

MARKETING AMBIDEXTERITY RESEARCH: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

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Abstract. This study systematically reviews the development of marketing ambidexterity research and proposes a future research agenda by examining publication trends, antecedents, consequences, and existing research gaps. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach using the Scopus database. The search focused on reputable English-language journal articles published between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2025. Of the 278 articles initially identified, 45 were selected for in-depth analysis. Bibliometric analysis and thematic synthesis were conducted to map publication trends, dominant themes, conceptual relationships, and future research directions. The findings indicate that marketing ambidexterity has increasingly been examined through the perspectives of market-driven orientation, market-driving orientation, digital marketing capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, and small and medium-sized enterprise performance. The main antecedents include entrepreneurial orientation, online marketing capabilities, digital capabilities, market knowledge, and cross-functional capabilities. Its primary consequences include business performance, innovation performance, competitive advantage, and sustainable competitive advantage. This review is limited to reputable English-language journal articles published within the specified period. Future studies should develop more robust measurement models, employ longitudinal and multilevel research designs, and extend the investigation to emerging markets, small and medium-sized enterprises, service industries, digital platforms, and crisis contexts. This study contributes to the literature by synthesizing fragmented knowledge on marketing ambidexterity and clarifying its antecedents, consequences, theoretical gaps, and future research agenda. It also provides practical insights for designing adaptive, data-driven, and innovation-oriented marketing strategies.

Keywords: Marketing ambidexterity; marketing exploration; marketing exploitation; SME performance; systematic literature review.

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly dynamic global business environment has placed firms under growing strategic pressure to balance short-term efficiency with long-term innovation. Digital transformation, advances in data-driven technologies, intensifying competition, and changing customer expectations have fundamentally altered how organizations create, deliver, and sustain value in the marketplace (Paul et al., 2024; Saeed et al., 2023). Under these conditions, firms can no longer rely solely on exploiting their existing marketing capabilities; they must also explore new market opportunities to maintain sustainable competitive advantage. The tension between exploitation and exploration has therefore positioned ambidexterity as an important concept in strategic management, particularly when applied to the marketing domain (Vlašić et al., 2024).

In the marketing context, marketing ambidexterity refers to a firm's ability to simultaneously manage marketing exploitation and marketing exploration across various marketing functions, including product development, promotion, segmentation, targeting, pricing, and customer service (Ho et al., 2020). Marketing exploitation focuses on leveraging existing market knowledge, customer insights, and

marketing resources to improve efficiency and responsiveness to current market needs. In contrast, marketing exploration emphasizes the pursuit of new opportunities through market innovation, capability development, and the creation of value for future customers.

Within the market orientation framework, marketing ambidexterity can also be understood through two primary components: market-driven orientation and market-driving orientation. Market-driven orientation reflects a firm's ability to understand and respond to existing market needs, whereas market-driving orientation emphasizes the organization's capacity to proactively shape new market directions and influence customer preferences (Tolstoy et al., 2022). Accordingly, marketing ambidexterity enables firms to maintain stability in existing markets while simultaneously creating new opportunities for future growth.

From a strategic perspective, marketing ambidexterity has become increasingly relevant because it helps explain how firms improve performance, innovation, and competitive advantage in rapidly changing business environments. Firms that effectively combine marketing exploitation and exploration are generally more adaptive to market dynamics, more responsive to customer needs, and better positioned to

create new growth opportunities. In the digital context, this capability has become particularly important because online marketing capabilities, big data analytics, and artificial intelligence-based capabilities enable firms to acquire market intelligence more rapidly and accurately, thereby supporting more effective marketing decision-making (Chen et al., 2024; Jing et al., 2023). Moreover, ambidextrous capabilities provide firms with opportunities to develop continuous innovation by combining the effective use of existing resources with the development of new capabilities (Weiss & Kanbach, 2022).

Despite its strong strategic relevance, the implementation of marketing ambidexterity continues to face conceptual and empirical challenges. Exploitation and exploration require different strategic logics, organizational structures, resource allocation mechanisms, and learning processes, which may create internal tensions within organizations (Kim et al., 2022). While several studies have demonstrated that ambidexterity can enhance firm performance, other studies have found that balancing exploration and exploitation does not always generate positive outcomes, particularly when firms lack sufficient adaptive capabilities (Su et al., 2022). These inconsistent findings suggest that the effectiveness of marketing ambidexterity depends heavily on contextual factors, including environmental dynamism, digital readiness, managerial capabilities, industry characteristics, and organizational capacity to manage strategic paradoxes (Peters & Buijs, 2022; Van Neerijnen et al., 2022).

Beyond implementation challenges, the literature on marketing ambidexterity also reveals several important research gaps. First, inconsistencies remain in the terminology and conceptualization of marketing ambidexterity, organizational ambidexterity, dynamic marketing capabilities, market-driven orientation, and market-driving orientation. These conceptual differences may create ambiguity in construct operationalization and empirical measurement (Supriharyanti & Sukoco, 2022; Zahoor et al., 2024).

Second, knowledge in this field remains fragmented across several disciplines, including strategic management, digital marketing, entrepreneurship, innovation, and international business. Consequently, an integrative framework that comprehensively explains the relationships among the antecedents, mechanisms, and consequences of marketing ambidexterity is still lacking (Felicetti et al., 2024; Pfajfar et al., 2024).

Third, limited attention has been given to micro-foundational perspectives, individual roles, managerial decision-making, small and medium-sized enterprises, and emerging-market contexts. These aspects are essential for understanding how ambidextrous capabilities are developed and implemented in organizational practice (Annosi et al., 2024).

In response to these gaps, this study conducts a systematic literature review of the development of marketing ambidexterity research and formulates a future research agenda. More specifically, the study addresses the following research questions: RQ1: How have the trends and intellectual structure of marketing ambidexterity research developed in the academic literature?, RQ2: What are the relationships among marketing ambidexterity, its antecedents, and its consequences for firm

performance?, RQ3: How can identified research gaps and future research directions in the marketing ambidexterity literature strengthen the development of marketing theory and practice?

This study makes several important contributions. First, it provides a systematic synthesis of marketing ambidexterity as a distinct marketing construct rather than merely an extension of organizational ambidexterity. Second, it integrates multiple theoretical perspectives, including Dynamic Capabilities Theory, the Resource-Based View, and Paradox Theory, to explain how firms manage the tension between marketing exploitation and exploration (Carmine & De Marchi, 2023; Urbano et al., 2022).

Third, this study identifies patterns in empirical findings, inconsistencies in previous results, and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of marketing ambidexterity. Fourth, it develops a future research agenda that can guide subsequent studies, particularly in relation to digital transformation, adaptive marketing capabilities, small and medium-sized enterprises, emerging markets, and the management of strategic paradoxes in marketing.

Overall, this study is expected to enrich the strategic marketing literature while providing practical implications for organizations seeking to design marketing strategies that are adaptive, innovative, and sustainable.

Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory provide the primary theoretical foundations for understanding marketing ambidexterity as a strategic capability that enables firms to create and sustain competitive advantage. The RBV emphasizes that firms can achieve superior performance when they effectively manage resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable. These resources may include marketing capabilities, customer knowledge, brand reputation, digital technologies, and market analytics capabilities.

In the context of marketing ambidexterity, these resources provide the foundation for firms to exploit existing markets while simultaneously exploring new market opportunities. However, the possession of strategic resources alone is insufficient in a dynamic business environment. Firms must also be capable of integrating, developing, and reconfiguring their marketing resources to remain aligned with changes in markets, technologies, and consumer behavior. Dynamic Capabilities Theory is therefore relevant because it explains how firms use big data analytics, online marketing capabilities, and artificial intelligence-based capabilities to strengthen marketing exploitation and marketing exploration simultaneously (Dayangan & Aykol, 2024).

In the context of *Marketing Ambidexterity Research: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda*, the integration of the RBV and Dynamic Capabilities Theory is important because it explains how marketing resources can be transformed into ambidextrous capabilities that influence business performance, innovation outcomes, and sustainable competitive advantage. The RBV explains “what” strategic resources a firm possesses, whereas Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains “how” those resources are developed,

integrated, and reconfigured in response to environmental changes.

Accordingly, marketing ambidexterity can be understood as a higher-order capability that depends not only on the availability of strategic resources but also on the organization's ability to manage and reconfigure those resources adaptively in continuously changing markets.

Organizational Learning Theory

Organizational Learning Theory complements the capability-based perspective by explaining marketing ambidexterity as an organizational learning process. From this perspective, marketing exploitation refers to the utilization of existing market knowledge to improve efficiency, enhance responsiveness to current customers, and strengthen established marketing capabilities. By contrast, marketing exploration involves the acquisition of new knowledge through experimentation, innovation, learning from new markets, and identifying previously unrealized opportunities.

Exploitation and exploration are therefore not merely two different marketing strategies but also two distinct modes of organizational learning that must be managed in a balanced manner. This balance enables firms to maintain short-term performance while simultaneously developing long-term adaptability (Liu et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024).

In this study, Organizational Learning Theory is relevant for explaining how firms acquire, interpret, share, and apply market knowledge in developing ambidextrous capabilities. Firms that effectively learn from their current customers are likely to be more successful in implementing a market-driven orientation. Meanwhile, firms that are capable of exploring new knowledge are better prepared to develop a market-driving orientation.

Therefore, Organizational Learning Theory provides a foundation for understanding how market learning, organizational learning, and knowledge management function as important mechanisms linking marketing ambidexterity to innovation, competitive advantage, and firm performance.

Market Orientation Theory

Market Orientation Theory provides the most specific theoretical foundation for explaining the marketing dimensions of marketing ambidexterity. In the marketing literature, market orientation is generally understood as a firm's ability to understand customer needs, monitor market changes, and respond to competitive dynamics.

Within the context of marketing ambidexterity, this theory distinguishes between two primary orientations: market-driven orientation and market-driving orientation. Market-driven orientation represents the logic of exploitation because it focuses on understanding and responding to existing customer needs. In contrast, market-driving orientation represents the logic of exploration because it emphasizes a firm's ability to shape new markets, create customer preferences, and proactively change the rules of competition (Tolstoy et al., 2022).

The relevance of Market Orientation Theory to this study lies in its ability to clarify that marketing ambidexterity is not merely the application of organizational ambidexterity to the marketing function. Instead, it represents a strategic marketing construct characterized by a specific market logic. Firms must

not only understand and satisfy current customer needs but also develop the capacity to create new needs and influence future market developments.

Thus, Market Orientation Theory strengthens the positioning of this study within the marketing domain by explaining how marketing exploitation and marketing exploration are translated into distinct but complementary market orientations.

Contingency Theory Perspective

The Contingency Theory perspective is important for explaining why the effects of marketing ambidexterity on firm performance are not always consistent across empirical studies. This perspective emphasizes that the effectiveness of an organizational strategy or capability depends on the fit between a firm's internal characteristics and its external environmental conditions.

In the context of marketing ambidexterity, factors such as environmental dynamism, competitive intensity, firm size, industry characteristics, digital readiness, degree of internationalization, and resource constraints may determine whether exploitation or exploration produces a stronger effect on performance. In relatively stable environments, the exploitation of existing markets may generate benefits through greater efficiency and more effective utilization of current customer relationships. By contrast, in turbulent and highly competitive environments, exploration becomes increasingly important because firms must create new opportunities and adapt to rapid market changes (Hoque et al., 2022; Su et al., 2022).

In this study, the contingency perspective explains variations in previous findings concerning the relationship between marketing ambidexterity and firm performance. Several studies suggest that marketing ambidexterity can improve performance, whereas others report inconsistent outcomes when firms lack adequate adaptive capabilities or when environmental conditions do not support the implementation of ambidextrous strategies.

Accordingly, Contingency Theory strengthens the future research agenda by emphasizing the importance of examining moderating factors such as market turbulence, competitive intensity, digital readiness, and industry characteristics. This perspective also offers practical implications by suggesting that managers should not implement marketing ambidexterity uniformly. Instead, they must adjust the balance between exploitation and exploration according to their organization's characteristics and business environment.

Integrative Theoretical Positioning

Based on the integration of these theoretical perspectives, this study positions marketing ambidexterity as a strategic marketing capability developed through resource management, market learning, market orientation, and adaptation to environmental conditions. The RBV and Dynamic Capabilities Theory explain the strategic resources and capability-reconfiguration processes that enable firms to engage in both exploitation and exploration.

Organizational Learning Theory explains how market knowledge is acquired, developed, shared, and applied to support both activities. Market Orientation Theory clarifies the marketing dimension of ambidexterity through market-driven

and market-driving orientations. Meanwhile, Contingency Theory explains why the effectiveness of marketing ambidexterity varies across industries, firm sizes, market conditions, and levels of digital readiness.

Thus, the theoretical framework adopted in this study explains marketing ambidexterity not only as a balance between exploitation and exploration but also as a strategic mechanism linking its antecedents, organizational processes, and firm performance outcomes. This theoretical integration provides a strong foundation for addressing the three research questions concerning the development of research trends and intellectual structures, the relationships among antecedents, marketing ambidexterity, and firm performance, and the identification of research gaps and future research directions.

Theoretically, this framework contributes to clarifying the position of marketing ambidexterity as a distinct marketing construct. Practically, it helps managers understand that the success of ambidextrous marketing strategies depends on the firm's ability to manage strategic resources, learn from the market, develop dual market orientations, and adjust its strategies to changing business environments.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to synthesize the literature on marketing ambidexterity. This approach enables the systematic identification and integration of previous findings concerning the balance between marketing exploitation and marketing exploration, while also mapping the development of the literature, conceptual structures, relationships among variables, and future research agendas in the field of strategic marketing (Page et al., 2021; Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003).

Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature was collected from an academic database, focusing on English-language journal articles addressing marketing ambidexterity and related constructs. The search was limited to Q1 journal articles, with a minimum citation threshold of zero and a publication period from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2025. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords and Boolean search strings, including marketing ambidexterity, market-driven orientation, market-driving orientation, marketing exploitation, marketing exploration, ambidextrous marketing capabilities, dual market orientation, and combinations of exploration, exploitation, and marketing (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020; Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Bibliometric analysis was conducted separately to map general trends in the literature, including publications by year, citation impact, top terms, and major themes, based on the retrieved dataset. Accordingly, bibliometric visualizations were used to illustrate the structure and development of the literature, whereas the thematic synthesis focused on the most relevant final articles (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

To ensure transparency and replicability, the inclusion and exclusion criteria are summarized in Table 1 (Page et al., 2021; Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Details
Inclusion	
Database	Scopus
Search query	The search strategy used a combination of keywords and Boolean operators applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords: ("marketing ambidexterity" OR "ambidextrous marketing capabilities" OR "dual market orientation" OR "market-driven orientation" OR "market-driven approach" OR "market-driving orientation" OR "market-driving approach" OR ("marketing exploitation" AND "marketing exploration") OR ("exploration" AND "exploitation" AND "marketing"))
Publication period	January 1, 2020–December 31, 2025
Journal quality	Q1 journals
Minimum citations	0 citations
Research areas	Marketing, Strategic Marketing, Digital Marketing, Innovation Management, Entrepreneurship, Dynamic Capabilities, SME Performance
Document type	Journal articles
Language	English
Screening basis	Title, abstract, keywords, and full-text relevance
Records identified	278 documents
Exclusion	
Not relevant to the research focus	Articles that did not directly address marketing ambidexterity or related marketing constructs
Outside the marketing context	Articles discussing ambidexterity without clear marketing implications
Not meeting the eligibility criteria	Articles not aligned with journal quality, document type, language, or research questions
Records excluded	233 documents
Final SLR sample	45 documents

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure the relevance and quality of the articles analyzed. Articles that did not meet the research focus, were not situated within the marketing context, or did not satisfy the eligibility criteria were excluded from the analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RQ1: How Have the Trends and Intellectual Structure of Marketing Ambidexterity Research Evolved in the Academic Literature?

The annual distribution of publications shows a consistent upward trend from 2021 to 2025. The number of publications increased from seven articles in 2021 to 11 articles in 2022, followed by 18 articles in 2023 and 21 articles in 2024. The most substantial increase occurred in 2025, when the number of publications reached 35 articles. This trend indicates that marketing ambidexterity has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly during the final year of the analysis period.

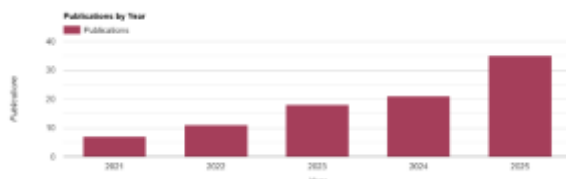


Figure 1. Annual Distribution of Publications (2021–2025)

The average number of citations per publication generally declined between 2021 and 2025. The highest average was recorded in 2021, at 47.143 citations per publication, before decreasing to 35.364 in 2022 and 28.389 in 2023. In 2024, the average citation count increased slightly to 29.095, before falling sharply to 7.229 in 2025.

This pattern is likely attributable to citation-window effects. Earlier publications have had more time to accumulate citations, whereas more recent publications have had relatively limited time to generate a comparable academic impact. Therefore, the lower citation average in 2025 should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of lower research quality or relevance.

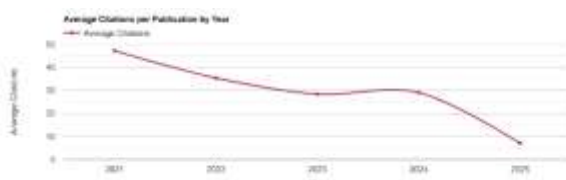


Figure 2. Average Citations per Publication by Year (2021–2025)

The word cloud indicates that the marketing ambidexterity literature is dominated by terms such as *performance*, *innovation*, *firm*, *market*, *digital*, *capabilities*, and *marketing*. The prominence of these terms suggests that research in this field primarily concentrates on the relationships among firm performance, innovation, organizational capabilities, market orientation, and digital transformation.

Other frequently appearing terms, including *exploration*, *exploitation*, *value creation*, and *competitive*, further demonstrate that the literature focuses on how firms balance the pursuit of new opportunities with the utilization of existing resources to create value and establish competitive advantage.



Figure 3. Keyword Frequency Word Cloud in the Marketing Ambidexterity Literature

The thematic distribution shows that the largest proportion of the literature addresses the relationship between market-driven and market-driving orientations, accounting for 22% of the identified themes. This is followed by digital marketing capability at 19%, entrepreneurial orientation at 17%, online marketing and SME performance at 15%, dynamic capabilities at 14%, and organizational ambidexterity at 13%.

These findings indicate that marketing ambidexterity research primarily focuses on dual market orientation, digital capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, SME performance, and organizational capabilities for responding to changing market conditions. The distribution also demonstrates the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of the field, particularly through its intersection with digital transformation, entrepreneurship, innovation, and strategic management.

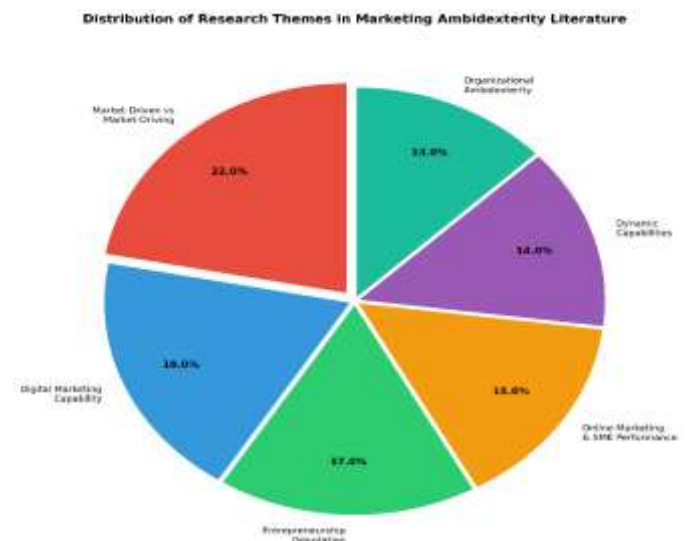


Figure 4. Thematic Distribution of Marketing Ambidexterity Research

RQ2: What Are the Relationships Among Marketing Ambidexterity, Its Antecedents, and Its Consequences for Firm Performance?

The synthesis indicates that marketing ambidexterity is shaped by several strategic antecedents, particularly entrepreneurial orientation, online marketing capability, digital capabilities, dynamic capabilities, market knowledge, and cross-functional capabilities. Entrepreneurial orientation encourages firms to become more innovative, proactive, and willing to take risks when developing new marketing strategies. It therefore strengthens their capacity to identify market opportunities, develop new products, and respond rapidly to environmental changes (Ramadani et al., 2025).

Online marketing capability expands a firm's capacity to manage relationships with existing customers while simultaneously reaching new market segments through digital platforms (Tolstoy et al., 2022). Digital capabilities and big data analytics also function as important sources of market intelligence, enabling firms to process market information more accurately and support marketing exploration and exploitation simultaneously (Saeed et al., 2023). Collectively, these antecedents provide an important foundation for the development of ambidextrous marketing capabilities oriented toward market adaptation, innovation, and value creation.

At the construct level, marketing ambidexterity operates through two principal mechanisms: market-driven orientation and market-driving orientation. Market-driven orientation reflects a firm's capacity to understand and respond to current customer needs, whereas market-driving orientation represents its ability to proactively shape new market preferences and create future growth opportunities (Ho et al., 2020).

These orientations represent the complementary logics of marketing exploitation and marketing exploration. In new product development, balancing customer-driven and customer-driving strategies is important because firms must utilize existing customer knowledge while simultaneously influencing future market preferences (Khan et al., 2021).

However, the contributions of these two dimensions to firm performance are not always equivalent. Several studies indicate that market-driving orientation may exert a stronger influence on performance because it is associated with innovation, differentiation, and new-market creation. By contrast, market-driven orientation may not produce a significant direct effect when firms focus exclusively on existing customer needs in highly dynamic environments (Adiwijaya et al., 2020; Ho et al., 2020).

The primary consequences of marketing ambidexterity include improved business performance, marketing performance, innovation performance, competitive advantage, and sustainable competitive advantage. Firms capable of balancing marketing exploitation and exploration tend to be more adaptive to market changes, more effective in creating customer value, and better positioned to maintain competitive advantage.

The literature further indicates that these relationships are strengthened by the development of market knowledge, cross-functional capabilities, and adaptation to rapidly changing task environments (Chigori et al., 2024). The concept of data ambidexterity also demonstrates that combining small data and big data can enhance marketing innovation. Firms should not depend exclusively on large-scale datasets but should also develop a deeper understanding of individual customer experiences and contextual market information (Gnizy, 2025).

The development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence capabilities further strengthens the role of marketing ambidexterity as a strategic capability that links organizational resources, innovation, and firm performance (Chen et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, the relationship between marketing ambidexterity and firm performance is contingent rather than universal. Factors such as environmental dynamism, competitive intensity, absorptive capacity, business model

innovation, firm size, industry characteristics, degree of internationalization, and emerging-market conditions may strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of ambidextrous strategies.

These findings suggest that marketing ambidexterity should not be understood as a universal formula that automatically generates superior performance. Instead, its effectiveness depends on the alignment between environmental conditions and a firm's internal capabilities (Abuseta et al., 2025; Hoque et al., 2022; Lisboa et al., 2025; Restuputri et al., 2024).

Research conducted at the individual, team, organizational, and interorganizational levels further indicates that ambidextrous capabilities are influenced by learning processes, coordination mechanisms, and decision-making among organizational actors (Burkert & Grossrieder, 2026; Melkić, 2025; Serrano-Bedia & Pérez-Pérez, 2021). Therefore, the relationships among strategic antecedents, marketing ambidexterity, and firm performance should be understood as dynamic processes shaped by internal capabilities, technological developments, and market conditions.

RQ3: How Can Research Gaps and Future Research Directions in the Marketing Ambidexterity Literature Strengthen Marketing Theory and Practice?

The first major gap in the marketing ambidexterity literature concerns the absence of a strong theoretical consensus regarding the relationships among market-driven orientation, market-driving orientation, and firm performance. Although business performance is the most frequently examined consequence, empirical findings remain inconsistent.

Market-driving orientation generally appears to have a stronger influence on performance because it enables firms to create trends, develop new products, shape customer preferences, and proactively generate growth opportunities (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2022; Muis et al., 2025). By contrast, market-driven orientation does not always exert a direct effect on performance because responding to current customer needs may be insufficient to generate competitive advantage in highly dynamic environments (Hughes, 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the need to conceptualize marketing ambidexterity as a multidimensional construct that integrates market orientation, dynamic capabilities, organizational learning, and customer value creation within a unified framework. Future studies should therefore examine how market-driven and market-driving orientations interact, evolve, and generate value under different environmental conditions (Hoque et al., 2022; Oduro & De Nisco, 2024).

The second gap concerns the limited understanding of the boundary conditions that determine the effectiveness of marketing ambidexterity. The effect of ambidextrous strategies on performance is not universal but depends on contextual factors such as environmental uncertainty, market turbulence, competitive intensity, firm size, industry sector, degree of internationalization, digital capabilities, and organizational knowledge-management capacity.

Market uncertainty may influence ambidexterity, but the effects of environmental and technological uncertainty on the

development of ambidextrous capabilities remain inconsistent (Restuputri et al., 2024). Market turbulence may strengthen the effect of digital technologies on firm agility, but it does not necessarily moderate the relationships among digital technologies, absorptive capacity, and business model innovation (Abuseta et al., 2025).

In international markets, market opportunities and the degree of internationalization may also determine whether ambidexterity strengthens or weakens firm performance (Lisboa et al., 2025). From a managerial perspective, these findings imply that firms must align the balance between exploitation and exploration with market conditions, digital readiness, resource structures, and competitive pressures.

Future studies should consequently expand their empirical examinations to underrepresented settings, including Africa, Latin America, emerging markets, service industries, platform businesses, digital innovation ecosystems, and crisis conditions. African and emerging-market contexts are particularly relevant for understanding the roles of institutional support and sociopolitical dynamics (Mansouri & Kaswengi, 2025). Meanwhile, digital innovation ecosystems and crisis situations provide opportunities to examine the roles of digital capabilities and strategic flexibility in international marketing (De Fano et al., 2026; Zahoor & Lew, 2023).

The third research gap relates to methodological limitations, multilevel analysis, and technological integration. Marketing ambidexterity cannot be adequately explained by examining exploration and exploitation separately because the two operate through dynamic interactions among organizational capabilities, market learning, and value creation.

Future research should therefore develop more precise measurement models capable of capturing the interaction, balance, and combined effects of market-driven and market-driving orientations. To strengthen the validity and explanatory power of empirical findings, future studies should employ mixed-methods designs, meta-analysis, multilevel models, simulations, and longitudinal approaches. These methods would provide a more comprehensive explanation of ambidextrous capabilities at the individual, team, organizational, and interorganizational levels (Burkert & Grossrieder, 2026; Sannö et al., 2024).

Digital transformation and business model innovation also constitute important research priorities because they may enhance a firm's ability to respond adaptively to market changes (Chen et al., 2024). The development of artificial intelligence capabilities creates further opportunities to investigate how technology enables firms to balance the exploitation of existing markets with the exploration of new opportunities, particularly in export and international marketing contexts (Kumar et al., 2025).

Customer orientation and innovation also remain important for explaining how marketing strategies are converted into business growth in international markets (Tuominen et al., 2023). Overall, these research gaps demonstrate the need for more integrative conceptualization, context-sensitive empirical testing, and methodologically rigorous research. For practitioners, the proposed research agenda provides a foundation for designing marketing strategies that are adaptive,

innovative, data-driven, and responsive to changes in the contemporary business environment.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study synthesized the development of the marketing ambidexterity literature through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine research trends, the relationships between antecedents and performance outcomes, and the principal research gaps and directions for future inquiry. The findings demonstrate that marketing ambidexterity has emerged as an important construct in strategic marketing because it explains how firms balance marketing exploitation and marketing exploration amid market turbulence, digital transformation, and increasing competitive pressure. The reviewed literature shows a growing emphasis on market-driven orientation, market-driving orientation, digital capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, SME performance, innovation, and competitive advantage. The synthesis indicates that marketing ambidexterity is shaped by several strategic antecedents, including entrepreneurial orientation, online marketing capability, digital capabilities, dynamic capabilities, market knowledge, and cross-functional capabilities. The construct operates through two primary mechanisms. Market-driven orientation focuses on understanding and responding to current market needs, whereas market-driving orientation emphasizes a firm's ability to shape customer preferences and create new market opportunities proactively. The principal consequences of marketing ambidexterity include improvements in business performance, marketing performance, innovation performance, competitive advantage, and sustainable competitive advantage. However, these relationships are contingent rather than universal. The effectiveness of marketing ambidexterity is influenced by environmental dynamism, competitive intensity, digital readiness, absorptive capacity, industry characteristics, firm size, and the degree of internationalization. Marketing ambidexterity should therefore be understood as a context-dependent strategic capability whose value is determined by the alignment between a firm's internal capabilities and its external business environment. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by clarifying the position of marketing ambidexterity as a multidimensional marketing construct that is conceptually distinct from organizational ambidexterity in general. The integration of the Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, Market Orientation Theory, and Contingency Theory provides a comprehensive conceptual foundation for explaining how strategic resources, market learning, market orientation, and environmental conditions shape ambidextrous marketing capabilities. This theoretical integration reinforces the view that the effectiveness of marketing ambidexterity depends not only on achieving a balance between exploration and exploitation but also on a firm's ability to configure its resources, develop market knowledge, coordinate organizational functions, and adapt its marketing strategies to internal and external conditions. The study therefore strengthens the theoretical positioning of marketing ambidexterity as a strategic mechanism that connects organizational resources and capabilities with

innovation and performance outcomes. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that managers should develop marketing strategies that are not only responsive to current customer needs but also proactive in creating new market opportunities. Firms need to strengthen their digital marketing capabilities, market intelligence systems, innovation processes, and cross-functional coordination to respond more adaptively to changing market conditions. For SMEs and firms operating in emerging markets, marketing ambidexterity is particularly relevant because resource limitations and competitive pressures require them to balance short-term efficiency with long-term innovation. Managers should avoid allocating resources exclusively to either exploitation or exploration. Instead, they should develop a context-sensitive balance that reflects the firm's strategic priorities, technological readiness, competitive environment, and resource availability. This study has several limitations. First, the review was restricted to English-language journal articles published in Q1 journals during a specified publication period. Second, the analysis relied on a single bibliographic database, which may have excluded relevant studies indexed elsewhere. Third, the application of predetermined eligibility criteria may have limited the representation of studies from certain geographical, industrial, and methodological contexts. Future research should therefore expand the range of databases, geographical contexts, industrial sectors, and publication types included in systematic reviews. Subsequent studies should also develop more precise measurement models to capture the interaction, balance, and combined effects of marketing exploration and marketing exploitation. Longitudinal research designs are needed to explain how marketing ambidexterity develops and changes over time. Mixed-methods studies may provide a deeper understanding of the organizational processes through which firms manage tensions between exploitation and exploration. Meta-analytical research is also needed to assess the magnitude and consistency of relationships among the antecedents, dimensions, and outcomes of marketing ambidexterity across different empirical settings. Furthermore, multilevel approaches should be employed to examine marketing ambidexterity at the individual, team, organizational, and interorganizational levels. Future studies should also investigate the roles of artificial intelligence, digital platforms, data analytics, digital innovation ecosystems, and crisis conditions in shaping ambidextrous marketing capabilities. Overall, marketing ambidexterity represents a significant strategic capability for firms seeking to maintain current market performance while simultaneously developing new sources of growth. Its theoretical and practical relevance is expected to increase as organizations face accelerating technological change, more complex customer expectations, and increasingly uncertain competitive environments.

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