analysis

First, approval was sought from the authors' university ethics committee. Once authorization was granted, the questionnaires were prepared using Microsoft Forms®. They were administered through phone calls and on-site visits to increase the response rate. They were also provided to the Lima Chamber of Commerce for distribution to its community. The information was collected between October 2024 and December 2024, with each participant spending approximately 15 minutes completing the questionnaire. The data was then downloaded in Excel format and assigned an ID for identification purposes. This data was initially recoded for exploration. Factor analysis was employed to corroborate causal connections using SmartPLS 4 statistical software, where the proposed models' structure was tested at the hypothesis level.

In addition, the study complied with ethical guidelines established by the University; therefore, the confidentiality and anonymity of the merchants were ensured by not recording their names or identity documents. On the other hand, participants were recruited voluntarily and provided their informed consent online after understanding the study's objectives and procedures. The data was analysed anonymously and confidentially.

Results

A structural equation model (SEM) was used to analyze the results. This is considered a multivariate multiple regression technique that allows us to examine the extent to which variables can be measured, i.e., unobservable latent variables (constructs). Likewise, SEM allows for modelling the relationships between several predictor variables (independent or exogenous) and criterion variables (dependent or endogenous) (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). In this sense, PLS-SEM was applied with a predictive rather than a confirmatory approach. Next, the measurement model is examined to determine the convergent and discriminant validity of the model, and the structural model is also analyzed with PLS estimation (M. Martínez & Fierro, 2018).

Measurement model

The indicators were subjected to an acceptance criterion, whereby each item must obtain a value greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, Table 3 presents the factor loadings for the model that analyses the role of the IOA in EC and GC; the table indicates that

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each of the constructs meets the acceptance criteria, both individually and in terms of the values obtained in the averages.

Finally, although the item 'QM1' of the quality management construct has a value of 0.694 and does not meet the established criterion of being greater than 0.7, it still contributes to the validation of the model; therefore, the results are translated into three factors and 12 items.

Table 3.
Cross factor loads

Indicators	Enterprise competitiveness	Innovative Organizational Approach	Quality Management
EC1	**0.703**	0.482	0.523
EC2	**0.827**	0.597	0.595
EC3	**0.851**	0.603	0.560
EC4	**0.820**	0.632	0.530
IOA1	0.636	**0.806**	0.478
IOA2	0.621	**0.867**	0.454
IOA3	0.618	**0.854**	0.509
IOA4	0.539	**0.815**	0.456
QM1	0.470	0.330	**0.694**
QM2	0.539	0.498	**0.785**
QM3	0.565	0.470	**0.858**
QM4	0.571	0.458	**0.781**

Cross-factor loadings. Table 4 presents the convergent validity statistics for the measurement model. It includes the factor loadings that meet the previously established criteria, as well as the variance inflation factor (VIF) value to ensure that the model does not present multicollinearity problems that affect internal validity. Another statistic analyzed is the average extracted variance (AVE), which indicates that the latent variable (construct) explains more than 50% of the variance of each indicator.

Table 4.
Validez convergente del modelo

Indicator	Factor loading	VIF	AVE	CA	CR
EC1	0.703	1.400	0.643	0.813	0.878
EC2	0.827	1.802			
EC3	0.851	2.169			
EC4	0.820	1.963			
IOA1	0.806	1.811	0.699	0.856	0.903
IOA2	0.867	2.317			
IOA3	0.854	2.205			
IOA4	0.815	1.991			
QM1	0.694	1.405	0.611	0.786	0.862
QM2	0.785	1.544			
QM3	0.858	2.028			
QM4	0.781	1.567			

The internal consistency method based on Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient (CA) and composite reliability (RC) allows us to estimate the reliability of a measurement instrument with a set of items that are expected to measure the same construct or a single theoretical dimension of a latent construct; in other words, it is the average of the correlations between the items that form part of an instrument (Streiner, 2003). The closer the Alpha value is to 1, the greater the consistency. On the other hand, as an acceptance criterion, for measurements of the same construct to be considered valid, they must exhibit high correlation values that demonstrate convergent validity; however, for discriminant validity to exist, this correlation must be lower, indicating differentiation between constructs (Cheung et al., 2024). This is evident in Table 5, which demonstrates that this criterion is met for the measurement model, thereby confirming that the model is both reliable and valid in terms of convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 5.
Fornell-Lacker criterion

	EC	IOA	QM
EC	0.802		
IOA	0.724	0.836	
QM	0.689	0.568	0.782

Structural model

The relationships in the structural model are evaluated using path coefficients. To achieve this, the path, T-value, and p-value statistics are utilized, which are calculated using the bootstrap method in SmartPLS 4, considered the most widely used method for estimating standard errors (M. Martínez & Fierro, 2018). Table 6 shows that the three hypotheses proposed for the model are fulfilled.

The results demonstrate that IOA has a positive impact on CE and GC, which, in turn, positively impact the competitiveness of Peruvian companies. To support the results of a predictive approach, R^2 is evaluated, i.e., the proportion of total variance explained (Hair et al., 2021), as shown in Figure 1. The GC variable received a weak value and the CE variable a moderate value.

Likewise, the size of the f2 effects in each of the relationships was evaluated, also for predictive purposes. The relationships: innovative organizational approach business competitiveness (0.452) and innovative organizational approach quality

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management (0.476) obtained large effects; and quality management business competitiveness (0.314) obtained a medium effect. On the other hand, the results are also presented in the SmartPLS graph (Figure 2).

Table 6.
Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis		Path Value	STDEV	T Value	P value	Acceptance
Innovative Organizational approach -> Enterprise competitiveness	H1	0.492	0.069	7.078	0.000	Accepted
Innovative Organizational Approach -> Quality Management	H2	0.568	0.085	6.655	0.000	Accepted
Quality Management -> Enterprise competitiveness	H3	0.409	0.075	5.436	0.000	Accepted

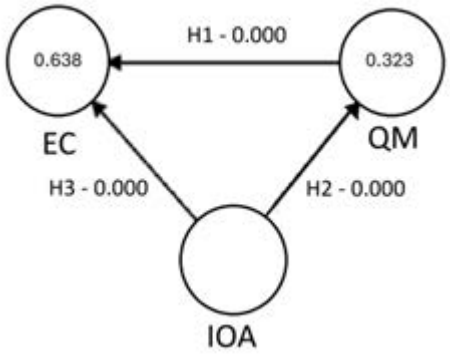

Figure1.
Model on the role of the innovative organizational approach

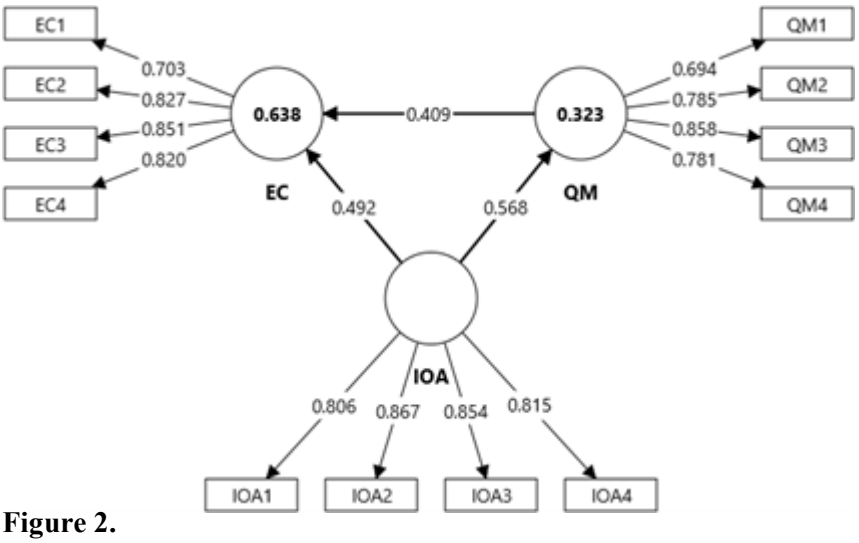

Figure 2.
Results of the model produced by the SmartPLS programme.

Finally, as a last predictive approach, Q2 is examined, which is considered relevant, given that it has values greater than 0 in the cross-validation redundancy report, indicating predictive relevance. Thus, Table 7 shows that the endogenous variable, business competitiveness (0.512), has high predictive relevance, and the variable quality management (0.297) has medium predictive relevance. This demonstrates that the model proposed in this study meets the criteria of validity and construct validity, and exhibits predictive relevance.

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Table 7.
Predictive relevance criterion

	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
EC	0.512	0.714	0.544
QM	0.297	0.865	0.665

Discussion

The study's results have contributed to the knowledge of factors that tend to influence CE variability in MYPEs within the sector, specifically the impact of IOA and GC, confirming the hypotheses developed. Regarding the predictive power of IOA on CE, the results show a coefficient of 0.492, which is significant ($p < .001$) and accompanied by a large effect size ($f^2 = .452$). These findings are consistent with the scientific literature that highlights the relevance of the organizational approach as a key driver in improving business competitiveness (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2024; Huynh et al., 2024). In this sense, companies that adopt innovative strategies not only improve their ability to differentiate themselves in the market but also increase their agility in adapting to rapidly changing environments within their sector.

Similarly, it has been shown that IOA tends to have a positive influence on KM, which is confirmed by a model of 0.568 ($p< .0001$), demonstrating that IOA, beyond being significantly related to KM in SMEs, reinforces the idea that companies that tend to adopt innovation in their internal processes not only optimize operations, but also improve quality standards, which is essential to ensure competitiveness in dynamic markets (Malisić et al., 2025; Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023). This is further reinforced by the effect size ($f^2 = .476$).

In response to the influence of QM on CE, a coefficient of .409 ($p<.001$) was found. In this scenario, it is noteworthy that effective quality management not only improves operational efficiency but also strengthens loyalty, which directly translates into greater competitiveness (Abbas, 2020; Alsaqer et al., 2024). However, although the effect size is medium ($f^2 = 0.314$), the relationship is significant, highlighting that QM is an essential, albeit not exclusive, component for improving CE in various contexts (Akin, 2024; Bernardo et al., 2024). Upon examining the confirmation of the general model, it is evident that IOA has a significant impact on both business competitiveness ($f^2 = 0.452$) and quality management ($f^2 = 0.476$). Furthermore, in terms of the relationship between KM and CE ($f^2 = 0.314$), the effect is medium, indicating that KM is important; however, its impact is moderate compared to other factors, such as organizational innovation.

Although the findings provide a solid empirical basis for the influence of innovative organizational approaches and quality management on the competitiveness of MSMEs, this study has some limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results. First, the research focused exclusively on companies in the service sector in a specific economic context, which may limit the generalization of the results to other productive sectors or regions with different dynamics. Second, the sample size was moderate ($n = 150$), so future research with larger and more diverse samples could offer greater statistical robustness and broaden the external validity of the model. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of the research prevents the establishment of definitive causal relationships between the variables. It is advisable to conduct longitudinal studies to observe the evolution and impact of these practices over time. Finally, although the PLS-SEM model was used for its predictive capacity, the inclusion of mediating or moderating variables could enrich the theoretical analysis and add greater depth to the proposed model.

The findings of this study offer important practical implications for managers, business advisors, and policymakers seeking to strengthen MSMEs. First, it is recommended that organisations adopt a strategic approach that integrates organizational innovation not only as a goal but also to drive quality processes that strengthen competitiveness. This involves fostering more flexible structures, creative problem-solving processes, and a culture open to change. Second, quality management must extend beyond regulatory compliance, focusing on generating added value through consistent standards, continuous improvement, and a customer-oriented approach. From a public policy perspective, the results support the need to design training, financing, and incentive programmes for MSMEs to develop innovation and quality capabilities in a coordinated manner. Finally, companies can utilize the proposed model as a diagnostic and strategic planning tool to identify key areas for improvement, thereby consolidating their competitive advantage in constantly changing economic environments.

Conclusions

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to understanding the factors that drive competitiveness in micro and small enterprises (MSEs), as they empirically demonstrate that both

the innovative organizational approach (IOA) and quality management (QM) are key predictors of such competitiveness. This study presents an integrated model that not only confirms the direct influence of IOA on CE but also highlights its indirect effect through QM, revealing a strategic dynamic between innovation and quality that has been rarely explored jointly in previous research focused on MSMEs in the service sector.

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