



Factors Influencing Professionalization in Small-Scale Real Estate Brokerage Firms in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco: A Theoretical Analysis

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Abstract. The real estate sector in tourism-oriented destinations such as Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, has experienced sustained growth, creating new managerial challenges for small-scale brokerage firms. Although these organizations play a strategic role in regional economic development, many continue operating under empirical management models characterized by limited strategic planning, insufficient technological adoption, weak process standardization, and incomplete regulatory compliance. Consequently, little theoretical consensus exists regarding the organizational factors that explain their professionalization and long-term competitiveness. This study aims to identify and theoretically integrate the factors influencing the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms. A qualitative documentary research design was adopted using analytical-synthetic and descriptive methods through the systematic review of contemporary scientific literature, legal regulations, and institutional reports. The findings identified four interdependent dimensions that collectively explain organizational professionalization: administrative management, human capital development and ethical professionalism, technological innovation through PropTech, and legal and regulatory compliance. The analysis demonstrates that these dimensions operate as an integrated organizational system rather than as isolated managerial practices. Administrative management provides the structural foundation for standardized processes, human capital strengthens organizational credibility and service quality, PropTech enhances operational efficiency and strategic decision-making, while legal compliance reinforces transparency, institutional legitimacy, and investor confidence. Together, these dimensions improve organizational resilience, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability in increasingly dynamic tourism-oriented real estate markets. The study contributes by developing an integrated conceptual framework that advances the theoretical understanding of professionalization and provides a foundation for future empirical research and strategic decision-making within emerging real estate markets.

Keywords: Real estate marketing, competitiveness, administrative management, and professionalization.

1 Introduction

The real estate sector has become one of the principal drivers of economic growth, investment, and regional development worldwide. Beyond facilitating property transactions, the sector stimulates employment generation, urban expansion, tourism development, financial services, and infrastructure investment. In emerging economies, real estate activities contribute significantly to local competitiveness by attracting domestic and foreign capital while

supporting the development of complementary industries such as construction, hospitality, and professional services. Consequently, the performance of real estate firms increasingly depends on their organizational capabilities, managerial efficiency, and ability to respond to dynamic market conditions ([1] & [2]).

Recent evidence suggests that the contribution of the real estate sector extends beyond its direct economic impact, functioning as a catalyst for territorial competitiveness and sustainable regional development. The expansion of real estate markets enhances the attractiveness of destinations for investment, talent, and tourism while promoting the development of innovation ecosystems, business services, and urban infrastructure that strengthen regional productivity. In this context, the competitiveness of territories is increasingly associated with their capacity to create favorable institutional, economic, and organizational environments capable of attracting long-term investment and generating sustainable economic value ([3] & [4]). Likewise, regional development depends not only on the availability of physical resources but also on the accumulation of organizational capabilities, knowledge, and complementary assets that enable firms to adapt to changing market conditions and generate competitive advantages over time [5].

The growing complexity of real estate markets has also transformed the competitive dynamics faced by brokerage firms. Increasing digitalization, evolving consumer expectations, stricter regulatory frameworks, and greater market transparency require organizations to adopt more sophisticated management practices supported by strategic planning, technological innovation, professional human capital, and effective governance mechanisms. Consequently, competitive success no longer depends exclusively on favorable market conditions or property availability but increasingly on firms' ability to integrate organizational knowledge, standardized management processes, digital technologies, and regulatory compliance into coherent business strategies capable of generating long-term organizational resilience and sustainable competitive advantages.

Within Mexico, the real estate sector has consolidated itself as one of the country's most dynamic engines of investment, particularly in destinations with a strong tourism vocation such as Cancún, Los Cabos, and Puerto Vallarta. Among these, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, represents a strategic real estate market where residential development, tourism investment, and second-home ownership have expanded significantly over the last decade. According to the Statistical and Geographic Information Institute of Jalisco [6], the Costa-Sierra Occidental region maintains one of the highest property appreciation rates in the state, positioning Puerto Vallarta as one of the most attractive destinations for national and international real estate investment. This sustained growth has intensified competition among brokerage firms, making organizational efficiency and professional management increasingly important competitive factors.

Despite these favorable market conditions, a considerable proportion of small-scale real estate brokerage firms continue operating under informal administrative structures characterized by empirical decision-making, limited strategic planning, insufficient technological adoption, and weak process standardization. Unlike large national and international franchises that benefit from standardized operating procedures, legal advisory services, advanced marketing

strategies, and continuous personnel training, many independent agencies rely primarily on the founder's tacit knowledge and personal experience. As a result, these organizations often experience limited scalability, lower operational efficiency, and greater vulnerability to market fluctuations ([7] & [8]).

The real estate market in Bahía de Banderas, where Puerto Vallarta is located, has undergone accelerated transformation driven by tourism expansion, foreign investment, and increasing demand for residential and vacation properties. Small-scale brokerage firms play a fundamental role in facilitating property transactions; however, they frequently operate under conditions of competitive asymmetry when compared with international franchises that possess consolidated administrative structures, standardized operational procedures, and integrated legal, technological, and marketing support. In this context, professionalization emerges as a strategic mechanism capable of strengthening organizational competitiveness and ensuring long-term business sustainability [2].

Professionalization should not be understood solely as technical training but rather as a comprehensive organizational transformation that encompasses administrative management, strategic planning, ethical conduct, technological innovation, regulatory compliance, and continuous human capital development. From a theoretical perspective, [9] argues that professionals derive their legitimacy from specialized scientific knowledge and recognized expertise within a defined field of practice. Likewise, professionalization involves the development of institutional structures, professional relationships, and shared standards that regulate organizational behavior and promote service quality [10].

International literature consistently recognizes professionalization as a strategic capability that enhances organizational competitiveness, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability. Contemporary management theories argue that sustainable competitive advantages emerge not only from tangible resources but also from organizational knowledge, managerial capabilities, standardized processes, and continuous innovation. In this regard, the Resource-Based View proposes that specialized knowledge and organizational capabilities constitute valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate strategic assets capable of generating superior organizational performance [11]. Similarly, contemporary management approaches emphasize that organizational learning, digital transformation, and process standardization are essential components of organizational competitiveness in increasingly dynamic business environments [1].

Despite the growing body of research on competitiveness, organizational management, and technological innovation in the real estate sector, limited attention has been devoted to understanding the theoretical factors that explain the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in tourism-oriented destinations. Most previous studies have focused on housing markets, investment dynamics, or large real estate organizations, whereas considerably less attention has been given to the administrative, legal, technological, and human dimensions that collectively shape professionalization within independent brokerage firms. Consequently, there is still no integrated theoretical framework that explains how these

dimensions interact to strengthen competitiveness and organizational sustainability in highly competitive regional markets such as Puerto Vallarta.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of small real estate brokerage firms in Puerto Vallarta continue lacking formal administrative structures and comprehensive management systems. Their operations frequently depend on the founder's tacit knowledge, while process standardization, digital technologies such as PropTech, and full compliance with the Real Estate Operations Law of the State of [12] remain only partially implemented. Consequently, the lack of professionalization generates structural vulnerability, increasing organizational mortality during periods of economic uncertainty and regulatory change [8]. Existing literature suggests that these limitations are associated not with insufficient market demand but rather with deficiencies in internal management and the absence of a long-term strategic vision [7].

Therefore, the central research question guiding this study is: What are the fundamental theoretical factors that should be integrated into a professionalization model capable of strengthening the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in a highly competitive, tourism-oriented market?

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze, from a theoretical perspective, the factors that constitute professionalization in small-scale real estate brokerage firms in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, in order to propose an integrated conceptual framework that explains how administrative management, human capital development, technological innovation, and legal compliance collectively contribute to organizational competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

1.1 Objectives

General Objective: To analyze, from a theoretical perspective, the factors that constitute professionalization in small-scale real estate brokerage firms in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, in order to propose a reference framework that promotes their competitiveness and sustainability.

1.2 Specific Objectives

To identify the administrative and operational dimensions that define professionalization in the real estate sector according to the current scientific literature. To examine the relationship between the adoption of ethical and legal standards and the strengthening of trust in the regional real estate market.

2 Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative research approach with a descriptive and exploratory scope based on documentary analysis. The research aimed to identify, analyze, and systematize the theoretical factors influencing the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco. Rather than testing causal relationships, the study sought to develop an integrated conceptual understanding of the administrative, legal, technological, and human dimensions that collectively support organizational competitiveness and long-term

sustainability. A qualitative documentary approach was considered appropriate because the objective of the study was to synthesize existing theoretical knowledge and identify recurring concepts across academic literature, institutional reports, and regulatory documents rather than generate statistical inferences or test hypotheses. Documentary research enables the systematic examination of diverse information sources, facilitating the interpretation and integration of theoretical perspectives that contribute to explaining complex organizational phenomena [13]. Furthermore, qualitative documentary analysis is particularly suitable for studies addressing emerging organizational issues, where theoretical integration constitutes an essential step toward the development of future empirical research [14].

2.1 Research Design and Procedure

The study employed a non-experimental documentary research design. Documentary research was considered the most appropriate methodological strategy because the phenomenon under investigation has been widely addressed through scientific literature, legal frameworks, institutional reports, and management theories. Consequently, the research focused on the systematic examination, comparison, and synthesis of secondary sources to construct a theoretical framework capable of explaining the professionalization process within small-scale real estate brokerage firms.

The analytical-synthetic method guided the research process. Initially, the concept of professionalization was decomposed into its principal theoretical dimensions through analytical examination of specialized literature. Subsequently, these dimensions were integrated into a comprehensive conceptual model explaining their interrelationships and contribution to organizational competitiveness. This methodological approach allowed the identification of common patterns, conceptual relationships, and recurring organizational practices reported across different studies, thereby facilitating the construction of an integrated theoretical framework consistent with the objectives of the research [14].

The research was conducted during the first quarter of 2026 following a structured documentary research process. During this period, scientific literature, official government publications, legal regulations, and institutional reports were systematically identified and reviewed according to previously established selection criteria. Particular attention was given to publications addressing business management, organizational professionalization, competitiveness, strategic management, human capital development, digital transformation, PropTech, and regulatory compliance within the real estate sector. Priority was assigned to recent scientific publications while also incorporating seminal theoretical contributions considered fundamental to the conceptual development of professionalization and organizational capabilities.

Subsequently, the collected information was critically analyzed using the analytical-synthetic method to identify recurring concepts, theoretical approaches, and organizational practices associated with professionalization in the real estate sector. The resulting evidence was then classified into thematic categories and integrated into a conceptual model that explains the interrelationships among administrative management, human capital development, technological innovation (PropTech), and legal compliance as fundamental dimensions of

professionalization in small-scale real estate brokerage firms. Finally, the conceptual synthesis facilitated the identification of the principal theoretical relationships among these dimensions, providing a coherent framework for interpreting the factors that contribute to organizational competitiveness and long-term sustainability in tourism-oriented real estate markets.

2.2 Documentary Sources

Information was collected from multiple academic and institutional sources to ensure theoretical consistency, methodological rigor, and contextual relevance. Scientific literature was retrieved from internationally recognized academic databases, while legal and statistical information was obtained from official governmental institutions and professional organizations directly related to the real estate sector. The documentary review prioritized peer-reviewed publications addressing business management, organizational professionalization, strategic management, competitiveness, digital transformation, PropTech, human capital development, and real estate administration.

To strengthen the theoretical foundation of the study, the documentary search incorporated scientific articles, academic books, legal regulations, institutional reports, and official statistical databases. The selection of multiple documentary sources allowed for the triangulation of theoretical perspectives and institutional evidence, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms. Furthermore, official documents were used to contextualize the regulatory and socioeconomic environment of Puerto Vallarta, while scientific literature provided the conceptual basis for interpreting the relationships among administrative management, technological innovation, legal compliance, and organizational competitiveness ([13] & [14]).

Priority was given to recent publications published between 2021 and 2026 to ensure that the analysis reflected current developments in organizational management and the real estate industry. Nevertheless, seminal theoretical contributions were also incorporated when considered essential for explaining the concepts of professionalization, organizational capabilities, and strategic management. The principal documentary sources consulted are summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Databases Consulted.

Source Type	Repositories and Databases	Purpose
Scientific literature	Google Scholar, Scielo, Redalyc, Dialnet	Identification of theories related to professionalization, competitiveness, strategic management, and real estate administration
Legal framework	Official Gazette of the State of Jalisco, SEDECO	Review of the Real Estate Operations Law and applicable state regulations
Statistical information	IIEG Jalisco, INEGI, National AMPI	Collection of regional indicators related to the real estate sector and tourism development

Source Type	Repositories and Databases	Purpose
Academic repositories	UNAM Institutional Repository, University of Guadalajara Repository	Identification of previous studies concerning tourism competitiveness and real estate services

Note. Own elaboration.

2.3 Selection Criteria

To ensure the quality, credibility, and relevance of the documentary analysis, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before reviewing the literature. These criteria were designed to guarantee the selection of reliable and up-to-date sources that contributed directly to the theoretical understanding of professionalization in small-scale real estate brokerage firms.

The inclusion criteria comprised the following:

- peer-reviewed scientific publications;
- books and academic texts on management and professionalization;
- official government reports and statistical databases;
- current legal regulations applicable to the real estate sector in Jalisco;
- publications issued primarily between 2021 and 2026, while incorporating seminal theoretical works considered essential to the conceptual foundation of the study, such as those by ([9], [11] & [10]).

Preference was given to publications indexed in internationally recognized academic databases and institutional reports issued by governmental or professional organizations. This selection strategy ensured that the documentary evidence reflected both contemporary theoretical developments and the regulatory context surrounding the real estate sector. Likewise, classical contributions were retained when they provided the theoretical basis for concepts such as professionalization, organizational capabilities, and strategic management.

Documents were excluded when they lacked academic rigor, duplicated information already analyzed, were unrelated to organizational management or the real estate sector, or did not provide sufficient theoretical or contextual evidence to support the objectives of the study.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The documentary analysis was conducted in four sequential stages to ensure a systematic and transparent process for identifying, organizing, and synthesizing the available evidence.

Stage 1. Identification of Information Sources

Scientific articles, books, legislation, institutional reports, and statistical databases related to professionalization, competitiveness, organizational management, and the real estate sector were identified. The documentary search was guided by the research objectives, emphasizing publications that addressed the organizational, technological, legal, and human dimensions of professionalization.

Stage 2. Documentary Review

Each selected document was critically analyzed to identify concepts, theoretical approaches, administrative practices, and organizational factors associated with professionalization. Particular attention was given to recurring theoretical arguments, conceptual similarities, and practical recommendations reported in the reviewed literature.

Stage 3. Thematic Categorization

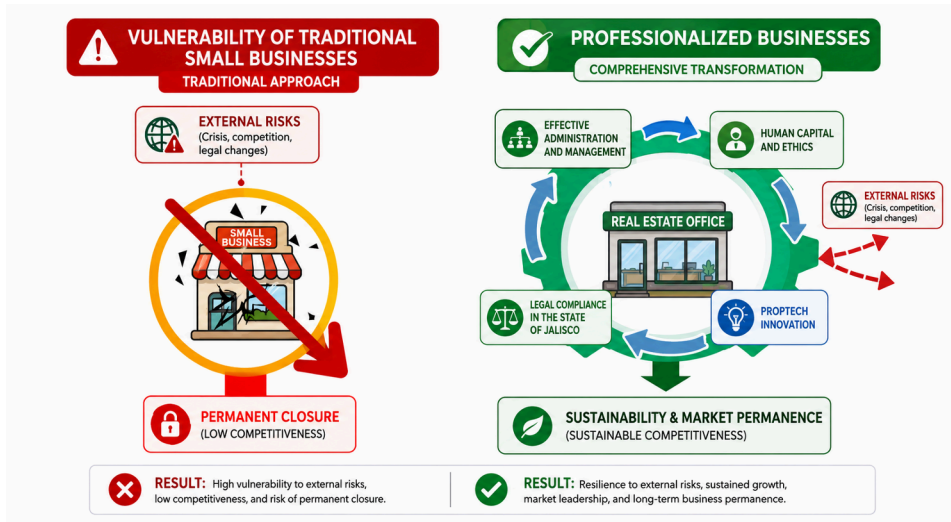
The extracted information was classified into four analytical dimensions:

- Administrative Management
- Human Capital and Ethics
- Technological Innovation (PropTech)
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance

These dimensions emerged as the most recurrent factors identified across the reviewed literature and were subsequently used as the analytical categories guiding the interpretation of the documentary evidence. The thematic classification facilitated the comparison of different theoretical perspectives while highlighting the relationships among the principal organizational factors discussed in previous studies.

Stage 4. Theoretical Integration

Finally, the four dimensions were synthesized into an integrated conceptual framework explaining how professionalization contributes to organizational competitiveness, operational efficiency, legal certainty, and long-term sustainability within small-scale real estate brokerage firms. This stage enabled the integration of diverse theoretical perspectives into a coherent model that explains the interdependence of administrative, human, technological, and regulatory capabilities in supporting organizational development and competitive performance.



Note. Own elaboration.

Figure 1. Comparison of the traditional small business model and the professionalized business model, showing the impact of administrative professionalization on competitiveness, resilience to external risks, and long-term sustainability.

2.5 Methodological Framework

(Figure 1) summarizes the methodological process followed throughout the study. The methodological sequence consisted of:

1. Definition of the research problem;
2. Documentary search and source selection;
3. Critical literature review;
4. Identification of theoretical dimensions;
5. Comparative analysis;
6. Development of the conceptual professionalization model.

This sequential framework ensured methodological coherence throughout the investigation by establishing a logical progression from the identification of the research problem to the integration of the theoretical findings. Each stage contributed to the systematic organization of documentary evidence, allowing the identification of recurring concepts, the comparison of different theoretical perspectives, and the development of an integrated conceptual framework. Furthermore, the methodological process enhanced the transparency and traceability of the

documentary analysis, facilitating the interpretation of the relationships among the principal dimensions of professionalization identified in the literature ([13] & [14]).

3 Results

The documentary analysis identified four interrelated dimensions that collectively explain the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco. These dimensions emerged consistently across the scientific literature, legal framework, institutional reports, and sector-specific documentation reviewed during the study. Rather than representing isolated organizational practices, the findings indicate that professionalization constitutes a multidimensional process integrating administrative management, human capital development, technological innovation, and regulatory compliance.

The analysis further revealed that these dimensions are mutually reinforcing. The absence or weakness of any one dimension reduces organizational capacity to respond effectively to market changes, technological disruption, and increasing regulatory requirements. Consequently, professionalization should be understood as an integrated organizational strategy rather than a set of independent administrative practices.

The documentary evidence also indicates that the effectiveness of professionalization depends not only on the implementation of individual organizational practices but also on the degree of alignment among administrative processes, human resource capabilities, technological adoption, and legal compliance. Organizations that develop these dimensions in an integrated manner are better positioned to improve operational efficiency, strengthen customer confidence, facilitate organizational learning, and achieve sustainable competitive advantages. Therefore, the identified dimensions should be interpreted as complementary organizational capabilities that collectively support long-term business sustainability rather than as isolated management functions.

3.1 Identification of the Critical Professionalization Factors

The first major finding of the documentary analysis was that professionalization extends far beyond technical or occupational training. Across the reviewed literature, professionalization was consistently conceptualized as a comprehensive organizational transformation involving managerial, legal, technological, and human resource capabilities.

The analytical review enabled the identification of four critical dimensions that repeatedly appeared as determinants of organizational competitiveness within small-scale real estate brokerage firms. Although each dimension contributes independently to organizational performance, the documentary evidence suggests that their greatest contribution emerges when they operate in an integrated and coordinated manner. Administrative management provides the organizational structure for planning and decision-making; human capital enhances knowledge, ethical conduct, and service quality; technological innovation increases operational efficiency and market responsiveness; and legal compliance strengthens institutional legitimacy, transparency, and stakeholder trust. Together, these dimensions constitute the fundamental components of a professionalization model capable of improving organizational resilience and long-term competitiveness in increasingly dynamic real estate markets.

The following sections examine each of these dimensions individually, highlighting their theoretical foundations, organizational implications, and contributions to the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in tourism-oriented destinations such as Puerto Vallarta.

1. Administrative Management

The first dimension identified corresponds to administrative management. The literature emphasizes that organizations adopting strategic planning, standardized operating procedures, documented workflows, and process-based management achieve greater organizational stability and operational efficiency than firms relying exclusively on empirical decision-making. Effective administrative management provides organizations with the ability to coordinate resources, establish strategic objectives, optimize resource allocation, monitor organizational performance, and adapt to changing market conditions through structured decision-making processes ([1], [15] & [16]).

Within the real estate sector, standardized administrative processes improve transaction control, reduce operational errors, facilitate service quality, and support organizational growth. Consequently, administrative management represents the structural foundation upon which professionalization is built. The implementation of formal organizational structures, standardized operating procedures, and documented workflows also contributes to improving internal communication, accountability, and operational consistency, reducing uncertainty throughout the real estate transaction process. Likewise, quality management systems promote continuous improvement by establishing standardized procedures that facilitate organizational learning and more efficient service delivery [17].

From a strategic perspective, administrative management extends beyond routine operational control by supporting organizational learning, continuous improvement, and long-term competitiveness. Organizations capable of integrating strategic planning with performance evaluation and process management are better positioned to respond to evolving customer expectations, technological innovation, and increasingly competitive market environments. Accordingly, administrative management constitutes a strategic organizational capability that strengthens business sustainability and facilitates the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms ([8] & [16]).

2. Human Capital and Ethical Professionalism

The second dimension relates to human capital development and professional ethics. The documentary review demonstrated that continuous education, professional certification, specialized knowledge, and ethical conduct strengthen organizational credibility while improving customer confidence and long-term business relationships. Professionalization therefore requires organizations to invest not only in technical knowledge but also in the continuous development of managerial, interpersonal, and ethical competencies that improve organizational performance and service quality ([6] & [7]).

The literature consistently recognizes that professional competence extends beyond technical expertise to include communication skills, negotiation capabilities, transparency, accountability, and commitment to legal compliance. These competencies facilitate effective interaction with clients, investors, financial institutions, and public authorities, thereby strengthening organizational reputation and reducing information asymmetries during real estate transactions. Ethical behavior also contributes to increasing customer trust, which is particularly relevant within tourism-oriented destinations where reputation and service quality significantly influence purchasing decisions ([6] & [7]).

Furthermore, organizations that encourage continuous professional development are better prepared to respond to regulatory changes, technological innovation, and evolving customer expectations. Continuous learning enables employees to acquire new technical and managerial competencies while fostering adaptability, innovation, and organizational commitment. Consequently, human capital development should be understood as a strategic investment capable of generating sustainable competitive advantages by improving organizational capabilities, customer satisfaction, and long-term business performance [3].

3. Technological Innovation (PropTech)

The third dimension identified corresponds to technological innovation through the incorporation of PropTech solutions. The reviewed literature indicates that digital transformation has significantly modified the operation of contemporary real estate firms by improving customer relationship management, property marketing, market analysis, and organizational decision-making. Rather than functioning merely as technological support tools, PropTech solutions integrate digital platforms, information systems, and analytical technologies that facilitate more efficient organizational processes and improve customer experience throughout the real estate transaction cycle [18].

Digital tools such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, virtual property tours, digital marketing platforms, geographic information systems, cloud computing, and data analytics increase organizational efficiency while enabling small brokerage firms to compete more effectively with larger national and international organizations. These technologies improve communication with clients, facilitate information management, reduce transaction times, and support evidence-based decision-making. Consequently, technological innovation should not be viewed merely as operational support but as a strategic organizational capability that contributes directly to competitiveness, innovation, and long-term sustainability [19].

Recent advances in artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and digital platforms have further transformed the real estate industry by facilitating automated property valuation, personalized customer services, market forecasting, and operational process optimization. The incorporation of these technologies allows organizations to improve productivity, increase transparency, and strengthen their competitive position within increasingly digitalized real estate markets ([18] & [19]).

4. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

The fourth dimension identified during the documentary analysis concerns legal and regulatory compliance. The review of the Real Estate Operations Law of the State of Jalisco and related institutional documentation demonstrated that legal certainty constitutes an essential component of professionalization. Compliance with legal requirements contributes to reducing organizational risk while promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical business practices throughout the real estate transaction process [9].

Compliance with professional regulations, contractual obligations, licensing requirements, ethical standards, and consumer protection legislation reduces legal risk while strengthening investor confidence and organizational legitimacy. For small-scale brokerage firms operating in tourism-oriented markets such as Puerto Vallarta, legal compliance becomes a competitive advantage rather than simply a regulatory obligation. Organizations that consistently operate under formal legal frameworks are more likely to establish long-term relationships with clients and investors because regulatory compliance enhances credibility, minimizes disputes, and increases confidence in real estate transactions [9].

Beyond meeting statutory obligations, legal compliance also contributes to the institutionalization of organizational practices by promoting standardized documentation, transparent contractual procedures, effective risk management, and professional accountability. Consequently, regulatory compliance should be understood as an organizational capability that strengthens governance, improves organizational legitimacy, and supports the long-term sustainability of small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating within highly competitive tourism-oriented markets [20].

3.2 Integrated Theoretical Model of Professionalization

The comparative analysis of the documentary evidence indicates that none of the four dimensions independently explains organizational professionalization. Instead, the findings suggest that professionalization results from the interaction among administrative management, human capital development, technological innovation, and legal compliance. This interaction reflects the multidimensional nature of organizational capabilities, where the integration of complementary resources contributes to greater organizational effectiveness and sustainable competitiveness [16].

Administrative management provides the organizational structure required to standardize operations and improve efficiency. Human capital contributes specialized knowledge and ethical behavior that strengthens organizational reputation. Technological innovation facilitates process optimization and strategic decision-making, whereas legal compliance ensures institutional legitimacy and reduces organizational risk. Together, these dimensions reinforce organizational adaptability, allowing firms to respond more effectively to changing market conditions and evolving stakeholder expectations [15].

Collectively, these dimensions create a dynamic organizational system that enhances competitiveness, operational performance, adaptability, and long-term sustainability within small-scale real estate brokerage firms. Rather than operating as independent elements, their combined implementation strengthens organizational resilience and supports the development

of sustainable competitive advantages in increasingly complex real estate markets [5]. These dimensions influence competitiveness in the following ways (see Table 2):

Table 2. Theoretical Dimensions of Real Estate Professionalization.

Professionalization Dimension	Key Components Identified	Organizational Contribution	Expected Competitive Impact
Administrative Management	Strategic planning, standardized procedures, process management	Operational efficiency	Organizational scalability
Human Capital and Ethics	Training, certification, ethical conduct	Service quality and organizational trust	Customer loyalty and reputation
Technological Innovation (PropTech)	CRM, digital marketing, data analytics, virtual platforms	Digital transformation	Market visibility and competitive positioning
Legal and Regulatory Compliance	Licensing, legal framework, professional standards	Legal certainty	Investor confidence and risk reduction

Note. Own elaboration based on the documentary analysis.

4 Discussion

The documentary analysis confirms that professionalization constitutes a multidimensional organizational process rather than an isolated managerial practice. The findings demonstrate that administrative management, human capital development, technological innovation, and legal compliance interact synergistically to strengthen the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of small-scale real estate brokerage firms. Consequently, professionalization should be understood as an organizational capability that enables firms to respond more effectively to increasingly dynamic and competitive market conditions. This finding reinforces the perspective that sustainable competitiveness emerges from the coordinated development of organizational capabilities that allow firms to adapt to increasingly complex business environments [16].

The first major finding supports the argument that organizational competitiveness depends primarily on internal capabilities rather than external market conditions. Although Puerto Vallarta offers favorable economic opportunities derived from sustained tourism growth and increasing real estate investment, the documentary evidence suggests that many small brokerage firms continue experiencing structural limitations associated with empirical management practices, limited strategic planning, and insufficient organizational formalization. These findings are consistent with the resource-based view proposed by [11], which argues that sustainable competitive advantages originate from valuable organizational resources and capabilities that competitors cannot easily replicate. Similarly, recent studies emphasize that firms with stronger organizational capabilities are better prepared to respond to environmental uncertainty and maintain long-term competitiveness, even in highly dynamic regional economies [5]. Therefore, organizational success depends not only on favorable market conditions but also on the firm's ability to transform internal resources into strategic capabilities.

Similarly, the results indicate that administrative management represents the structural foundation upon which professionalization is built. The implementation of standardized procedures, strategic planning, documented workflows, and performance monitoring contributes to improving operational efficiency while reducing organizational uncertainty. These findings are consistent with contemporary management theory, which recognizes process standardization as a critical factor for organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement [1]. Rather than increasing bureaucratic complexity, standardized management systems facilitate organizational learning, improve coordination among organizational functions, and support sustainable organizational growth. In addition, organizations that establish formal management systems tend to demonstrate greater operational consistency, more effective resource allocation, and improved decision-making processes, all of which contribute to long-term organizational performance ([15] & [17]).

Another relevant finding concerns the role of human capital in organizational professionalization. The documentary review demonstrated that professional competence extends beyond technical knowledge to include ethical behavior, communication skills, continuous training, and customer-oriented service. These elements are particularly important in real estate brokerage because client confidence, transparency, and credibility directly influence purchasing decisions and long-term business relationships. Consequently, professionalization contributes not only to operational performance but also to organizational legitimacy and market reputation. These findings are consistent with the human resource management literature, which recognizes continuous learning, competency development, and ethical conduct as strategic organizational assets that improve service quality, innovation, and long-term competitiveness ([21] & [3]). Likewise, the dynamic capabilities perspective suggests that organizations investing in the continuous development of employee knowledge and skills are better positioned to adapt to technological change and evolving market demands [22]. In service-based industries such as real estate brokerage, human capital therefore represents a critical source of differentiation because trust and professional expertise directly influence customer satisfaction and organizational performance [23].

The incorporation of technological innovation also emerged as one of the principal determinants of professionalization. The analysis indicates that PropTech tools—including Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, digital marketing platforms, virtual property tours, geographic information systems, and data analytics—have transformed the way real estate firms manage information, interact with clients, and make strategic decisions. Digital technologies therefore represent more than operational support; they constitute strategic organizational capabilities that improve productivity, expand market visibility, and facilitate competitiveness against larger national and international brokerage firms. Recent research highlights that digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the real estate industry by improving operational efficiency, supporting data-driven decision-making, and enhancing customer engagement through innovative digital solutions [19]. Similarly, organizations that effectively integrate digital technologies into their business processes are more likely to strengthen innovation capabilities and sustain competitive performance in rapidly changing environments [24].

Legal and regulatory compliance also proved to be an essential component of organizational professionalization. Within the context of Puerto Vallarta, compliance with the Real Estate Operations Law of the State of Jalisco provides legal certainty for both brokerage firms and property investors. Beyond fulfilling regulatory requirements, legal compliance strengthens organizational credibility, reduces operational risk, and promotes greater transparency in real estate transactions. These findings reinforce the idea that institutional legitimacy represents a strategic organizational asset rather than merely an administrative obligation. In addition, compliance with recognized professional standards contributes to strengthening governance, ethical conduct, and stakeholder confidence, particularly in markets characterized by increasing international investment and complex regulatory environments [20]. From an institutional perspective, organizations that align their operations with legal and professional standards improve their legitimacy while creating more stable conditions for sustainable organizational development [25].

Collectively, the four dimensions identified through the documentary analysis suggest that professionalization should be approached as an integrated organizational system. Administrative management establishes the operational structure; human capital strengthens organizational knowledge and ethical conduct; technological innovation enhances efficiency and adaptability; and legal compliance provides institutional legitimacy. The absence of any one of these dimensions weakens organizational resilience and reduces the firm's capacity to compete within highly dynamic tourism-oriented real estate markets.

Finally, this study contributes to the existing literature by proposing an integrated conceptual framework specifically focused on small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in tourism destinations. While previous studies have generally examined competitiveness, organizational management, or technological innovation independently, the present analysis demonstrates that professionalization emerges from the interaction of multiple organizational dimensions that collectively explain sustainable competitiveness. Consequently, the proposed framework provides a theoretical basis for future empirical research aimed at evaluating the relative influence of these dimensions on organizational performance, profitability, and long-term business sustainability.

Collectively, the four dimensions identified through the documentary analysis suggest that professionalization should be approached as an integrated organizational system. Administrative management establishes the operational structure; human capital strengthens organizational knowledge and ethical conduct; technological innovation enhances efficiency and adaptability; and legal compliance provides institutional legitimacy. Rather than functioning independently, these dimensions reinforce one another, creating organizational synergies that improve decision-making, operational effectiveness, and long-term competitiveness. The absence of any one of these dimensions weakens organizational resilience and reduces the firm's capacity to compete within highly dynamic tourism-oriented real estate markets. This systemic perspective is consistent with contemporary organizational theory, which emphasizes that sustainable competitive advantage depends on the effective integration and coordination of complementary organizational capabilities rather than on isolated managerial practices ([16], [5] & [22]).

Finally, this study contributes to the existing literature by proposing an integrated conceptual framework specifically focused on small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in tourism destinations. While previous studies have generally examined competitiveness, organizational management, or technological innovation independently, the present analysis demonstrates that professionalization emerges from the interaction of multiple organizational dimensions that collectively explain sustainable competitiveness. This integrated perspective extends previous research by highlighting the importance of aligning managerial, technological, human, and institutional capabilities within a single organizational framework. Consequently, the proposed framework provides a theoretical basis for future empirical research aimed at evaluating the relative influence of these dimensions on organizational performance, profitability, organizational resilience, and long-term business sustainability. Furthermore, it may serve as a conceptual reference for practitioners and policymakers seeking to design strategies that strengthen the competitiveness of small-scale real estate brokerage firms operating in increasingly dynamic tourism markets ([4] & [3]).

5 Conclusions

This study analyzed, from a theoretical perspective, the factors influencing the professionalization of small-scale real estate brokerage firms in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco. The documentary analysis confirmed that professionalization should not be understood as an isolated managerial practice or limited exclusively to technical training. Instead, it represents a multidimensional organizational process that integrates administrative management, human capital development, technological innovation, and legal compliance as complementary capabilities that collectively strengthen organizational competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

The findings demonstrate that the professionalization of small-scale brokerage firms depends primarily on the development of internal organizational capabilities rather than exclusively on favorable market conditions. Although Puerto Vallarta continues to experience sustained growth in tourism and real estate investment, many independent brokerage firms remain vulnerable because of empirical administrative practices, limited strategic planning, insufficient technological adoption, and weak organizational formalization. Consequently, strengthening these internal dimensions becomes essential for improving organizational resilience and ensuring long-term business continuity.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the existing literature by proposing an integrated conceptual framework that explains the interaction among the four critical dimensions of professionalization. Unlike previous studies that have generally examined administrative management, competitiveness, technological innovation, or legal compliance independently, the present research demonstrates that these dimensions operate as an interconnected organizational system whose effectiveness depends on their simultaneous implementation. Therefore, the proposed framework provides a comprehensive perspective that may support future theoretical and empirical studies on professionalization within the real estate sector.

The study also offers practical implications for managers, entrepreneurs, professional associations, and public institutions involved in the real estate industry. The proposed framework may serve as a strategic reference for designing organizational improvement programs, strengthening managerial capabilities, promoting continuous professional development, encouraging the adoption of PropTech solutions, and reinforcing compliance with the regulatory framework governing real estate brokerage activities. Collectively, these actions may contribute to increasing operational efficiency, improving organizational credibility, attracting greater investor confidence, and enhancing the competitiveness of small-scale brokerage firms operating in tourism-oriented destinations.

It is important to acknowledge that this research is limited by its documentary and theoretical nature. Consequently, the proposed conceptual framework has not yet been empirically validated. Future studies should examine the relative influence of each professionalization dimension through quantitative and mixed-method approaches, allowing researchers to evaluate their effects on organizational performance, profitability, customer satisfaction, business resilience, and long-term competitiveness. Comparative studies involving other

tourism destinations in Mexico and Latin America would also contribute to extending the external validity of the proposed model.

In conclusion, professionalization should no longer be considered an optional organizational initiative but rather a strategic capability that enables small-scale real estate brokerage firms to adapt successfully to increasingly competitive, technologically dynamic, and highly regulated business environments. Organizations capable of integrating administrative excellence, qualified human capital, technological innovation, and regulatory compliance will be better positioned to generate sustainable competitive advantages and contribute to the long-term development of regional real estate markets.

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