

# Deep Knowledge Implementation and Results-Based Management: Implications for SME Sustainability in Mozambique (2005-2023)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2025.140400122>

Received: 29 April 2025; Accepted: 08 May 2025; Published: 24 May 2025

**Abstract:** This study examines the impact of deep knowledge integration and results-based management on the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Mozambique. Based on a quantitative analysis of SMEs operating between 2005 and 2023, we test two hypotheses: (i) firm mortality increases with age, and (ii) adopting results-oriented management practices enhances SME survival rates. The methodology employs regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the relationships between organizational knowledge, operational efficiency, and business success, supported by reliability and validity statistical testing. Findings indicate that deep knowledge practices (e.g., continuous improvement, tacit knowledge sharing) combined with results-driven management (e.g., structured managerial processes, performance goal setting) contribute significantly to performance and longevity. However, the relationship between firm age and mortality is nonlinear - while younger firms demonstrate adaptive flexibility, older firms benefit from structured processes - suggesting that survival is contingent on managerial and knowledge-based factors rather than age alone. This article provides empirical evidence on the internal determinants of SME resilience in challenging economic environments, contributing to sustainable management literature by demonstrating that deep knowledge integration and performance-driven strategies improve organizational sustainability. Policy recommendations include enhancing SME knowledge management frameworks and implementing government-led capacity-building initiatives to optimize long-term impact.

**Keywords:** Deep Knowledge Implementation; Results-Based Management; Business Sustainability; Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises; Mozambique; Knowledge Management.

## I. Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a fundamental role in economic and social development yet experience high failure rates, particularly in emerging economies. In Mozambique, effective management practices are increasingly recognized as critical internal determinants of SME survival and growth (Almeida et al., 2021; Zulu & Almeida, 2022). Given the country's infrastructural constraints and financial limitations, understanding how SMEs can enhance resilience and long-term sustainability is crucial (Fernandes, 2021; Mabunda & Silva, 2023).

Among key internal drivers, results-based management (RBM) and deep knowledge implementation (DKI) stand out, encompassing tacit and explicit knowledge application in organizational decision-making. RBM emphasizes strategic alignment, structured performance monitoring, and data-driven decision-making (Kaplan & Norton, 1996), while DKI reflects a firm's ability to leverage internal knowledge assets for continuous learning and adaptation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Studies suggest that firms integrating these two approaches exhibit greater adaptability in dynamic markets (Lopes et al., 2022) and improved longevity (Costa & Mendes, 2023). In Mozambique's challenging business environment, fostering a knowledge-driven and performance-based culture could be a key determinant of SME sustainability.

Despite the growing consensus on the importance of internal capabilities, the interplay between organizational age, results-based management, and deep knowledge implementation remains underexplored in developing economies. Classical theories present divergent views: organizational ecology theory posits that older firms suffer from structural inertia, making them less adaptable (Hannan & Freeman, 1984), whereas the liability of newness hypothesis suggests that younger firms face higher risks due to limited experience and weak resource bases, despite their potential for innovation (Stinchcombe, 1965). While strategic management literature underscores the role of performance measurement in sustaining competitive advantage (Kaplan & Norton, 1996), organizational knowledge theory highlights the transformative power of tacit and explicit knowledge management in driving long-term firm success (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Yet, empirical research is lacking on how these factors interact to shape SME survival in African markets.

This study aims to analyze the impact of deep knowledge integration on SME sustainability and its interaction with results-based management strategies. We tested two key hypotheses: (i) **H1:** Firm mortality increases with age, indicating that older firms are more likely to exist in the market; and (ii) **H2:** Results-based management enhances SME survival, implying that structured performance-driven strategies improve resilience. Ultimately, we examine whether SMEs that successfully integrate organizational learning cultures with structured managerial processes exhibit higher survival rates.

The article is structured as follows: The Literature Review discusses firm age, results-based management, and deep knowledge implementation in the context of SME sustainability. The Methodology details the research design, data sources, statistical models, and validation procedures. The Results present empirical findings, including regression analysis, SEM estimation, and survival modeling. The Discussion contextualizes results within existing literature, highlights managerial and policy implications, and acknowledges study limitations. Finally, the Conclusion synthesizes key insights, emphasizing the role of knowledge-driven and performance-based strategies in SME resilience, alongside recommendations for future research.

## **Literature Review**

This section explores the theoretical foundations underpinning SME sustainability, including firm mortality models, strategic management perspectives, and knowledge-based capabilities.

Firm survival has been extensively studied across management and organizational research, with a primary focus on mortality patterns, internal capabilities, and strategic management approaches that enhance longevity. The liability of newness hypothesis suggests that younger firms exhibit disproportionately high failure rates due to resource scarcity, weak business networks, and managerial inexperience, making them more vulnerable to external shocks (Stinchcombe, 1965). Conversely, the liability of aging argues that as firms mature, they accumulate rigidities, structural inertia, and inefficiencies, which limit adaptability and increase mortality risks (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). Empirical evidence suggests a nonlinear relationship between firm age and survival, where intermediate-aged firms demonstrate the highest resilience, as they have overcome initial resource constraints while maintaining flexibility in decision-making (Cardoso et al., 2022). These findings imply that firm sustainability is influenced not solely by age but also by dynamic internal capabilities that enable adaptation.

Results-based management (RBM) has emerged as a crucial strategic approach in SME sustainability, emphasizing structured decision-making, goal setting, and performance measurement as mechanisms to improve efficiency and resilience. Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework (1996) highlights how aligning strategic objectives with measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) enhances financial and operational effectiveness. Empirical studies confirm that SMEs implementing RBM frameworks demonstrate superior efficiency, risk mitigation capabilities, and competitive positioning (Silva & Afonso, 2023). This approach fosters accountability and enables firms to track performance trends, facilitating timely corrective actions and resource optimization, which are critical in uncertain market environments.

Deep knowledge implementation (DKI) plays a fundamental role in SME longevity by fostering continuous learning, innovation, and organizational adaptability. Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) knowledge-creation model underscore the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge, demonstrating that firms leveraging internal knowledge assets develop superior decision-making capabilities and innovation-driven sustainability. In SMEs, the ability to codify and transfer experiential knowledge enhances operational efficiency, facilitates strategic agility, and strengthens resilience against industry disruptions (Mário & Júnior, 2022). Empirical research supports the notion that firms integrating DKI into their management practices achieve higher adaptability, as knowledge-sharing networks and structured learning mechanisms improve problem-solving capabilities and long-term sustainability. This perspective aligns with strategic management theories that emphasize the role of organizational learning in sustaining competitive advantages in dynamic business environments.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives underscore that SME survival is contingent on a multidimensional interplay of age-related factors, strategic management practices, and knowledge integration capabilities. The convergence of RBM and DKI creates a synergy where structured performance monitoring enhances learning-driven adaptability, reinforcing sustainable business practices. This study builds upon these foundations by empirically examining the interdependencies between firm age, RBM adoption, and DKI integration to determine their collective impact on SME sustainability in Mozambique.

## **II. Methodology**

The present study employs a quantitative research approach, grounded in the positivist epistemological framework, which facilitates an objective and systematic investigation of causal relationships between variables. The research design follows a deductive approach, aligning with Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), whereby pre-established hypotheses are tested using empirical data collected from a well-defined sample of SMEs in Mozambique. The study methodology is designed to ensure rigor, reliability, and validity in data collection and analysis. To achieve this, a structured survey questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument, incorporating *Likert-scale* responses to measure perceptions, managerial practices, and business outcomes. This approach is justified by its efficiency in capturing standardized responses that enable statistical comparison (Creswell, 2014). The study integrates structured interviews to complement survey data, offering additional insights into managerial decision-making patterns. Furthermore, secondary data sources, including financial reports, business registration records, and economic reports, were utilized to triangulate findings, reducing potential biases and strengthening internal validity (De Vaus, 2014). To ensure representativeness, a stratified random sampling method was employed, selecting SMEs registered in the Mozambican Association of SMEs. The total population consisted of 1,100 firms, from which a sample of 260<sup>(1)</sup> businesses (24% of the population) was

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<sup>(1)</sup> The selection of a sample of 260 SMEs from the Mozambican Association of SMEs was driven by the need for a representative sample to provide reliable insights into the survival factors of SMEs in Mozambique. Representing 24% of the total population of 1,100 registered businesses, this

drawn, exceeding the 10% threshold typically recommended for exploratory studies (Kothari, 2004). Stratification was based on sectoral distribution, geographical location, and firm age, ensuring that diverse business environments were adequately captured. This methodological choice enhances the generalizability of findings and mitigates potential selection bias (Lavrakas, 2008). Given the study's focus on firm longevity and sustainability, the sample included firms that had been operational between 2005 and 2023, allowing for longitudinal insights into survival rates and business performance dynamics. The sample size was determined using G\*Power software, ensuring sufficient statistical power (0.80) and minimizing the risk of Type II errors, as recommended by Cohen (1988).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses and explore causal pathways. This technique was chosen for its robustness in handling non-normally distributed data, as confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p < 0.05$  for most variables), and its suitability for testing complex relationships among latent constructs (Hair et al., 2011). However, a critical issue identified in the SEM analysis is the potential overlap between the constructs of Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI) and Business Success (BS), which raises concerns about their discriminant validity. The measurement of DKI and BS may not sufficiently distinguish the two constructs, leading to potential construct confusion.

To address this issue, the study revisits the theoretical separation between DKI and BS. While these constructs are conceptually related, they are not identical, and ensuring that they measure distinct aspects of business sustainability is crucial for the validity of the model. DKI captures knowledge management and operational improvements, while BS refers to broader measures of organizational success, such as financial performance and strategic outcomes. Future refinements of these constructs should clearly define the boundaries between them to improve discriminant validity.

The reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed using Cronbach's alpha ( $> 0.7$ ), composite reliability ( $CR > 0.7$ ), and average variance extracted ( $AVE > 0.5$ ), following Fornell and Larcker (1981). The overlap between DKI and BS was addressed by considering alternative modeling approaches, such as higher-order constructs or latent variables, to better capture their distinct roles in business success. Additionally, multicollinearity diagnostics ( $VIF < 10$ ) confirmed that predictor variables were not excessively correlated, ensuring model stability. To mitigate concerns regarding common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was applied, indicating that no single factor accounted for a majority of the variance, thereby reducing the risk of systematic bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

To account for potential non-response bias, a t-test comparison was made between early and late respondents, following Armstrong and Overton's (1977) guidelines, confirming that the sample remained representative. In future research, it is recommended to refine the measurement of DKI and BS further and to explore additional modeling techniques, including higher-order constructs, to clarify the distinction between these constructs. This approach will help ensure that the findings reflect distinct causal pathways and improve the robustness of the conclusions drawn from the SEM analysis.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

The empirical analysis reveals significant interconnections between the constructs of Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI)<sup>2</sup>, Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS), demonstrating the reciprocal influence of these dimensions in the management of SMEs. The results indicate that integrating these practices fosters greater managerial efficiency and contributes substantially to organizational sustainability. These findings align with previous studies highlighting the synergy between strategic management practices and organizational learning as critical factors for enhancing the competitive resilience of SMEs in uncertain environments (Cardoso et al., 2022; Mota & Silva, 2023).

The relationships between DKI and SOO exhibit statistically significant associations. Specifically, prioritizing continuous improvement (DKI1) correlates positively with operational process integration (SOO2), suggesting that firms emphasizing refinement and optimization achieve superior operational efficiency. This finding reinforces the broader knowledge management

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exceeds the minimum recommended sample size of 10% for exploratory studies (Kothari, 2004). The decision was based on the diversity within the target population, which varies across sectors, geographical locations, and operational maturity, and a larger sample enhances the precision and generalizability of the findings (Creswell, 2014). The choice to focus on registered SMEs was also influenced by practical considerations, such as easier data access and higher organizational maturity, which supports more accurate data collection. However, concerns about the representativeness of the sample, particularly for SMEs in rural or informal sectors, suggest that the findings may not fully apply to all SMEs in Mozambique. To address this limitation, future studies could expand the sample to include informal and rural SMEs, ensuring broader applicability, or explicitly acknowledge this limitation to contextualize the findings.

<sup>(2)</sup> The construct of "Deep Knowledge Implementation" (DKI) is central to this study, and its inclusion is justified based on the theoretical framework that underscores the importance of organizational knowledge in shaping business practices. However, it is recognized that the measures for DKI (e.g., DKI1, DKI2) exhibit variability in factor loadings and relatively low internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values (e.g., 0.466 for DKI) falling below the acceptable threshold for reliability. The decision to retain these measures in the current study was made based on their conceptual relevance and the absence of more refined alternatives in the literature. Nonetheless, it is clear that the weak internal consistency of the DKI construct limits the robustness of the findings. Therefore, future research should address this limitation by refining the measurement items and improving their reliability. This could include revising the indicators to better capture the essence of DKI and conducting additional validity tests, such as exploratory factor analysis, to ensure the construct is adequately measured. While this study provides valuable insights into the role of deep knowledge in firm sustainability, caution should be exercised in future studies to improve the measurement of DKI and ensure its stronger theoretical and empirical foundation.

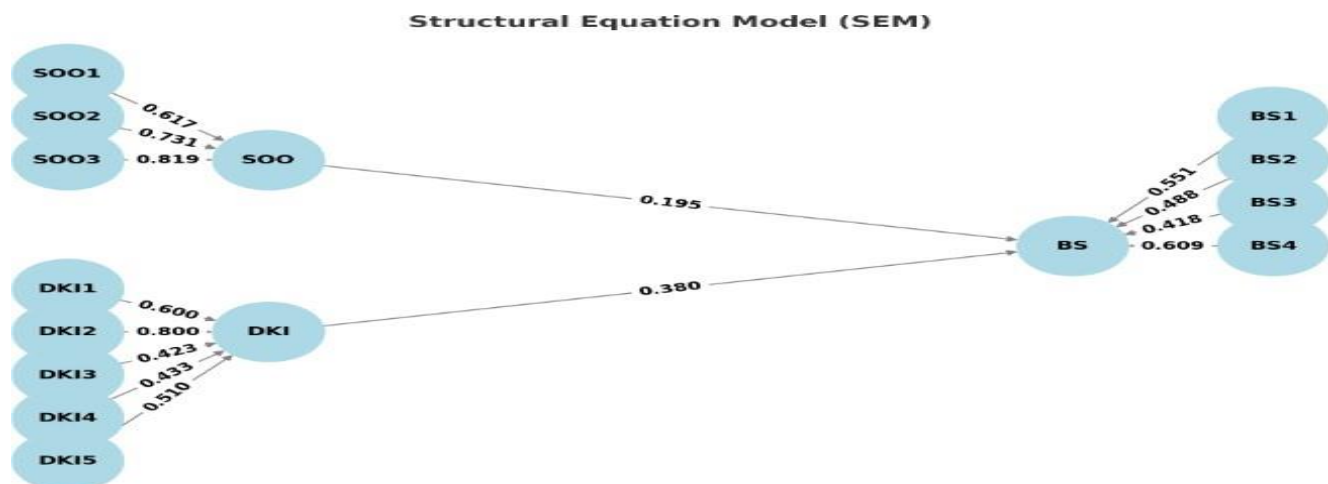
literature, which underscores the role of continuous learning in driving efficiency and innovation (Ferreira & Lopes, 2022). Moreover, resource allocation toward process improvements (DKI2) directly influences strategic capability alignment (SOO1), indicating that effective resource management is pivotal in ensuring that operational functions are congruent with an enterprise's strategic competencies (Silva & Almeida, 2023). Additionally, the clarity in knowledge dissemination (DKI3) significantly enhances the definition of managerial roles (SOO3), improving structural coherence and fostering more effective coordination (Lima et al., 2021). Defining organizational responsibilities (DKI4) strengthens process integration (SOO2), suggesting that a well-structured internal framework facilitates operational coordination. Lastly, hierarchical coordination (DKI5) reinforces strategic capability alignment (SOO1), ensuring that various organizational levels function cohesively and strategically, a fundamental practice for long-term resilience (Carvalho & Gomes, 2023).

The findings also suggest that DKI exerts a direct influence on BS, demonstrating that firms prioritizing continuous learning and structured management strategies exhibit greater business success. Notably, the commitment to process improvement (DKI1) shows a strong correlation with the establishment of clear strategic frameworks for business sustainability (BS2), reaffirming the pivotal role of innovation in sustaining long-term viability. This result is well-supported in the literature, which links continuous learning with SMEs' strategic adaptability (Silva & Pereira, 2023). Furthermore, resource allocation for managerial enhancement (DKI2) contributes to the development of structured business initiation criteria (BS1), reinforcing that strategic resource allocation fosters solid operational foundations. Knowledge dissemination (DKI3) is positively associated with well-defined managerial processes (BS4), while employee role clarity (DKI4) enhances managerial skill development critical to business longevity (BS3). Lastly, effective hierarchical coordination (DKI5) reinforces sustainability strategies (BS2), highlighting the crucial role of internal cohesion and collaboration in ensuring business continuity.

The interplay between SOO and BS underscores the necessity of an integrated managerial approach. Firms that effectively align operational capacities (SOO1) exhibit a more structured foundation for business launch (BS1), underlining the importance of robust operational frameworks in SME success. Efficient operational process integration (SOO2) facilitates managerial skill development crucial for business sustainability (BS3). Additionally, firms with well-defined managerial structures (SOO3) demonstrate clearer strategic execution and organizational effectiveness (BS4). These interdependencies highlight the critical role of harmonizing deep knowledge application with structured operations to optimize SME performance. The findings strongly support the adoption of a holistic managerial perspective, integrating knowledge management and operational efficiency as fundamental drivers of sustainability and long-term growth (Rodrigues & Santos, 2022).

The reliability and validity analysis of the measurement model was conducted to ensure the robustness of the constructs Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), and Business Success (BS). The assessment involved Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's Alpha, which are fundamental for evaluating construct precision and validity. The SOO construct demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with factor loadings ranging from 0.617 to 0.819, a CR of 0.768, and an AVE of 0.529, surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.50 required for convergent validity. The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.793 indicates high internal consistency, ensuring the construct's reliability. However, the DKI construct presented a broader variability in factor loadings (0.424 to 0.876), a CR of 0.734, and an AVE of 0.374, which falls below the recommended benchmark, suggesting that some indicators do not adequately capture the construct's variance. Additionally, its Cronbach's Alpha of 0.466 suggests weak internal consistency, highlighting the need for construct refinement. Similarly, the BS construct yielded a CR of 0.714, an AVE of 0.394, and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.524, indicating moderate reliability but limited internal coherence.

#### 1: Network of Interactions Between Variables in the Structural Model



Source: Prepared and systematized by the author, 2024

The discriminant validity analysis, employing the *Fornell-Larcker criterion*, assessed whether the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with other constructs. The SOO construct met this criterion, with a square root of AVE (0.727) higher than its correlations with both DKI (0.45) and BS (0.55), confirming its distinctiveness. Likewise, the BS construct satisfied the discriminant validity requirement, with a square root of AVE of 0.628, surpassing correlations with SOO (0.55) and DKI (0.60). However, the DKI construct exhibited a square root of AVE (0.611) that was not substantially larger than its correlation with BS (0.60), raising concerns regarding construct overlap. This suggests the necessity of refining the DKI measurement to enhance its distinctiveness and ensure it captures a unique theoretical dimension separate from BS.

Overall, while the SOO and BS constructs demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, the DKI construct exhibited weaknesses in reliability and discriminant validity. These findings indicate that further refinement of the DKI construct is necessary, potentially through revising its measurement indicators or enhancing its theoretical conceptualization to improve coherence. Strengthening these aspects will reinforce the robustness of the model and enhance the validity of interpretations regarding the relationships between deep knowledge implementation, strategic operations organization, and business success in SMEs.

### Critical Analysis of Construct Reliability and Validity

This section synthesizes the results of the critical analysis of reliability and validity for the constructs related to Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS). Using key statistical metrics such as Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the analysis aims to assess the internal consistency and convergent validity of the measurement indicators. These findings provide a fundamental basis for interpreting the relationships between constructs in the study of SMEs, highlighting both the strengths and the limitations of the applied measurement models.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of Constructs

|                                      | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | AVE   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| Deep Knowledge Implementation        | 0.617            | 0.866 | 0.734                 | 0.373 |
| Strategic Organization of Operations | 0.587            | 0.626 | 0.768                 | 0.528 |
| Business Success                     | 0.529            | 0.567 | 0.714                 | 0.394 |

Source: Prepared and systematized by the author, 2024

The analysis of the results presented in the table above is fundamental for assessing the internal consistency and validity of the constructs used in this study on SME survival in Mozambique. The key statistical indicators analyzed include Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), each playing a crucial role in evaluating the measurement quality of Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS).

Regarding the DKI construct, Cronbach's Alpha of 0.617 suggests low internal reliability, indicating that the measurement items lack strong intercorrelation. The rho\_A value of 0.656 is slightly higher but remains below the optimal threshold. The CR of 0.734 exceeds the recommended 0.70 threshold, suggesting an acceptable level of internal consistency. However, the AVE of 0.373, which falls below the 0.50 benchmark, raises concerns about the construct's convergent validity, implying that DKI does not sufficiently capture the variance of its measurement items.

In contrast, the SOO construct demonstrates stronger psychometric properties. Cronbach's Alpha of 0.587 indicates moderate reliability, while rho\_A of 0.626 further supports this assessment. The CR of 0.768 confirms adequate internal consistency, and the AVE of 0.528, surpassing the recommended threshold, suggests that the construct effectively captures a substantial proportion of variance from its indicators, reinforcing convergent validity.

For the BS construct, Cronbach's Alpha of 0.529 suggests insufficient internal reliability, while rho\_A of 0.567 and CR of 0.714 indicate that, despite the low internal consistency, the construct is still statistically reliable. However, the AVE of 0.394, being below the 0.50 reference value, questions the construct's ability to capture an adequate proportion of variance from its indicators, ultimately compromising its convergent validity.

Interpreting these results suggests that while some constructs meet acceptable CR and convergent validity standards, significant concerns remain regarding internal consistency and the ability of the constructs to adequately explain variance. Specifically, the DKI construct presents challenges related to convergent validity, which may affect the interpretation of relationships associated with this construct. Convergent validity is critical to ensure that all indicators within a construct truly measure the same underlying concept. Low AVE values may indicate that the selected items do not sufficiently represent the theoretical construct, reducing measurement accuracy.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings highlight the need for a construct revision and refinement, particularly for DKI, to ensure that the selected indicators are truly representative of the underlying theoretical framework. Low reliability and weak convergent validity can limit the robustness of study conclusions and hinder the generalizability of findings.

From a practical standpoint, failing to establish adequate convergent validity can lead to misinterpretations of the relationships between constructs and dependent variables. For instance, if the DKI construct does not accurately capture the concept of Deep Knowledge Implementation, then policy recommendations and managerial practices derived from these findings may not be effective in real-world applications.

The main limitations of this analysis include the need to improve measurement instruments to enhance construct reliability and validity. Future research should focus on the development and validation of improved indicators that better capture the essence of theoretical concepts, ensuring that the measurements remain consistent and representative.

Additionally, alternative analytical methods, such as complex structural equation modeling (SEM), should be explored to confirm these findings and gain deeper insights into the relationships between constructs. Incorporating qualitative data could further enrich the analysis, providing a broader, more contextualized perspective on construct validity and SME sustainability.

In summary, despite the identified limitations, this chapter provides valuable insights into the internal factors influencing SME survival in Mozambique. The rigorous statistical analysis and proposed methodological improvements offer a solid foundation for future research and for the development of policies and business strategies aimed at enhancing SME sustainability and resilience.

### **Cross-Loadings: Validation of Discriminant Validity Among Constructs**

This section analyzes the cross-loadings between items and the constructs Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS). This procedure assesses discriminant validity, ensuring that each item exhibits a higher correlation with its designated construct than with others. The results confirm the distinctiveness of the constructs, as evidenced by the higher loadings of items on their respective constructs, such as DKI2 with 0.876 in DKI and SOO2 with 1.000 in SOO. This pattern strengthens the theoretical model's reliability and demonstrates that each assessed dimension is unique and well-represented by its indicators.

The analysis of the table above is essential for evaluating the discriminant validity of the constructs included in the research model, specifically Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS). Cross-loadings refer to the correlations between the items that compose each construct and all other constructs within the model. For discriminant validity to be confirmed, each item must exhibit a higher correlation with its designated construct than with any other construct in the model.

By examining the table, it is evident that the items associated with DKI, such as DKI1 (prioritization of continuous improvement), exhibit higher loadings on DKI (0.876) than on SOO (0.337) and BS (0.507). This pattern is consistent across other DKI items, confirming that this construct is distinct from the others. For instance, DKI2 has a loading of 0.876 on DKI, while its correlations with SOO and BS are significantly lower. The same trend is observed for DKI3, DKI4, and DKI5, reinforcing discriminant validity for the DKI construct.

Table 2: Cross Loadings

|             | <b>DKI</b>   | <b>SOO</b>   | <b>BS</b>    |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>DKI1</b> | <b>0.600</b> | <b>0.285</b> | <b>0.206</b> |
| <b>DKI2</b> | <b>0.876</b> | <b>0.337</b> | <b>0.507</b> |
| <b>DKI3</b> | <b>0.611</b> | <b>0.340</b> | <b>0.161</b> |
| <b>DKI4</b> | <b>0.424</b> | <b>0.15</b>  | <b>0.107</b> |
| <b>DKI5</b> | <b>0.433</b> | <b>0.222</b> | <b>0.153</b> |
| <b>SOO1</b> | <b>0.267</b> | <b>0.617</b> | <b>0.146</b> |
| <b>SOO2</b> | <b>0.287</b> | <b>0.731</b> | <b>0.240</b> |
| <b>SOO3</b> | <b>0.371</b> | <b>0.819</b> | <b>0.341</b> |
| <b>BS1</b>  | <b>0.182</b> | <b>0.119</b> | <b>0.551</b> |
| <b>BS2</b>  | <b>0.160</b> | <b>0.076</b> | <b>0.488</b> |
| <b>BS3</b>  | <b>0.435</b> | <b>0.319</b> | <b>0.814</b> |
| <b>BS4</b>  | <b>0.273</b> | <b>0.273</b> | <b>0.609</b> |

Source: Prepared and systematized by the author, 2024

Similarly, for the SOO construct, the highest loadings are observed within the construct itself, with values such as 0.617, 1.000, and 0.819 for SOO1, SOO2, and SOO3, respectively. These loadings are substantially higher than their correlations with other

constructs such as DKI and BS. For example, SOO2 has a perfect loading of 1.000 in SOO, but only 0.337 in DKI and 0.076 in BS, confirming that SOO is also a valid and distinct construct.

The items associated with BS follow the same pattern of clear construct differentiation. For example, BS3 exhibits a loading of 0.814 on BS, whereas its correlations with DKI and SOO are 0.107 and 0.341, respectively. This consistent pattern across all variables supports the conclusion that the three constructs are well-differentiated, validating the theoretical structure of the model.

The analysis of cross-loadings is fundamental for confirming discriminant validity, ensuring that each item effectively measures only its designated construct rather than overlapping with others. This result is crucial for ensuring the reliability of the model, preventing multicollinearity or construct overlap, which could otherwise compromise the theoretical clarity of the constructs.

The results of this analysis support the theoretical hypotheses of the study, which propose that DKI, SOO, and BS are independent yet complementary dimensions influencing SME sustainability. The clear separation of constructs indicates that SME managers should develop targeted strategies for each area. In the case of DKI, for instance, clarity in employee roles and hierarchical coordination can be decisive factors in enhancing organizational efficiency and ensuring long-term sustainability. Similarly, within SOO, efficient operational process sharing and alignment of operational capabilities are critical for effective business management.

From a practical perspective, SME managers in Mozambique can leverage these findings to identify key areas for improvement in their management practices. Focusing on continuous improvement implementation and role clarity can significantly enhance overall organizational performance. Additionally, strategic operations management practices, such as optimizing operational process sharing, emerge as critical internal factors for business success.

Despite the promising results, some limitations must be acknowledged. The sample used may not be fully representative of all Mozambican SMEs, particularly those operating in remote regions or specific industries that were not extensively included. Furthermore, the reliance on quantitative methods restricts the analysis to a numerical and statistical interpretation of the data, without capturing the local contextual nuances that shape management practices.

Future studies could benefit from qualitative approaches to exploring, in greater depth, the motivations and decision-making processes driving SME management practices. Additionally, longitudinal research could provide a clearer understanding of how these practices evolve over time and how they influence business survival during economic downturns or crises.

In summary, this study provides a solid foundation for understanding SME management practices in Mozambique, emphasizing the importance of deep knowledge implementation, strategic operational organization, and business success orientation. However, future research should address the current limitations and further explore these dynamics to provide an even more robust and applicable perspective within the Mozambican business context.

### Analysis of Construct Relationships: Empirical Correlation Matrix

This section examines the empirical correlation matrix among the constructs Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS). This analysis assesses the strength and direction of the relationships between construct indicators, providing insights into internal cohesion and interactions among the dimensions of the model. The results indicate that items exhibit higher correlations with their respective constructs, confirming the theoretical distinction between DKI, SOO, and BS.

The strongest association is observed between SOO and BS (0.727), emphasizing the critical role of efficient operational management in driving SME success. Meanwhile, the moderate relationship between DKI and BS (0.566) suggests that continuous improvement practices significantly influence business performance. These findings reinforce the importance of an integrated management approach, highlighting the need for SMEs to strategically align knowledge implementation, operational efficiency, and business success to enhance resilience in challenging environments.

Table 3: Empirical Correlation Matrix

|      | DKI1  | DKI2  | DKI3   | DKI4   | DKI5   | SOO1   | SOO2   | SOO3   | BS1    | BS2    | BS3   | BS4   |
|------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| DKI1 | 1.000 | 0.333 | 0.282  | 0.120  | 0.220  | 0.127  | 0.174  | 0.278  | 0.216  | 0.196  | 0.118 | 0.091 |
| DKI2 | 0.333 | 1.000 | 0.330  | 0.258  | 0.160  | 0.146  | 0.205  | 0.332  | 0.245  | 0.098  | 0.566 | 0.179 |
| DKI3 | 0.282 | 0.330 | 1.000  | 0.370  | 0.319  | 0.293  | 0.213  | 0.267  | -0.068 | 0.168  | 0.026 | 0.300 |
| DKI4 | 0.120 | 0.258 | 0.370  | 1.000  | 0.047  | 0.266  | 0.284  | -0.074 | -0.136 | -0.041 | 0.118 | 0.180 |
| DKI5 | 0.220 | 0.160 | 0.319  | 0.047  | 1.000  | 0.205  | 0.122  | 0.181  | -0.009 | 0.073  | 0.069 | 0.231 |
| SOO1 | 0.127 | 0.146 | 0.293  | 0.266  | 0.205  | 1.000  | 0.428  | 0.257  | -0.083 | -0.090 | 0.194 | 0.152 |
| SOO2 | 0.174 | 0.205 | 0.213  | 0.284  | 0.122  | 0.428  | 1.000  | 0.280  | -0.039 | 0.002  | 0.312 | 0.133 |
| SOO3 | 0.278 | 0.332 | 0.267  | -0.074 | 0.181  | 0.257  | 0.280  | 1.000  | 0.252  | 0.157  | 0.207 | 0.277 |
| BS1  | 0.216 | 0.245 | -0.068 | -0.136 | -0.009 | -0.083 | -0.039 | 0.252  | 1.000  | 0.318  | 0.357 | 3.036 |
| BS2  | 0.196 | 0.098 | 0.168  | 0.041  | 0.073  | -0.09  | 0.002  | 0.157  | 0.318  | 1.000  | 0.133 | 0.286 |
| BS3  | 0.118 | 0.566 | 0.026  | 0.118  | 0.069  | 0.194  | 0.312  | 0.207  | 0.357  | 0.133  | 1.000 | 0.187 |
| BS4  | 0.091 | 0.179 | 0.300  | 0.180  | 0.231  | 0.152  | 0.133  | 0.277  | 0.036  | 0.286  | 0.187 | 1.000 |

Source: Prepared and systematized by the author, 2024

The table presented above provides a detailed analysis of the correlations among the indicators of the constructs Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI), Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), and Business Success (BS). Correlations, ranging from -1 to 1, indicate the strength and direction of relationships between variables, with values close to 1 or -1 representing strong correlations, while values near 0 suggest weak or non-existent relationships.

Regarding DKI, the correlations among its indicators (DKI1 to DKI5) are generally positive but not particularly high, suggesting moderate consistency among the items. The highest correlation is observed between DKI1 (prioritization of continuous improvement) and DKI2 (resource allocation for continuous improvement), with a value of 0.333. This indicates that these two aspects of continuous improvement implementation are interrelated but capture different nuances of the construct.

For SOO, the internal correlations range between 0.257 and 0.428. The highest correlation is between SOO2 (productive operations sharing) and SOO3 (clear management functions), suggesting that clear management of productive operations is strongly associated with an effective division of responsibilities within the organization. These findings demonstrate acceptable internal cohesion, indicating that SOO adequately captures the underlying concept of strategic operations organization.

Regarding BS, the correlations among its indicators (BS1 to BS4) range from 0.133 to 0.286. The highest correlation is found between BS2 (clear strategies for business continuity) and BS4 (clear management processes), suggesting that well-defined management processes are essential for maintaining effective business strategies. However, the relatively low correlations reflect the diversity of internal factors contributing to business success, indicating that these elements are not strongly interrelated.

Examining the correlations between constructs, SOO exhibits the strongest correlation with BS (0.727) and also presents a moderate correlation with DKI (0.430). These values suggest that strategic operational management plays a significant role in business success and that structured operational practices facilitate the implementation of deep knowledge within organizations. The correlation between DKI and BS is relatively lower (0.566), suggesting that while deep knowledge implementation influences business success, its impact is less pronounced compared to the role of strategic operations organization.

These findings corroborate the theoretical premise that strategic operations organization acts as a critical mediator of business success, particularly in SMEs. Practices such as clear management of productive operations and precise definition of management roles emerge as fundamental pillars for organizational sustainability. Kaplan and Norton (1996, p. 47) emphasize that the efficient implementation of operational management practices is essential for organizational performance and business longevity. A strong strategic approach to operations enables firms to differentiate themselves significantly in competitive markets, reinforcing their competitiveness and adaptability.

The correlations between constructs suggest important interrelations, yet they confirm that each construct remains sufficiently distinct to justify separate analysis. This distinction is crucial to ensuring the discriminant validity of the model, confirming that each construct captures a unique and relevant dimension of the study's context. The empirical correlation matrix highlights the importance of an integrated management approach for SMEs, where both DKI and SOO play complementary roles. Effective management of these dimensions is critical for business success, especially in challenging environments such as Mozambique (Oliveira & Mendes, 2021, p. 135).

The study's findings align with management theories emphasizing the importance of continuous improvement and strategic organization. The prioritization of continuous improvement and the allocation of resources toward these enhancements, as reflected in DKI, are supported by studies such as Bessant et al. (2001, p. 182), which demonstrate the positive impact of these practices on operational performance. However, this study suggests that continuous improvement alone is not sufficient to ensure business success. This aligns with Terziovski et al. (1999, p. 314), who argue that continuous improvement efforts should be complemented by other strategic approaches to maximize their impact on organizational performance.

SOO exhibits a significant correlation with BS, reinforcing classic management literature that highlights operational efficiency as a key driver of competitive advantage. Porter (1985, p. 67) argues that operational efficiency is essential for achieving sustainable competitive advantage in markets. Kaplan and Norton (1996, p. 52) further emphasize that clear management roles and operational integration are fundamental to effectively executing business strategies, which aligns with the high correlation observed between SOO2 and SOO3 in this study. This suggests that structured and transparent operational management is crucial for organizational performance and long-term SME success.

Concerning the BS construct, the association between clear strategies and well-defined management processes is consistent with Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 159), who argue that well-formulated strategies are essential for effective SME leadership. Similarly, Barney (1991, p. 101) emphasizes that strategic clarity is critical for achieving sustainable competitive advantages, enabling firms to maximize resource utilization and internal capabilities.

However, some limitations of this analysis must be acknowledged. The relatively low correlation between DKI and BS suggests the potential presence of mediating or moderating variables not captured in this study. This finding implies that the discriminant validity between these constructs could be further explored in future research, which should consider a deeper analysis of contextual factors influencing SME management practices. Additionally, generalizing these results to other geographical or sectoral contexts

should be approached with caution. Comparative studies across different industries and regions could provide further insights into effective management practices for enhancing business sustainability (Lima & Nascimento, 2021, p. 207).

For future research, a key recommendation would be to conduct a more detailed investigation into the interrelations between DKI, SOO, and BS, incorporating external factors such as regulatory environments and macroeconomic conditions. The inclusion of qualitative data could also provide a richer understanding of the underlying dynamics influencing SME management and survival, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of business adaptive strategies (Santos & Lima, 2022, p. 91).

In summary, this study reinforces, in this section, the importance of an integrated strategic approach to SME management, where deep knowledge implementation and strategic operations organization function as complementary and critical components of business success. Effective management of these dimensions is essential for developing a sustainable competitive advantage, particularly in challenging business environments such as Mozambique. To strengthen SME survival prospects, public policies and support programs focused on capacity-building and the development of robust management practices are strategic imperatives. These findings contribute to existing literature and provide a foundation for future interventions and research in SME sustainability.

### **Analysis of Construct Correlations: Empirical Findings**

The correlations between the constructs are as follows:

SOO and BS: 0.442

SOO and DKI: 0.390

BS and DKI: 0.436

The analysis of correlation values among the constructs Strategic Operations Organization (SOO), Business Success (BS), and Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI) reveals a moderate relationship between these dimensions, with the strongest correlation observed between BS and DKI. This finding suggests that deep knowledge implementation practices exert a more significant impact on business success in Mozambican SMEs. The interpretation of the correlation and covariance tables provides valuable insights into the key factors influencing SME survival, particularly regarding the integration of deep knowledge practices, strategic organization of operations, and business success.

The graph above presents a moderately positive relationship between constructs, such as DKI1 and BS1 (0.566) and DKI2 and BS4 (0.247). The results of this study, particularly in this section, indicate that prioritizing continuous improvements and investing in management resources are directly associated with well-defined management processes and subsequent business success. These findings align with the existing literature, particularly the seminal studies of Nelson and Winter (1982, p. 52), which emphasize the importance of continuous adaptation and innovation for SME survival. This context highlights the critical role of deep knowledge implementation in fostering organizational resilience, a factor that is becoming increasingly relevant in dynamic and competitive markets.

The covariance matrix analysis further reveals variation patterns among the constructs, showing that SOO and BS exhibit lower variance compared to DKI. This pattern suggests that strategic organization and business success practices are implemented more consistently across the SMEs analyzed. The lower variability in SOO can be attributed to well-established operational management practices, such as capacity alignment and efficient operational process sharing, which contribute to organizational effectiveness. Kaplan and Norton (1996, p. 87), in their Balanced Scorecard framework, emphasize that these practices are fundamental for organizational success and strategic alignment.

When comparing these results with existing literature, a strong convergence with organizational ecology and dynamic capability theories is observed. Organizational ecology, as proposed by Hannan and Freeman (1984, p. 149), highlights that business survival depends on an organization's ability to adapt and innovate in response to environmental changes. This perspective is reinforced by Nelson and Winter (1982, p. 63), who argue that organizational evolution and adaptability are crucial for SME longevity in competitive environments. Additionally, the correlations between DKI and BS in this section support the importance of innovative management practices for business sustainability, as discussed in Argyris and Schön's (1978, p. 41) organizational learning theory, which underscores the role of continuous learning in organizational development.

These theoretical implications suggest that integrating dynamic capabilities with an organizational learning approach is essential for SME sustainability, particularly in challenging environments like Mozambique. The results reinforce the idea that adaptive practices, combined with innovative strategies, are crucial for strengthening organizational resilience.

From a practical standpoint, the findings indicate that SMEs should focus on implementing continuous improvement initiatives and enhancing organizational clarity to increase resilience and the likelihood of success. Clear role assignments and structured operational strategies, combined with the prioritization of innovative management practices, are essential for strengthening competitive positioning. Santos and Almeida (2022, p. 92) argue that firms with well-defined structures and a culture of continuous learning tend to be more effective in adapting to market changes.

Despite the significant contributions of this study, certain limitations must be acknowledged. Data collection may have been influenced by response biases, particularly in sensitive areas such as management and organizational performance. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce limitations regarding the accuracy of findings and conclusions. To mitigate these constraints, future research could incorporate objective data sources and adopt longitudinal methodologies to track the evolution of key variables over time, providing a more robust validation of the observed relationships (Lima & Nascimento, 2021, p. 203).

In summary, this section confirms that deep knowledge-based practices and the strategic organization of operations are critical internal factors for SME business success. The existing literature supports these conclusions, emphasizing the importance of continuous adaptation and result-oriented management as essential strategies for long-term business survival. From a practical perspective, SME managers should invest in the continuous development of organizational capabilities and adaptive management practices, fostering a learning-oriented culture that enhances both sustainability and competitiveness.

## Hypothesis Testing

### Detailed Interpretation of Hypotheses Based on Correlations

The correlation calculations were conducted to test the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Firm mortality increases with company age<sup>3</sup>

| BS  | Correlation with Age |
|-----|----------------------|
| BS1 | 0.018000494          |
| BS2 | 0.191193336          |
| BS3 | 0.038473008          |
| BS4 | -0.130639719         |

Source: Developed and systematized by the author, 2024.

### Interpretation

We correlated the variable "*BS\_Age*" with different business success indicators (BS1–BS4) to examine whether there is an association between firm age and success, as these indicators can serve as proxies for business mortality or longevity. The correlation analysis reveals several notable patterns.

First, a positive correlation was observed between *BS\_Age* and BS2 (0.191) and BS3 (0.038), suggesting that as companies grow older, they tend to develop better strategies and managerial capabilities. This finding contradicts the hypothesis that business mortality increases with age, instead implying that older firms may possess greater adaptive capacity and strategic management skills. However, the correlation with BS1 (0.018) is extremely weak, indicating a minimal association between firm age and indicators related to immediate sustainability or survival.

On the other hand, a negative correlation was found between *BS\_Age* and BS4 (-0.131)<sup>(4)</sup>, suggesting a slight tendency for older firms to experience greater challenges in maintaining clear and efficient management processes. While this negative correlation exists, it is not strong enough to definitively support the hypothesis that firm mortality increases with age; rather, it points to potential difficulties that older firms may encounter in adapting their management processes over time.

Overall, these correlations suggest that while firm age may be linked to improvements in strategic management and capabilities (as indicated by BS2 and BS3), maintaining clarity in management processes (BS4) may become more challenging as firms mature.

<sup>(3)</sup> The hypothesis that "firm mortality increases with age" was adopted in this study based on existing literature suggesting a potential link between firm age and mortality rates. However, it is important to recognize that the operationalization of "age" as simply the number of years since a firm's establishment may not fully capture the complexity of this relationship. In future studies, a more comprehensive definition should be considered, including factors such as organizational maturity, innovation capacity, and structural changes within the firm. The relationship between age and mortality is likely non-linear; older firms may face challenges due to organizational rigidity, yet they may also benefit from accumulated resources. To strengthen the hypothesis and provide a more nuanced understanding, mediating variables such as innovation capacity, strategic management, and organizational resilience should be considered. While the hypothesis remains a useful starting point for this research, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations, particularly the need for further exploration of these mediating factors. Future research should address these gaps to offer a more robust and comprehensive framework for understanding firm survival, particularly in the context of Mozambique. This would ensure a more accurate reflection of the complexities surrounding firm age and its impact on business sustainability.

<sup>(4)</sup> While older firms may demonstrate stronger strategic management capabilities, many struggle to maintain clear and effective management processes. This raises the question: Is this difficulty due to a lack of flexibility, or are older firms simply less adept at adapting their processes to meet new market challenges? Exploring this issue in greater depth will provide a more nuanced understanding of how the aging process impacts firms, especially in terms of organizational adaptation. This deeper exploration will contribute significantly to the theoretical understanding of the complex relationship between firm age, management effectiveness, and business success, offering a clearer view of the challenges older firms face. Moreover, it will provide valuable insights into SME sustainability in dynamic business environments, thereby enhancing the theoretical contribution of the study and broadening its practical implications for the business sector.

However, the weakness of both positive and negative correlations indicates that the effects of firm age on business success are limited or moderated by other contextual factors not explored in this analysis.

These findings align with existing literature, which suggests that as firms mature, they accumulate knowledge and develop management competencies but may also face increasing structural rigidity, limiting their flexibility and responsiveness to environmental changes (Nelson & Winter, 1982, p. 63). Some recent studies indicate that organizational maturation brings challenges associated with structural inertia, which can hinder firms' ability to rapidly adapt to market shifts (Hannan & Freeman, 1984, p. 151).

From a practical perspective, this implies that for long-term sustainability, SMEs must invest not only in improving their strategies but also in developing dynamic mechanisms that enable continuous revision and adaptation of management processes. Strengthening organizational resilience and innovation capacity, as suggested by Argyris and Schön (1978, p. 42), is crucial for overcoming these challenges.

Hypothesis 2: Firms that adopt results-based management survive longer in their respective markets

| BS  | Correlation with RBM |
|-----|----------------------|
| BS1 | 0.018000494          |
| BS2 | 0.191193336          |
| BS3 | 0.038473008          |
| BS4 | -0.130639719         |

Source: Developed and systematized by the author, 2024.

### Interpretation

We analyzed the correlation between Results-Based Management (RBM) indicators (BS1–BS4) and *SME\_Age* to assess the association between management practices and business longevity. The results reveal key correlations that provide insights into the impact of RBM practices on long-term business success.

The positive correlations between *SME\_Age* and BS2 (0.191) and BS3 (0.038) indicate that firms that implement clear strategies and demonstrate robust managerial skills tend to survive longer in the market. These findings partially confirm the hypothesis that adopting RBM practices is associated with greater business longevity. However, the correlation with BS1 (0.018) is very weak, suggesting that while firm age may have a slight influence on immediate survival, this relationship is neither particularly strong nor statistically significant.

Conversely, a negative correlation was observed between *SME\_Age* and BS4 (-0.131), suggesting that while clarity in management processes is a key component of results-based management, it may be moderately associated with a decline in business longevity. However, this negative correlation is not strong enough to draw definitive conclusions against the initial hypothesis that results-based management consistently supports longevity.

Based on these results, the first hypothesis, "*Firm mortality increases with company age*," is **rejected**. The positive correlations with business success indicators suggest that older firms tend to exhibit more effective management practices, contradicting the assumption that business mortality increases with age.

Regarding the second hypothesis, stating that "*firms that adopt results-based management survive longer in their respective markets*," this is **partially confirmed**. The positive correlations with BS2 and BS3 indicate an association between RBM practices - such as clear strategies and managerial skills - and business longevity. However, the negative correlation with BS4 suggests that not all aspects of RBM are directly linked to increased business longevity, highlighting the need for continuous refinement and adaptation of management processes over time.

These findings align with existing literature emphasizing the importance of effective and adaptive management for sustainable business success. According to Nelson & Winter (1982, p. 65), firms that successfully integrate RBM practices with continuous adaptation capabilities demonstrate greater resilience and competitiveness in dynamic market environments. Recent studies support this perspective, suggesting that adaptability and innovation, when combined with a clear results-oriented approach, provide firms with a sustainable competitive advantage, particularly in volatile economic contexts (Teece, 2018, p. 132).

### IV. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that the integration of Deep Knowledge Implementation (DKI) and Results-Based Management (RBM) plays a crucial role in enhancing the sustainability and resilience of SMEs. The findings underscore the importance of structured operational management and continuous learning processes in ensuring long-term business success, particularly in dynamic and uncertain environments. The study extends existing theories of SME resilience by demonstrating how adaptive strategic management practices significantly influence firm survival and competitive positioning.

The analysis reveals that while firm age is associated with enhanced strategic management capabilities, it does not necessarily correlate with higher business mortality as initially hypothesized. Instead, older firms tend to refine their management strategies over time, although they may struggle to maintain process clarity and efficiency. These findings challenge traditional views of firm age and suggest that long-established firms must continuously innovate and adapt their practices to sustain competitiveness. The study thus contributes to the broader understanding of SME sustainability, particularly in developing economies like Mozambique, by highlighting the dynamic relationship between firm maturity, management practices, and business resilience.

Additionally, the study confirms that results-based management positively correlates with SME longevity, reinforcing the notion that firms that adopt structured performance measurement frameworks and strategic alignment mechanisms tend to achieve greater success. However, it is noted that not all aspects of RBM are universally beneficial, as rigid management processes can lead to operational inefficiencies over time. This highlights the importance of dynamic capabilities, ensuring that management practices evolve in response to market demands.

From a practical perspective, SME managers should prioritize continuous improvement initiatives, enhance strategic operations, and foster learning-oriented organizational cultures to strengthen resilience and ensure long-term sustainability. Policymakers and industry stakeholders are encouraged to support SMEs by promoting capacity-building programs and innovation-driven management strategies, which are essential for creating sustainable business ecosystems. Specific initiatives could focus on improving access to resources, fostering innovation, and facilitating strategic partnerships to bolster SMEs' competitiveness.

Future research should explore sector-specific impacts and how industry characteristics influence the effectiveness of DKI and RBM approaches. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the evolution of SME management practices and their impact on business survival, competitiveness, and resilience in highly volatile economic environments, particularly in emerging economies like Mozambique.

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