INFLUENCING ASPECTS FOR ONLINE SALES: AN ANALYSIS OF 2ND-DEGREE OLIVE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN SPAIN

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Abstract

Spain occupies an important strategic position in the olive oil world market, accounting for 49.92% of world production and 71.49% of European Union production for the 2020-2021 season. These data reveal a situation of leadership and marked specialization which, however, does not translate into real benefits for the sector. Despite this leadership on the supply side, the Spanish olive oil sector has been characterized by the sub-standard marketing of its oils, mainly in bulk. In this context, information and communication technologies (ICTs) in general and the Internet in particular are tools with the potential to restructure the commercial functioning of the sector. This paper addresses the problem of the necessary market orientation of the Spanish olive sector, focusing attention on e-commerce as a means of access to the final market. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify the key factors that can stimulate a higher level of online invoicing by the sector's second tier cooperatives. In order to achieve this objective, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) has been used. The results indicate that online sales are affected, in a high percentage, by several factors, including online reputation, management training and internationalization, as well as the offer of ecological products and the degree of cooperative integration.

Keywords: *second-degree cooperatives; olive oil; e-commerce; fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA).*

JEL Classification: O13, P13, M15, Q13

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1 INTRODUCTION

Spain occupies an important strategic position in the olive oil world market. According to the International Olive Oil Council, for the 2020-21 season, Spanish production accounted for 49.92% of world production and 71.49% of European Union production. The Spanish olive oil sector has been characterized by the sub-standard marketing of its oils, mainly in bulk. This marketing problem has hindered the development of the sector for decades, preventing it from retaining a large part of the added value generated by the sale of bottled oil to the end consumer. The strong competition among olive oil mills in the face of a highly concentrated distribution which, in addition, sells 60% of olive oils under distribution brands (Alimarket, 2020), are factors that have a negative influence on the evolution of prices in the Spanish and international markets and drag them down.

In this context, information and communication technologies (ICTs) in general and the Internet in particular are tools with the potential to restructure the commercial functioning of the sector. Indeed, many authors point out that ICTs have the capacity to reduce transaction costs between

activities and the risk inherent in each transaction (Benjamin & Wigand, 1997; Steinfeld, et al., 1997), to increase efficiency in value chain activities (Porter & Millar, 1985; Ghosh, 1998) and to facilitate the diffusion of organizational knowledge (Koschatzky, 2002). Among the many advantages that ICTs offer the company, it is in the business area where their effects have been most noted and where they can most help organizational development (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Indeed, information, negotiation and warranty costs have been reduced by the use of these media, allowing the company to provide a more economical, personalized and agile service to consumers (Karoui et al., 2015). However, it is in the access to foreign markets where ICTs offer their full potential, an attractive feature in the context of worldwide expansion of the olive oil market (Rasheed, 2005). Indeed, e-commerce is capable of reducing transaction costs and facilitating contacts between users anywhere in the world, by reducing the importance of physical distances between them (Liberos et al., 2011). This potential is of particular interest to small companies (Vaño, 2023), such as those that dominate the olive sector, due to their limited human and financial resources (Sadowski et al., 2002).

Spain currently leads the world's olive oil production, and the sector is mainly made up of cooperative societies which, according to MAPA (2022), account for 65% of production. The literature points out the importance of undertaking a change of orientation towards the end market in order to make this activity profitable, pointing out the digitalization of cooperatives as a key factor (Batlle et al., 2020; Bernal et al., 2019b). The emergence of second-degree cooperativism makes possible the implementation of one of the most pointed academic recommendations for the sector, indicating the possibility of generating a better commercialization of this product through concentration and integration, that is, through the increase of the business dimension (Montero, 1999). In addition, these cooperative societies are in a privileged position to be able to consolidate their competitiveness in the end market thanks to their qualification as a socially responsible company (Benavides, 2020; Puentes & Velasco, 2009), a characteristic that is considered a source of competitive advantage and reputation by many authors (Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Bae et al., 2020).

In this context, the objective of this paper is to identify which factors explain a higher level of online turnover by the companies analyzed. To achieve this objective, the fsQCA methodology is applied. The target population of the study is the Spanish second-tier olive oil cooperatives. The degree of cooperative integration in the olive sector represents 50.16% of the existing cooperatives and the integration of 26% of the total national production. The outcome_variable used in this study was the percentage of online sales with respect to the company's total sales. Furthermore, organizational, managerial and structural variables have been included as condition variables, which in the literature have been indicated as determinants in the improvement of the online marketing of the companies.

There is a gap in the scientific literature on drivers of online sales in this enterprise, let alone considering a configurational approach. Much of the existing work has focused on identifying which factors (organizational, environmental, technological, etc.) affect the adoption of a website or other innovations (Hendricks & Mwapwele, 2023). Another group of studies has focused on identifying which features and functionalities of a website's content attract more users (Alnawas & Al Khateeb, 2022; Garet et al., 2016). Most of this research uses the Theory of Reasoned Action -TRA- approach (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975), the Technology Adaptation Model -TAM- (Davis, 1989) or the Theory of Planned Behaviour -TPB (Azjen's, 1991).

Another group of studies has focused on identifying the problems that hinder the adoption of these technologies by companies (Fillis et al., 2004; Kula & Tatoglen, 2003). Finally, there are not many studies focused on identifying factors linked not to the adoption of e-commerce but rather to its success (Eid & Trueman, 2004; Feind et al., 2002).

In most of the previous studies, the interest in establishing a general theory of diffusion and use of innovation has led many authors to adopt a theoretical approach and, as a consequence, to place little emphasis on obtaining solid and consistent empirical results on the determinants that affect each specific type of innovation and its successful use (Fichman & Kemerer, 1997; Vilaseca et. al., 2007). In fact, several authors claim the need for additional studies in order to identify which characteristics of the firm and its competitive environment are related to the adoption and development of e-commerce (García-Borbolla, 2005; Vilaseca et. al., 2007). This paper attempts to respond to this demand. To do so, this study uses a configurational approach (Fiss, 2007; Fiss et al., 2013), filling a gap by evaluating how various combinations of organizational attributes, recommended in the literature, are linked to organizational performance on the Internet, through online sales. To this end, a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is used.

In practice, the findings obtained are transferable to the olive cooperative sector, since they provide different strategic options for improving its competitive position on the Internet. The results suggest, as strategies to improve on-line marketing, a greater integration, greater internationalization, greater on-line reputation, CEO training and greater specialization in organic products. This paper is structured as follows: after this introduction, the contextual framework detailing the propositions of the study is presented, followed by the technical characteristics of the research in the methodology section; then the results are presented and finally, the corresponding conclusions.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this study we rely on the resources and capabilities theory (Barney, 1991) to evaluate how the combination of certain resources and practices recommended in the literature determine the firm's performance. This theoretical approach establishes that the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization and its ability to achieve competitive advantages is given by the heterogeneity and utilization of its resources and the characteristics of the company (Leiblein, 2011). In this line, the special contribution of intangibles in obtaining relevant capabilities that result in sustainable competitive advantages has been highlighted (Hall, 2009). Within intangible resources, a distinction can be made between human-dependent and human-independent assets, classified into human intangible assets (knowledge, training, experience, etc.) and non-human intangible assets, either technological or organizational (Navas & Guerras, 2016).

The application of this theory has also been evaluated in the context of the Internet (Ray et al., 2005; Tanriverdi, 2006), an increasingly important channel in business transactions. Liao et al. (2009) emphasize the firm's ability to mobilize its resources and capabilities and to align them with the changing opportunities of the environment, as is the case in the technological sphere. For example, the presence of a website and its use for internationalization can lead to capabilities that are considered highly beneficial for organizational performance (Kim, 2020). The reputation of the organization or managerial skills are clear examples of this type of resource, with an influence on business performance (Petrick et al., 1999). The emphasis on

certain resources or organizational characteristics can result in clear competitive advantages, as it is through size, also considering other theories such as scale or scope (Wicker et al., 2014). Betting on new products, new markets or new allies can improve organizational performance by generating value within the company (Glavas & Mish, 2015).

Based on the resources and capabilities theory, the mere enumeration of the resources that the company possesses does not alone explain its competitive advantage, but it is necessary to know how the company is able to exploit these resources together, which determines the company's capabilities (Navas & Guerras, 2016). Accordingly, and under a configurational approach (Fiss, 2007; Fiss et al., 2013), we identify combinations of intangible resources, human and non-human, that are associated with high business performance in the online environment. Specifically, this paper analyzes which are the best combinations of intangible resources for firms to achieve competitive advantages in the online marketing of their products. The human intangible resource considered is CEO training and the technological and organizational characteristics evaluated are online reputation, integration, internationalization and organic product offerings. The propositions associated with such intangible resources are then supported and formulated. All of them imply clear business challenges, due to the fact that in an increasingly competitive environment, the organization must be immersed in a continuous process of change, to renew their resources and capabilities in pursuit of achieving competitive advantages (Singh et al., 2021).

In order to successfully leverage the potential of the Internet in the commercial sphere, the company's ability to achieve a positive online reputation is key. Online reputation can be understood as the result of the company's activities in a virtual environment, with the subsequent interactions and reactions of stakeholders (Kanika, 2016). Undoubtedly, the Internet has caused changes in the culture and functioning of organizations. The use of social media has become a key element in business processes (Tapscott & Barry, 2009) in which the client becomes a valuable collaborator, and they will need their experience and knowledge about the brand and the products (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Štefko et al., 2023). Online reputation is an open and dynamic process that is generated in social media, based on the evaluation of a product, service, brand or company (Davis et al., 2003). Consumers are responsible for generating this image, which determines the buying attitudes of other potential customers (García et al., 2016; Rodríquez et al., 2018). For this reason, companies must be aware of the relevance of their online reputation, which is a highly relevant element in the purchase decision process in this channel.

In the economic literature, the relationship between reputation and competitive success has been based on its value as an intangible resource generating competitive advantage (Lee & Roh, 2012; Mai, et al., 2021; Trotta et al., 2012). Several studies have found a positive relationship between reputation and financial performance (Ayturk et al., 2011; Batrancea et al., 2022; Cocis et al., 2021; Lee & Roh, 2012; Xiaoman et al., 2018). Thus, from the marketing standpoint, a positive online reputation facilitates the attraction of customers and causes a change in their attitude towards the company, increasing customer satisfaction and boosting sales (Horster & Gottschalk, 2012; Lee & Roh, 2012). In this sense, Alniacik et al. (2012) indicate that a good reputation influences current customers to increase the frequency of purchases of newly launched services and products. As a result of the development of ICTs, no company or organization should ignore the digital dimension of reputation. Therefore, our first proposition is the positive relationship that exists between online reputation, considered as both quantitative ratings, which measure satisfaction variables with a measurement scale, and qualitative ratings

obtained from the opinions written by users (Ahmed & Rodriguez, 2020), and financial results measured by online sales.

Proposition 1. Online reputation: the corporate website positively affects the level of online sales.

Human capital plays a determining role in the knowledge economy (López et al., 2006), even more so in highly competitive environments such as the current olive oil market (Mozas et al., 2020b). To achieve a successful adoption of technology, it is necessary to take into account variables both technological and social in nature (Al-Shura et al., 2018; Rogers, 2010;). In this line, according to Hollestein (2004), the training of personnel is a determining factor in developing an innovative attitude, with the continuous training of personnel necessary to acquiring useful and updated knowledge of the environment in which the company operates (García et al., 2008), such as the acquisition of technological knowledge (Fernández et al., 2020). In this context, the educational background of managers has been identified as a key factor in the adoption and use of ICTs (Goldfarb & Prince, 2008; Singh & Kant, 2008; Talib et al., 2011). Managers with higher education levels are more inclined to adopt new technologies because they are more likely to recognize the advantages and benefits of their use. Based on the above argumentation, we put forward the following proposition:

Proposition 2. *The educational background of the organization's manager has a positive influence on online sales*

In today's market, the use of ICTs has become a fundamental condition for being able to participate in it with guarantees. ICTs have changed the rules of competition (Laudon & Laudon, 2009), allowing companies to significantly reduce transaction costs and making the search for buyers and sellers or the gathering of information faster (Chen & Seshadri, 2007). In the case of companies with limited financial and human resources, such as those in the sector under study, ICTs are particularly important, as they are essential for minimizing the effects of their structural weaknesses and facilitating their internationalization (Rasheed, 2005). In this sense, ICTs allow small-scale farmers to reduce barriers to market access by improving knowledge and management of the chain (Deichmann et al., 2016). In this line, Quarratu'Aini and Hapsari (2019) argue that having their own website allows small businesses to access international markets more effectively.

In addition, ICTs dispel, to a large extent, the importance of geographical distances, allowing direct and immediate entry into foreign markets (Vivekanandan & Rajendran, 2006), especially for those companies that have greater difficulties in accessing export activity. For Filipescu et al. (2009), conducting business operations through the Internet is often a key element for exporting, as it contributes to increased competitiveness and makes it possible to open new markets (Jiménez, 2013). In addition, these new technologies facilitate marketing and are an essential element for exporting (Carmona et al., 2012). In line with this, there are numerous investigations, such as those of Gorodnichenko et al. (2010), Cintio et al. (2017) or Nolazco (2020), which support the existence of a positive relationship between innovation and exports. This relationship between variables manifests itself in a double sense. Thus, various authors have found a greater use of ICT tools in companies that are present in foreign trade, largely due to the impetus of customers and international competition (Cintio et al., 2017; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005) and the relationships maintained by the company with other organizations abroad (Fierro et al., 2013). In addition, this higher level of innovation by exporting companies

would be explained by learning from the exporting experience itself (learning by exporting) (Nolazco, 2020), with exports contributing to the development and innovation of organizations and the sector in general (Prieto & Guzmán, 2019). Thus, the following proposition is established:

Proposition 3. Internationalization positively affects the level of online sales in the company.

There is a high level of consensus on the factors inhibiting the development of the organic sector. Among these are the misinformation of the population, the absence of accurate communication, the lack of proximity to the final consumer and the excessive price differential of these products compared to their conventional counterparts (Başaran et al., 2018; Buder et al., 2014; Mili & Arfa, 2020). As a possible response to the problems outlined above, the important role of innovations, such as the use of the Internet and its various applications to commercial activity, has been highlighted in the literature (Fernandez et al., 2020). Indeed, with regard to the problems currently faced by the organic agri-food sector, virtual sales channels offer companies a new way to communicate at low cost (Gunelius, 2011; Lin et al., 2020), improving trust and interaction with the consumer (Camanzi & Giua, 2020; Lai et al., 2011) and facilitating the improvement of their commercial position (Caiazza & Bigliardi, 2020). These solutions are particularly relevant for products that have been traditionally ignored by traditional sales channels (Wei et al., 2013), such as organic products.

On the other hand, several authors point to the existence of a positive relationship between the commitment of organizations to sustainable development, as in the case of organic production, and their predisposition towards innovation (Smith, 2006). Schaltegger & Wagner (2011) justify this positive relationship through the relevant contribution of innovation to sustainability. Along the same lines, Smith (2006) points out that actors present in novel sectors, such as green products, engage in more radical practices and tend to adopt more innovative solutions than other organizations. Social concern for sustainability tends to be addressed by organizations that are more prone to change and innovation, understood not only as the creation of new products but also as the development of new forms of marketing (Adams et al., 2016). Moreover, innovation will be especially useful in organizations with green offerings, increasing their performance and competitiveness (Ihnatenko & Novak, 2018; Mozas et al., 2020a). In this line, Bernal et al. (2019a) find a greater presence and level of activity in social networks and websites on the part of green companies compared to conventional ones. In accordance with this, the following proposition is defended:

Proposition 4. Organic production within the company drives the use of ICTs as an alternative sales channel.

Development strategies refer to the decisions that the business management adopts in relation to the future evolution of the field of activity, both in terms of quantitative aspects (growth strategy) and qualitative aspects (increasing the number of products or services, or what we call diversification strategy) (Guerras & Navas, 2015). The business growth strategy was already included by Ansoff (1976) when he identified it with the strategy that refers to the increase in size of the organization, but aimed at strengthening the same activity that the organization had been developing. Guerras & Navas (2015) indicate that growth is interpreted as a sign of health, vitality and strength and, moreover, in dynamic and competitive environments, companies have to grow if only to maintain their competitive position. The relationship between the size of the organization and its propensity to innovate has been widely studied. Thus, according to

Rothwell (1983), size is one of the main factors affecting the innovative attitude of companies, with large companies being more prone to technological innovations (Tether, 2005). Among the conditioning factors that make innovation difficult for small companies are the following: lack of financial resources, lack of personnel, lack of time and lack of technological knowledge (Medina et al., 2016). This idea is echoed in several studies that establish a direct relationship between firm size and firm innovation (Wamba & Carter, 2014). This relationship has also been frequently studied in the cooperative sector, with numerous authors pointing out that business integration is one of the determining factors for the strengthening and innovation of cooperative societies (Parras et al., 2013). According to these arguments, it is possible to put forward the following proposition in our research study:

Proposition 5. The degree of business integration, measured by the number of member cooperatives, facilitates online sales.

3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND DATA

This study has been designed to test the previously raised propositions, with the specific objective being to identify the key factors that can stimulate a higher level of online invoicing by the companies studied.

3.1 DATA

The population under study are the second-grade olive oil cooperatives in Spain dedicated to the commercialization of olive oils. These organizations (35 in total) integrate a total of 449 companies that represent more than 165,000 individual members, have a turnover of more than 2,000 million euros and employ more than 2,500 people. The degree of cooperative integration in the olive oil sector represents 50.16% of the existing cooperatives and 25% of the total integration of the oil mills marketing sector in Spain. In turn, these entities represent a concentration of 26% of the total production of Spanish olive oils (Mozas & Guzmán, 2017).

The collaboration of Cooperativas Agroalimentarias de España was requested for data collection, since it is the confederation that groups together the Spanish agricultural cooperative movement. This confederation carries out an annual structured survey in which, in addition to first-grade cooperatives, second-grade cooperatives also participate. On the other hand, a structured telephone survey was conducted among the directors-managers of each of the 35 second-tier entities, which was added to the information collected in the database of Cooperativas Agroalimentarias de España. To eliminate possible arbitrariness in data collection, the telephone survey was carried out in its entirety by a single member of the research team so that the information obtained was homogeneous, which ensured a uniform process in obtaining the information. In addition, each of the web pages and the evaluations and comments made by consumers on different Internet platforms of the entities analyzed were reviewed. The collection of information was carried out between September and December 2021. Valid data were obtained from 27 of them, representing a response rate of 77.14%.

3.2 METHOD

The qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), in its fuzzy sets variant, was used to identify the explanatory variables of the percentage of online invoicing. The QCA is based on Boolean algebra and uses a verbal, conceptual and mathematical language that configures it as a qualitative as well as quantitative approach, combining the benefits of both. Specifically, in this

study, the fuzzy set (fsQCA) variant has been used, which overcomes one of the major problems in the application of the initial crisp set (csQCA) variant, which only allowed the inclusion of dichotomous variables (Sehring et al., 2013). Unlike classical regression approaches, which seek to determine the direct effect of factors on the outcome variable, the QCA allows the study of causal patterns in the form of necessity and sufficiency relationships, between a set of antecedents or conditioning factors and a particular outcome (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010). Some of its strengths include the fact that this technique assumes that the relationship between the variables of interest is not symmetric (asymmetry), that several solutions can lead to the same outcome (equifinality) and yield different causality results (causal complexity) (Elliot, 2013). Another advantage of this method is that it is developed especially for small or medium-sized samples or populations (Ragin et al, 2003; Ragin & Rihoux, 2004), as is the case in this research.

In summary, the use of this technique will offer as a result one or several antecedent combinations for obtaining a specific result, such as: X1*~X2*X3, sufficient for a result (Y). Being: * the union and ~ the absence or negation, in this case the opposite value to X2 (1- X2). In this study, the percentage of online sales with respect to the company's total sales was used as the outcome. In a similar way, online reputation, CEO training, the importance of foreign trade, the consideration of ecological products and business integration were included as condition variables, as detailed in Tab. 1.

Tab. 1 – Variables considered for the fsQCA. Source: own research

Outcome	Description	Type of variable
Online sales	Percentage of online sales with respect to total revenues	Continuous[1]
Conditions	Description	Type of variable
Formation	CEO training	Categorical[2]
Internationalization	The cooperative exports	Dichotomous[3]
Organic	The cooperative offers organic products	Dichotomous[3]
Integration	Number of companies in the organization	Continuous[1]
Online reputation	Sentiment towards the organization, measured through the ratings and comments made by consumers on different Internet platforms	Continuous[1]

Notes:
[1]The continuous variables were calibrated using the fsQCA 3.0 software.
[2] Four-level categorical variable (no knowledge; user level; intermediate level; advanced level). Calibrated according to Rihoux (2009).
[3] A value of 1 was assigned if the company was involved in this activity and 0 otherwise.

The reputation variable (OR), mentioned in Tab. 1, measures the "feeling" of Internet users about the organization, measured through their ratings and comments on different Internet platforms. This index was created from three sources of information: The first is the number of comments and the average rating of the organization on the Google My Business platform (GR); Secondly, the rating received by the organization through the prestigious Social Searcher tool (SS), considered one of the most popular platforms for measuring user sentiment towards a brand or company. This platform makes it possible to search for content on social networks in real time and provides in-depth analytical data on user ratings. Thirdly, social influence measured by the number of followers of the organization (FO) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram social networks has been included. These three factors make up, proportionally, the variable that we have called reputation. Following these arguments, the outcome “Online

Reputation (OR)" was defined as follows: OR = (GR+SS+FO)/3. The purpose of this construct was to capture, taking into account weightings, the information and reviews of consumers about the organization and its products on the major Internet platforms.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before proceeding with the results of the fsQCA, it is of interest to make an approximation to the data of this study. Tab. 2 shows the average values of the variables that have been analyzed in this study.

Tab. 2 – Descriptive statistics of the analyzed organizations. Source: own research

Conditions	Details
Online sales	40.74% of the companies sell online
Formation	88.89% of CEOs have a high level of academic education
Internationalization	14.81% of companies do not export.
Organic	29.62% include organic products in their offer.
Integration	On average, the societies make up about 20 organizations. In total, the sample includes 449 organizations.
Online reputation	The average number of comments per organization on Google My business is 54 and the average rating, on a scale of 1 to 5, is 4.1. According to the Social Searcher platform, 59% of the organizations receive more positive comments than negative ones. 48.14% of organizations do not have or do not reach 500 followers. The average number of total followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram profiles is 3829.

Conditions	Valid N	Mean	Standard deviation	5th percentile (fully out)	Median (cross-over point)	95th percentile 95th (fully in)
Online reputation	27	0,517	0,338	0,043	0,5	0,967
Formation	27	0,629	0,492	0	1	1
Internationalization	27	0,740	0,446	0	1	1
Organic	27	0,518	0,509	0	1	1
Integration	27	0,397	0,282	0,05	0,5	0,887

Following the recommendations established in the literature, all the causal factors and outcomes were calibrated so that their measures in fuzzy sets present values ranging between 0 and 1. Subsequently, a necessity analysis of the variable "percentage of online invoicing" was performed on the different causal conditions in order to verify that none of the variables, on its own, is explanatory of the outcome. In none of the cases was consistency equal to or higher than the recommended limit of 0.9, and no coverage was too low, below 0.5 (Ragin, 2008). Once identified the combinations of conditions that give rise to the result of interest (output), it has been used Boolean minimization (Marx & Peters, 2004) to identify the conditions whose presence or absence is not relevant to obtain such result.

The main findings of this analysis are shown in Tab. 3, which indicates the intermediate solution of the established model. The use of the intermediate solution is recommended, since parsimonious solutions usually provide a simplified view of the phenomenon (Fiss, 2007). The results show the various combinations that lead to higher online turnover of companies. Specifically, four solutions were identified and are presented in order from highest to lowest gross coverage.

Using the usual terminology in this type of study, black circles (●) denote the presence of a condition, while crossed-out circles (⊗) indicate its absence. A blank space indicates that a condition is irrelevant. The distinction between a core and peripheral condition is denoted by the use of large and small circles, respectively (Pappas & Woodside, 2021). The following Tab.3 includes the set-theoretic consistency values for each configuration, as well as the overall model solution. As can be seen in the Tab. 3, this overall solution is above the threshold recommended in the literature (> 0.75).

Tab. 3 – Results of the fsQCA analysis. Source: own research

CONFIGURATION	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Online reputation	●	●		●	⊗	⊗
Formation	•	•	•			⊗
Internationalization	●	•	●	●	●	⊗
Organic	●		●	●	●	⊗
Integration		•	⊗	•	⊗	
Raw coverage	0,413262	0,369449	0,329781	0,307282	0,185317	0,149793
Unique coverage	0,074008	0,116045	0,013025	0,307875	0,010657	0,149793
Consistency	0,883544	0,909621	0,919142	0,901042	0,871866	0,706704
Model coverage	**0.800474**					
Model consistency	**0.841843**					

The results obtained provide support for the propositions put forward in this study. The causal configurations of online reputation, organic products, CEO formation, internationalization and degree of integration are conducive to a high volume of online turnover. The results indicate an overall model coverage of 0.80, suggesting that a substantial proportion of the outcome is covered by the five variables considered, with an overall consistency of 0.84. The first configuration alone explains 41.32% of the organizations with higher online turnover. This combination of variables is made up of the variables reputation, CEO formation, internationalization and the offer of organic products. The second configuration shows that 36.94% of the organizations with a higher degree of online turnover are those with online reputation, CEO formation, internationalization reputation and a higher degree of integration.

These results allow us to affirm that, in the context of the Internet, the company's ability to mobilize its resources and align them with the changing opportunities of the environment influences its business performance. The importance of intangible resources, both human and non-human, as a source of competitive advantage has been highlighted. In particular, online reputation, measured through the ratings and comments given by consumers on different Internet platforms, offers the possibility of differentiation, positively influencing consumers and results, through online sales. Therefore, the information provided through various social media, such as websites, social networks, blogs, forums, etc. (Zraková et al. 2019) will have a special importance in influencing the image that the user creates of the company and their final purchase decision (Vand Der Heijden et al., 2004).

On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between training and the use of ICTs for online sales. These results are in line with other research conducted in different sectors and geographical areas (Medina et al., 2016; Mozas et al., 2020b; Walker, 2006). There is also a direct relationship between the participation of firms in international markets and their degree of innovation and the importance given to e-commerce. As pointed out by several authors, this relationship can be bidirectional, with e-commerce facilitating access to international markets (Filipescu et al., 2009; Deichmann et al., 2016; Quarratu'Aini & Hapsari, 2019; Vivekanandan & Rajendran, 2006) and, at the same time, increasing the level of innovation in the firm as a result of its participation in foreign trade (Nolazco, 2020; Prieto & Guzmán, 2019).

Similarly, the positive relationship of ICTs with the supply of green products in the company has been verified. Certainly, ICTs are a suitable channel for enhancing the consumption of organic products, through online consumer reviews (Tariq & Tanveer, 2021) and companies' own recommendations in social networks (Zhang et al., 2020). Organizations are aware that their ability to innovate and use ICTs can generate efficiency in the production and promotion of organic products (Chen et al., 2021).

Finally, characteristics associated with business size, such as integration and internationalization, lead to higher online performance. There have been many researchers who have opted for vertical integration and concentration as a way to strengthen these organizations and ensure the improvement of the commercialization of their products and innovation (Bel, 1996; Parras et al., 2013), a fact that is in line with the results of our research.

In short, the results have great applicability in business practice by presenting a combination of intangible resources that improve competitiveness and have an impact on a higher volume of sales on the Internet. In line with Liao et al. (2009), the use of resources in the pursuit of business opportunities is associated with higher organizational performance, especially when there is complementarity between these attributes. The results show the relevance of intangible resources in the technological context, which is the focus of this study (Hall, 2009). The findings obtained provide organizations with different improvement paths and goals to strengthen their competitive position on the Internet.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study, under the resources and capabilities theory, focuses on identifying the combination of intangible resources, recommended by the literature, which are associated with high business performance in the online environment. Having a certain heterogeneity of resources and taking advantage of them is key to online business progress in a sector, such as the olive oil sector, with important structural business problems.

The population under study are the Spanish second-degree cooperative societies, which by their legal form -business integration- already adopt one of the recommendations of the experts to improve marketing in the sector. Another of the recommendations pointed out in the literature is related to online marketing, which is the subject of this study. The results obtained show that combinations of resources such as the intensity of cooperative integration (measured by the number of first-degree cooperatives or other entities that make up the second-degree cooperative), CEO training, the exporting nature of the cooperative, the supply of organic products and online reputation are positively related to a higher volume of online sales.

The main contribution of this study is at a theoretical level due to the scarcity of scientific research on factors linked to the success of e-commerce. Most studies have focused on identifying factors linked to e-commerce success and which affect the adoption of websites and related technologies, as well as characteristics of website content that attract users. On the other hand, our research enriches the literature by applying a configurational approach, through fsQCA, where we not only identify the intangible resources that are associated with high business performance in the online environment, but also identify the best combination of them.

On the other hand, the results have important implications for business management and practice. They can guide decision makers in maximizing the potential of the Internet. First, it highlights the importance to a company of having an active website and leveraging it in order to market their products. Secondly, results will be influenced by the online reputation they build.

In the digital era, companies in the agri-food sector cannot be left behind and must orient their sales channels, not only offline but also online. They must build a positive online reputation through social networks, which will give them a competitive advantage within the sector. In addition, innovation, as well as other organizational variables addressed in this study, are key factors of relevance for companies to face current challenges (Mozas & Fernández, 2022). Particularly for organic products, the online channel is key. The main problems associated with the consumption of organic products, such as the lack of access to this offer or consumer misinformation, make the online channel a very attractive medium for consumers who demand this type of food. The inclusion of these products in the offer of the organization, especially through online sales, is a clear incentive to attract more consumers in a market in which the consumption of organic products is increasing and, largely, through this medium, for the benefits and advantages it brings to this type of consumer. Undoubtedly, the results represent a clear opportunity for differentiation for organizations in an increasingly competitive market and with consumers who are increasingly demanding and concerned about the environment and climate change (Eurobarometer, 2023).

To conclude, it is important to highlight future lines of research and research limitations. Firstly, this study focused on second-degree olive cooperatives could be extended in the future to focus on other sectors of the social economy, with the aim of contrasting whether the factors identified here as determining factors for the online marketing of the company can be established in a general way in any sector of activity. In addition, it would also be of interest to investigate the vision that consumers have of the cooperative's actions on the Internet, its ease of use and interaction, as well as the image that consumers have of these companies as being socially responsible within their environment.

In terms of limitations, this study is not free of them. The first is its specific focus on the olive cooperative sector, which makes it difficult to extrapolate the results to other sectors. This circumstance makes it possible to carry out new research in other sectors that could corroborate the results obtained. The second is related to the size of the population. In this sense, it has been decided to analyze all the olive oil cooperatives integrated in second-grade cooperatives, but the study has not been extended to cooperatives that operate independently in the market and to the remaining companies with a legal formula other than cooperatives. Finally, the third limitation is associated with the fact that the study was carried out in reference to a single country, although it is the world's largest producer of olive oils. The study could be repeated in other countries to verify the results.

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