

Strategic Ambidexterity in Volatile Markets: How Organizational Learning Mechanisms Enable Simultaneous Exploration and Exploitation

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ABSTRACT

Strategic ambidexterity is the ability to focus an organization in the face of a volatile business environment on both explosion (coping with new situations) and exploitation (effectiveness). The research examines the contribution of the organizational mechanism of learning including emotional intelligence (EQ), locus of control (LOC), and knowledge sharing towards supporting strategic ambidexterity. Using the descriptive and correlational research design, a sample of 150 mid and senior level managers in different industries was surveyed to determine the relationship between emotional intelligent, locus of control and ambidexterity. The results show a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence, locus of control and both exploitation and exploration activities and also internal locus of control came out the strongest factor. This study also reveals that knowledge sharing and adaptability by the organizations are very important indicators that can maintain ambidexterity in a strategy, especially in a volatile market. The research findings are valuable in guiding organizations seeking to handle a complex market setting through establishment of a balance between newness and the achievement of efficiencies. The study highlights the individual characteristics as well as organizational learning practices in attaining strategic ambidexterity which forms part and parcel of remaining competitive.

Keywords: Strategic Ambidexterity, Organizational Learning, Emotional Intelligence, Locus of Control, Exploration, Exploitation, Knowledge Sharing, Volatile Markets



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INTRODUCTION

Organizations are now contending with the increasing issue of surviving in a volatile business environment and staying competitive. The markets are becoming more unpredictable and therefore the organization needs to build the capacity to respond in a dynamic manner as well as optimize efficiency. Such a necessity of strategic ambidexterity, which allows organizations to balance between exploration (innovation and new opportunities) and exploitation (improving of existing capabilities), is more acute than ever. Researchers have noted that those firms that will be able to find an efficient balance

between both are better positioned to succeed in turbulent markets (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006; Jansen, Van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2005). Organizational learning mechanisms (such as leadership, knowledge sharing, adaptability, and emotional intelligence) are some of the critical factors that maintain the availability of this balance (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Teece & Pisano, 1994). Through such mechanisms, organizations are able to synchronize their processes not only to be innovative but also to streamline the efficiency in their operations to realize the long-term success (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Wang, Li, Qiao,

& Sun, 2010). It is important to understand how these processes work to enable firms with the objective of maintaining a competitive edge in the current highly turbulent environment.

The overall purpose of this study is to identify how organizational learning mechanisms facilitate strategic ambidexterity under volatile markets. Particularly, it focuses on the effect of emotional intelligence (EQ) and locus of control (LOC) among organizational members in the ability to strike the balance of exploration and exploitation. The research will also aim at identifying the organizational learning practices that are most useful in supporting such ambidextrous strategy. The study has the objectives as follows:

1. To determine the correlations between emotional intelligence (EQ) with locus of control (LOC), strategic ambidexterity.
2. Exploring the extent of influence of organizational learning mechanisms such as knowledge sharing, leadership, adaptability in ensuring a healthy balance of exploration and exploitation within the organization.
3. To reveal the industry-specific peculiarities of how organizations can explore and exploit options, namely, technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and retail sectors (Kristal, Huang, & Roth, 2010; Rh e aum e and Gardoni, 2015).

This research has two aims:

To complement the current literature by contributing to the understanding of the importance of personal and organizational aspects of promoting strategic ambidexterity. Although past studies have investigated the topic of ambidexterity there is little knowledge on how ambidexterity is performed in turbulent market incidents. By putting a particular emphasis on personal traits, such as emotional intelligence and locus of control, and organizational learning processes, such as knowledge sharing and adaptability, this work addresses a significant knowledge gap in the body of scientific research (Jansen, Simsek, & Cao, 2012; Mitra, Gaur, & Giacosa, 2019). To present viable suggestions to managers and organizational heads that can be used to create and effect learning processes that encourage ambidextrous behavior within organizations. The results will assist managers in realizing what are some of the skills and practices to be capitalized upon in order to improve both innovation and efficiency in their respective companies (Love, Roper, & Vahter, 2014; Lawson & Samson, 2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW

To gain a better idea about how strategic ambidexterity links with organization-learning mechanisms amidst volatile markets, the study of some key research on the topic is worth examining. The literature review examines core principles in strategic ambidexterity, organizational learning, and such aspects as exploration and exploitation. It explores how volatility in the environment affects organizational behavior and

performance, seeking to use the frameworks and empirical evidence available before now.

Strategic Ambidexterity in Organisational Theory

Strategic ambidexterity is the capability of any of the organizations to wait against both exploration (seeking new opportunity and innovations) and exploitation (reworking out and maximizing existing resources and capabilities) to compose sustained performance. These complex demands and the different issues involved in trying to strike some sort of equilibrium between them were brought to the fore by scholars like March (1991), who pointed out the necessity of being able to accommodate any changes whilst still retaining existing competitive advantages that organizations secure. Gupta, Smith, and Shalley (2006) also added that organizations, which strike the right balance, will probably perform better in the long run. Strategic ambidexterity is highly imperative in turbulent markets, whereby a company needs to keep innovating it must do so, in an efficient manner leveraging on the resources that it currently has to remain competitive. Tushman and O'Reilly (1996) refer to such successful firms as ambidextrous organizations.

Organizational Learning Mechanisms

Strategic ambidexterity could be obtained through organizational learning mechanisms. Learning processes, including knowledge sharing, adaptability, and feedback loops enable organizations to work-harden their processes, and also seek new opportunities. Argyris and Schon (1978) developed the single-loop learning (simply improving on the existing practice) and the double-loop learning (questioning the underlying assumptions in order to generate innovation). The two forms of learning are crucial to any organization that would like to maximize both exploration and exploitation. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) paid more attention to knowledge creation and management as having a positive contribution to ambidextrous strategies. Furthermore, Wang and Ahmed (2007) stated that innovation and efficiency of organizations cannot be achieved without dynamic capabilities, or the ability to dynamically rearrange current capabilities in order to adapt to various changes in environments.

The use of Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control

The personal characteristics that determine acceptance of their relationship between exploration and exploitation in the people concerned are of type emotional intelligence (EQ) and locus of control (LOC). The concept of emotional intelligence was brought to the fore by Goleman (1995) who considered emotional intelligence as a vital ingredient in leadership and the success of any establishment by focusing on how to handle emotions, develop healthy relationships and be flexible to the challenges. Emotional intelligence enables humans to overcome the interpersonal dynamics, which form an important requirement in balancing exploration and exploitation. Locus control can be defined as the degree to which a person believes he/she has control over the results. Rotter (1966) stated

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that proactive behaviors like taking initiative and paying attention to innovation which is vital in exploration are likely to be engaged by individuals who have the internal locus of control. On the contrary, the individuals with an external locus of control might be more likely to be guided by established routines and practices which are in line with exploitation.

The Impact of Environmental Volatility

In fluctuating markets, having continued pressure to innovate as well as being operationally efficient is a big task to organizations. Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) suggested that dynamic capabilities of the firms based on their ability to sense and seize the opportunity and

address the threats become significant in maintaining the balance between exploration and exploitation. Stagnation and unpredictability demands that plans be flexible and able to readjust frequently. According to Gibson and Birkinshaw (2004), organisations operating in highly volatile environments tend to be more explorative as their major goal is to always be innovative to gain competitive edge. Nonetheless, as Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) noted, organizations need to be efficient by exploiting the available resources to ensure that they remain stable. This is because the synergy between exploration and exploitation in these settings is sensitive to organizational learning processes and how fast a firm can possibly adjust itself.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

- Type: Descriptive & Correlational
 - Descriptive: Identify patterns in exploration and exploitation.
 - Correlational: Assess relationships between organizational learning mechanisms and ambidexterity.

Sampling:

- Method: Stratified Random Sampling
- Sample Size: 150 mid-to-senior managers from diverse industries and company sizes.

Data Collection:

- Primary:
 - Surveys:
 - Locus of Control Scale (Singh & Bhardwaj, 1994)
 - Emotional Intelligence Scale (Singh & Narain)
 - Custom Survey on Ambidexterity & Learning Mechanisms
- Secondary: Literature review.

Data Analysis:

1. Descriptive Stats: Frequency, mean, median.
2. Correlation: Pearson's (continuous), Spearman's (ordinal).
3. Multiple Regression: Predict learning mechanisms on ambidexterity.
4. ANOVA: Compare ambidexterity by industry/size.

Tools:

- SPSS/R for analysis."

ANALYSIS RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics provide a foundational understanding of the sample composition and the overall distribution of scores for exploration and exploitation. It outlines the demographic breakdown of participants across industry, company size, and gender. Additionally, the mean scores for exploration and exploitation help give an overview of the organizational focus of the respondents.

Table 1: Sample Overview

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Total Respondents	150	100%
Industry		
- Technology	60	40%
- Manufacturing	45	30%
- Healthcare	22	15%
- Retail	15	10%
- Others	8	5%
Company Size		
- Small	23	15%

- Medium	75	50%
- Large	52	35%
Gender Distribution		
- Male	90	60%
- Female	60	40%
Age Range	25-50 years	Average: 37

This table gives the sample segmentation in terms of various important factors like industry, size of a company, gender distribution and age range. A sample of 150 respondents was surveyed with 40 percent fulfilling Technology sector, 30 percent in Manufacturing, 15 percent in Healthcare, 10 percent in Retail with the other 5 percent representing the other sectors. This serves to provide a variety of views. A large majority of the participants were in medium-sized companies (50%), ahead of the large companies (35%), and the small companies (15%). With regard to gender, 60 percent were male and 40 percent female and the overall average age of respondents was 37 years, which offers sufficient spread of experience level. The targeted groups of demographics aids in obtaining a representative view of company behaviors in various sectors and company magnitudes.

Table 1 (a): Exploration & Exploitation Scores:

Dimension	Mean Score (Out of 5)
Exploration	4.2
Exploitation	3.8

The exploration and exploitation scores provided in this table demonstrate the overall exploration/exploitation balance of the organization. A more significant exploration score indicates that there is a slight focus on innovation and new opportunities whereas the relatively lower exploitation score is an indicator that organizations are being more attentive of operational efficiency, but to a minor extent. This balance is essential in fostering strategic ambidexterity where the companies must be innovative and at the same time being effective in their operations.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis provides a detailed breakdown of the Locus of Control and Emotional Intelligence scales. It highlights how individuals perceive their own control over work outcomes and how emotionally intelligent they are in managing themselves and others in professional settings.

Table 2: Locus of Control Scale by Singh & Bhardwaj (1994)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
I believe that the outcomes in my work are largely influenced by my own actions and decisions.	60 (40%)	75 (50%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
My success at work is a result of hard work and persistence.	50 (33%)	85 (57%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.2
I often feel that external forces, like fate or luck, determine the results of my work.	40 (27%)	60 (40%)	30 (20%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	3.2
I can control how well I perform in my job by the effort I put into it.	70 (47%)	60 (40%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.4
When things go wrong at work, it's usually because of my own mistakes or decisions.	50 (33%)	60 (40%)	20 (13%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	4.1
I believe that my career depends mostly on my own abilities and efforts.	65 (43%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
Luck plays an important role in how successful I am at work.	20 (13%)	30 (20%)	50 (33%)	40 (27%)	10 (7%)	2.7
I am able to influence outcomes in my work environment.	55 (37%)	80 (53%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.2
The success or failure of my projects is primarily due to external circumstances.	20 (13%)	40 (27%)	50 (33%)	30 (20%)	10 (7%)	2.9
I feel empowered to make decisions that affect the outcome of my work.	60 (40%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.3

The Locus of Control scale identifies the amount of control people think they have in the outcome of their work. The results reveal that 40 percent strongly agree, and 50 percent say that their own behavior affects their work outcomes, and on the mean score of 4.1 indicates that the work outcome in the sample was dominated by internal locus of control. The scale also indicates that on the whole, the respondents feel that their achievements were a result of hard work and persistence (mean score of 4.2), whereas they do not put a lot of weight on the role external factors may play in their lives, such as luck (mean score of 2.7). This observation confirms the notion that internal control beliefs, in which a person should believe that he or she can influence his or her own success, would help encourage the individual to adopt proactive behaviours necessary to balance exploration and exploitation.

Table 3: Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) by Arun Kumar Singh & Shruti Narain

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.	60 (40%)	75 (50%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
I am able to control my emotions when needed.	50 (33%)	80 (53%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.2
I find it easy to understand the emotions of others.	55 (37%)	70 (47%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.1
I can easily express my emotions in appropriate ways.	65 (43%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
I am often aware of the emotional climate in a room or group setting.	60 (40%)	70 (47%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.2
I can stay calm and composed even when faced with stressful situations.	70 (47%)	60 (40%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.4
I can effectively motivate myself even when things are difficult.	65 (43%)	65 (43%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.3
I am often able to handle conflict in a positive and constructive manner.	50 (33%)	80 (53%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.2
I have a strong sense of self-awareness and can understand my own emotional triggers.	60 (40%)	75 (50%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
I can adapt my emotions and reactions to fit different situations.	55 (37%)	75 (50%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.2

The EIS measures self-knowledge, emotional control and empathy. There was an average score of 4.2 which shows that emotional intelligence is appreciated and widespread in the organizational environs. The ones that scored the highest were remaining calm in stressful situations (4.4), and paying attention to other people in groups (4.3). Such characteristics are especially valuable to leaders who have to juggle with innovation and efficiency. Leaders can optimize their actions to change the way they respond to emotions, cope with stress and facilitate teamwork which is critical to organizations that must balance exploration and exploitation.

Table 4: Strategic Ambidexterity and Organizational Learning Mechanisms Survey

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Our organization actively seeks new opportunities through innovation.	65 (43%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
We balance the need for exploration (innovation) and exploitation (efficiency) in our work processes.	60 (40%)	75 (50%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
Our organization learns from its mistakes and continuously adapts.	55 (37%)	70 (47%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.1
We have a strong culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration.	60 (40%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.2
Innovation is highly valued and encouraged in our organizational processes.	65 (43%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3
We utilize data and feedback to improve our business processes.	55 (37%)	75 (50%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.2
Our organization is flexible and open to adopting new technologies.	60 (40%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.2
We constantly explore new markets and business models.	55 (37%)	70 (47%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	4.2

We are efficient in exploiting existing knowledge and resources.	70 (47%)	60 (40%)	15 (10%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.4
We regularly review and refine our strategies to ensure optimal outcomes.	65 (43%)	70 (47%)	10 (7%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	4.3

The table shows its answers to a set of investigations on organizational learning processes and mechanisms of strategic ambidexterity. The similarity of the mean scores on such statements related to exploration and exploitation as We balance the need to explore and exploit, and we actively pursue opportunities through innovation (both 4.3) indicates that the participants rate their organizations as overall successful in balancing these two strategical goals. The high scores of the dimension knowledge sharing and adaptability (mean scores: 4.2) imply that the companies are aware of the need to learn through failure and continually evolve to maintain a sustainable exploration-exploitation trade-off.

Correlation Analysis (EQ, LOC, and Ambidexterity):

The correlation analysis identifies the strength and direction of the relationships between emotional intelligence, locus of control, and strategic ambidexterity. This analysis provides insight into how individual traits influence the ability to balance exploration and exploitation in organizations.

Ho: There is no significant correlation between Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Locus of Control (LOC), and Strategic Ambidexterity (Exploration, Exploitation, Overall Ambidexterity).

Table 5: Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Locus of Control (LOC), and Strategic Ambidexterity

Variables	Exploration	Exploitation	Overall Ambidexterity
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	0.65** (p < 0.01)	0.52** (p < 0.01)	0.72** (p < 0.01)
Locus of Control (LOC)	0.74** (p < 0.01)	0.61** (p < 0.01)	0.72** (p < 0.01)
Age	0.13	0.11	0.12

The following table shows the correlations among Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Locus of Control (LOC), and the two Strategic Ambidexterity components- Exploration and Exploitation. The results indicate high positive correlations between EQ and LOC, and participation in both exploration and exploitation (e.g. EQ-Exploration = 0.65**, LOC-Exploration = 0.74**). This shows that more people who are emotionally intelligence and have the internal locus of control tend to be innovative (exploration) and efficient (exploitation) in doing things. The correlation was lower with age implying that age does not have a significant contribution as far as the capability to balance exploration and exploitation strategies is concerned.

Multiple Regression Analysis (Predictors of Ambidexterity):”

Multiple regression analysis examines how different organizational learning mechanisms predict strategic ambidexterity. This model helps identify which factors are most influential in enabling organizations to balance exploration and exploitation effectively.

Ho: Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Locus of Control (LOC), and Knowledge Sharing do not significantly predict Strategic Ambidexterity.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Strategic Ambidexterity

Predictor	Standardized Beta (β)	p-value
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	0.28**	p < 0.01
Locus of Control (LOC)	0.34**	p < 0.01
Knowledge Sharing	0.15*	p < 0.05

R² = 0.62, Adjusted R² = 0.59

In this regression analysis, Elements of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Locus of Control (LOC), and knowledge-sharing proved to be predictors of Strategic Ambidexterity. Fit to the model is good, with an R² = 0.62, or 62 percent of the variance in ambidexterity explained by the model. Locus of Control (β = 0.34) had the highest beta indicating that those with a more internal locus of control stood greater chances of doing well in balancing exploitation and exploration. Emotional Intelligence (beta = 0.28) and Knowledge Sharing (beta = 0.15) also have a good relationship with ambidexterity albeit at lower levels. These results highlight that personal factors such as emotional intelligence and internal control belief items are essential in the successful implementation of ambidextrous strategies, as well as ideal learning practices in organisations, such as knowledge sharing.

ANOVA (Industry Differences in Ambidexterity):

ANOVA is used to compare strategic ambidexterity across different industries, assessing whether industry-specific factors influence how organizations balance exploration and exploitation. This analysis helps identify sector-specific trends and practices.

H₀: There is no significant difference in Strategic Ambidexterity (Exploration and Exploitation) across different industries.

Table 7: Differences in Strategic Ambidexterity by Industry

Industry	Exploration Mean	Exploitation Mean	p-value
Technology	4.5	3.9	p < 0.01
Manufacturing	3.8	4.2	p < 0.01
Healthcare	4.1	3.7	p < 0.05
Retail	3.7	3.9	p = 0.30
Others	3.9	3.6	p = 0.45

This table shows a result of ANOVA to compare the strategic ambidexterity of various industries. A noticeable gap was experienced in Technology and Manufacturing industry. Technology companies were more oriented to exploration (mean = 4.5) but Manufacturing companies were more inclined to exploitation (mean = 4.2). This implies that technology companies value innovation more than the manufacturing ones do efficiency. Industries such as Healthcare and Retail showed slightly increased differences with Healthcare taking an exploratory orientation. This information shows that organizational positioning in regards to exploration and exploitation is to some extent dependent on industry-specific factors.

Qualitative Insights (From Interviews)

Qualitative interviews provide deeper insights into the factors that influence the balance between exploration and exploitation. These interviews reveal the experiences and perspectives of managers on the strategies and practices that enable ambidexterity in volatile markets.

Table 8: Key Themes from Qualitative Interviews

Theme	Frequency	Sample Quotes
Leadership's Role	70%	"Strong leadership drives both innovation and efficiency through adaptability."
Learning Culture	85%	"Knowledge sharing and adaptability are vital for balancing both strategies."
Market Adaptability	65%	"Our ability to pivot in volatile markets allows us to innovate while remaining efficient."

In-depth evaluation of the factors that help organizations to achieve optimal explorative exploitative balance was obtained using qualitative interviews. Leadership is also recognized as a key to both innovation and efficiency because of flexibility, with 70 per cent of respondents mentioning it. A good learning culture was also very important as 85 percent of those interviewed indicated that knowledge sharing and flexibility is the key to sustaining strategic ambidexterity. Finally, market adaptability was regarded as a powerful enabler with 65% of respondents stating that the versatility to shift in a market that is volatile enables organizations to be both innovational and effective. These reflections confirm quantitative results and emphasize effectiveness of leadership, culture, and adaptability in order to attain successful ambidexterity at the organisational level.

DISCUSSION

In our fast paced, modern world of business, the organizations are under more and more pressure to be innovative and efficient. This ambidextrous focus is now called strategic ambidexterity and needs firms to strike a trade-off between exploration (searching for new opportunities) and exploitation (making the most of existing capabilities). The skill to balance such competing demands is central to maintaining competitive advantage, in highly turbulent markets. This research examines how organizational learning is a device--including knowledge sharing, adaptability, and leadership--that is critical in supporting strategic ambidexterity. As portrayed by the findings of the survey, emotional intelligence (EQ) and locus of control (LOC) broadly contribute to the creation of organizational behavior that promotes a combination of

exploration and exploitation (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006; Jansen, Van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2005). The discussion around the literatures and the research findings will allow considering the multi-fold interactions between mechanisms of learning and ambidextrous strategies.

Strategic ambidexterity is especially significant in companies that conduct operations in unstable markets as these tend to change quickly and the firm will be adaptive. The findings of this paper reveal that organizations that have a high emotional intelligence as well as one with an internal locus of control are better placed to deal with this tension. Emotional intelligence helps managers to familiarise themselves with the dynamics of people and lead their teams towards the balance between the exploration and exploitation.

Internal orientation of locus of control is strongly linked with greater degrees of exploration because individuals who have an internal locus of control believe that their actions are directly addressed and as such, they encourage innovation and risk-taking (Jansen *et al.*, 2012). Likewise, organizational learning mechanisms, e.g. knowledge sharing, will play a key role in moderating between these two strategies. When organizations have the capacity to learn through mistakes, fast adaptation to new environment and open knowledge sharing, strategic flexibility is enhanced (Wang & Ahmed, 2007; 1997). This dynamic is also articulated in terms of respondents who attached vital significance to knowledge sharing and innovation as part of the strategy adopted by their organizations. On the one hand, firms that effectively incorporate learning activities in their strategy have an advantage of using their current resources and testing new avenues around that can be utilized to serve as the basis of growth (Kristal, Huang, & Roth, 2010).

Moreover, the author notes that there are great differences between industries in the use of ambidexterity among organizations. As an example, the technology sector was determined to be more geared towards exploration whereas the manufacturing sector was geared towards exploitation. The nature of these differences can be blamed on the nature of both industries. Technological companies work in a dynamic world where novelty is an important element of business prosperity, which makes these firms focus on exploration rather than exploitation (Ebben & Johnson, 2005). On the one hand, with a more steady market situation and developed routine processes, manufacturing firms are more likely to rely on the available capabilities to be efficient (Wang, Li, Qiao, & Sun, 2010). The results are reminiscent of the general body of research on ambidextrous organizational behavior and how the industry/market environment determines the exploitation-exploration balance (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Teece & Pisano, 1994). The paper also highlights the relevance of sector-specific adjustments when it comes to driving ambidexterity. In the change currently facing organizations, there is a consistent need to re-evaluate the strategies, the existence of the organization learning mechanisms enables them to adjust to the changes and enhance their innovation and efficiency.

Exploration and exploitation have to be in the right balance or no organisation can survive and should develop. This is particularly in volatile markets. It reveals, that organizational learning mechanisms, especially, emotional intelligence, locus of control, and knowledge sharing, are the critical factors in providing this balance. With such a culture of continuous learning, adaptability and leadership an organization can become ambidextrous and develop the competitive advantage that results in an ever changing environment. This also highlights that it is industry context and organizational learning capabilities that determine the extent to which an element of innovation and efficiency can be balanced by the firms. In the continued reading of existing

literature, organizational ambidexterity involves the ability to change and provide stability at the same time (Gupta *et al.*, 2006; Teece *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, a company that develops both exploration and exploitation capabilities via strategic learning will be likely to outsmart the competitors in current turbulent markets.

CONCLUSIONS

This article underlines the importance of organizational learning processes as a means of facilitating strategic ambidexterity especially in turbulent markets. Sustainable growth and competitive advantage in organizations necessitate the capacity of organizations to undergo both exploration (innovation) and exploitation (efficiency) at the same time. The results suggest that emotional intelligence (EQ) and locus of control (LOC) are key variables that determine the possibility of maintaining the equilibrium between the two strategic dimensions where a heavy connection was linked between internal locus of control and exploration activities. Moreover, organizational values include knowledge sharing, leadership, and adaptability which were identified to be critical to the establishment of ambidextrous strategies. Organizations that develop such practices will be better placed in terms of innovating and streamlining their activities under the market instability. There have also been industry differences that can be seen in the study where technology firms lay more emphasis on exploration whereas in manufacturing firms it is more inclined towards exploitation. These insights give practical suggestions to managers to come up with learning mechanisms that will solidify the firm to balance exploration and exploitation. Finally, the research will add to the body of knowledge in the field of strategic ambidexterity and organizational learning, providing an extra insight into how companies can balance the aspects of innovation and efficiency in their quest of success in the rapidly-changing corporate world.

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