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The Ambidexterity of very small enterprises: a qualitative exploration of the challenges and the role of support services and collaboration

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Abstract:

This article is the result of a larger study that explores the concept of organizational ambidexterity, highlighting its importance within Moroccan Very Small Enterprises (VSEs). The study examines how VSEs manage to reconcile exploitation and exploration, by qualitatively examining ambidexterity through semi-structured interviews with 10 managers of a set of VSEs of the North of Morocco.

Specifically, this article concentrates on the duality of challenges-facilitators as related to VSEs endeavor to strike a balance between exploitation and exploration. Consequently, the analysis of the results and the discussion focus on identifying the challenges and barriers to ambidexterity within VSEs, while highlighting the crucial role of support services and collaborations in promoting organizational ambidexterity in the context of very small companies.

The conclusions of the study are especially of interest for the elaboration of VSEs development policies aiming to enhance their ambidexterity to meet the challenges of a complex and ever-evolving environment.

Keywords: Organizational ambidexterity; Moroccan VSEs; Exploitation; Exploration; collaboration; support services.
JEL Classification: M100
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1. Introduction:

The tension between exploration (innovation) and exploitation (efficiency) is a central challenge in organizational management, particularly for firms operating in dynamic environments. Organizational ambidexterity—the ability to balance these dual imperatives—has been widely studied in large corporations (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; O'Reilly III & Tushman, 2011).

However, its applicability to Very Small Enterprises (VSEs), especially in emerging economies, remains underexplored, despite their critical socioeconomic role. Unlike their larger counterparts, VSEs operate in precarious environments marked by scarce financial and human resources, weak managerial capabilities, and minimal institutional support (OECD, 2021). Yet, their socioeconomic role is vital, particularly in regional industrial and artisanal sectors. Their survival hinges on reconciling exploration and exploitation despite systemic constraints, raising critical questions about the behavioral and organizational factors—such as coaching, collaboration, and adaptive leadership—that enable this balance.

Scholars identify unique barriers to ambidexterity in VSEs: resource scarcity forces prioritization of short-term operational needs over long-term innovation (Koryak et al., 2018), while informal governance structures often tie strategic decisions to owner-managers' survival instincts (Wales et al., 2021). Additionally, weak institutional support limits access to R&D incentives or structured development programs (OECD, 2021). These challenges suggest that traditional ambidexterity frameworks, designed for resource-rich firms, require adaptation to the realities of small-scale, resource-constrained entrepreneurship—particularly in contexts like Morocco, where VSEs dominate the economic landscape.

Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) play a crucial role in the Moroccan economy as they represent the majority of Moroccan companies and contribute significantly to job creation and economic growth in the country. According to the results of a national survey carried out in 2019 by the High Commission for Planning (HCP), the structure of companies in Morocco is: 64% of VSEs, 29% of SMEs and 7% of large companies.

This raises a critical question: ***How do Moroccan VSEs reconcile exploitation and exploration despite systemic constraints, and what external or internal mechanisms facilitate this balance?*** This study addresses this gap through an exploratory qualitative analysis of 10 VSEs in Northern Morocco.

Our exploratory work is based on semi-structured interviews with managers of VSEs from the North of Morocco. In this study, our objectives are: (1) identifying the specific challenges VSEs face in implementing ambidextrous strategies, (2) analyzing the role of external support—such as coaching and partnerships—and internal adaptability—including leadership and organizational culture—in fostering ambidexterity, and (3) proposing a practical framework for policymakers and business developers to enhance VSE resilience. By examining both structural barriers and enabling factors, this research aims to provide actionable insights to help very small enterprises balance innovation and efficiency in dynamic economic environments.

The results of this study offer a valuable insight into the realities experienced by Moroccan VSEs, as well as into the strategies they are developing to face current challenges. They also provide a solid basis for the development of practical recommendations that could help leaders and decision-makers improve the management of organizational ambidexterity in this specific context.

This introduction is followed by a literature review, which lays the conceptual foundation for our study by examining previous work on organizational ambidexterity, its dimensions, benefits, and challenges. Next, we present our research methodology, describing in detail how we conducted our interviews and collected our data. The results of our study are then analyzed

and interpreted and, finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for the management of Moroccan VSEs and making suggestions for future research.
Through this structure, we aim to provide a **comprehensive, evidence-based** perspective on ambidexterity in Moroccan VSEs, bridging the gap between theoretical models and on-the-ground realities.

2. Organizational Ambidexterity: Concept and Typologies

2.1. Organizational ambidexterity

The concept of ambidexterity was first introduced in Duncan's 1976 paper. Subsequently, the organizational ambidexterity concept was developed by March (1991) and Tushman and O'Reilly (1996). It consists of the ability of a firm to simultaneously explore and exploit (O'Reilly and Tushman, 2008), or to successfully manage the exploitation of the present and the exploration of the future at the same time, which gives firms the advantage of being competitive in both the short and the long term (Rosing and Zacher, 2017).
For March (1991), exploration is characterized by the search for new possibilities, and involves uncertain, distant, and often negative returns. It is linked to activities such as research, variation, risk-taking, experimentation, simulation, flexibility, discovery, and innovation. Exploitation, on the other hand, focuses on improving and extending existing skills, techniques, and models. It relates to efficiency, improvement, selection, production, implementation, and execution and its returns are generally susceptible to be positive, immediate, and predictable.
Organizational ambidexterity is a complex and dynamic concept that encompasses several forms such as structural, contextual, and network ambidexterity. The idea of structural ambidexterity, introduced by Duncan (1976), is based on the idea that organizations develop two distinct (sub)structures to manage, separately, exploitation and exploration. The operating structure is responsible for the effective management of day-to-day operations, while the exploration structure focuses on the research and development of new opportunities (Duncan, 1976).
Contextual ambidexterity highlights the need for and ability of organizations to adapt quickly and adjust their level of ambidexterity according to the phases of their life cycle and the emerging opportunities. The appropriate balance between exploitation and exploration can thus vary depending on changing market conditions, technology, regulations and other contextual factors (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004).
Network ambidexterity, a newer and less explored concept, concerns the ability of an organization to manage ambidextrous relationships with its partners, suppliers, and customers within its network. This dimension of ambidexterity is particularly relevant in the era of globalization and interconnection. It involves the simultaneous management of two types of relationships: operational-oriented relationships, aimed at optimizing operational efficiency, and exploration-oriented relationships, aimed at jointly exploring new opportunities and fostering innovation (Bingham & Davis, 2012).

2.2. Core Theoretical Foundations

March's (1991) exploration-exploitation paradigm provides the foundational lens for understanding how Moroccan VSEs navigate strategic tensions. Where large firms can dedicate separate resources to innovation (exploration) and optimization (exploitation), VSEs face acute trade-offs due to constrained human and financial capital (Koryak et al., 2018). Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2007) extends this understanding by framing ambidexterity as a higher-order capability - VSEs must continuously sense market shifts (exploration), reconfigure meager resources (exploitation), and transform their business models, all while operating in an environment with limited access to formal financing or R&D support (OECD, 2021). Together,

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these theories explain why ambidexterity manifests differently in VSEs compared to larger firms.

Resource Orchestration Theory (Sirmon et al., 2011) elucidates how VSEs address structural constraints through innovative resource allocation. Unlike large corporations that maintain distinct budgets for exploitation and exploration, VSEs depend on owner-managers to **assume dual roles**—simultaneously optimizing existing operations while identifying new opportunities through informal networks. This constraint necessitates alternative ambidexterity approaches: while structural ambidexterity (with dedicated subunits) is infeasible for firms with fewer than 10 employees, contextual ambidexterity emerges through organizational flexibility—employees dynamically alternate between routine tasks and exploratory initiatives as demands evolve (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004).

The interplay of these theories creates a unique framework for analyzing Moroccan VSEs. March's duality explains the inherent tension, Dynamic Capabilities reveal the adaptive processes, and Resource Orchestration shows the micro-level resource management tactics. Crucially, this synthesis highlights how institutional voids in emerging economies reshape theoretical assumptions - network ambidexterity replaces formal R&D structures, and informal trust mechanisms substitute for missing organizational slack.

2.3. Ambidexterity in the context of VSEs

To define and classify companies, the High Commission for Planning (HCP) of Morocco, uses the turnover and the number of employees. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined as those whose turnover does not exceed 75 million dirhams (DH) and which employ less than 200 workers. Very small enterprises (VSEs) are characterized by a turnover of less than 3 million dirhams and a number of employees of less than 10. Large enterprises (LEs) are defined as having a turnover of more than 75 million dirhams or a workforce of more than 200 employees.

Despite the vital role of VSEs in most economies, it should be noted that the majority of research on organizational ambidexterity has focused primarily on large firms. Studies related to organizational ambidexterity in the context of VSEs have been somewhat neglected by experts in the field. It therefore becomes imperative to deepen our understanding of how this concept can be applied to very small enterprises (VSEs) in the Moroccan context.

VSEs share different characteristics with SMEs, especially in comparison with large firms, and both categories (VSEs and SMEs) are particularly relevant topics of study in ambidexterity research, as they allow for in-depth analysis of exploitation and exploration activities (Voss & Voss, 2013). Recent research has found that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can also benefit from organizational ambidexterity, although their approach may differ from that adopted by large firms (Mohammed, s. d; Ouniniss & Berrad, 2022.; Parmentier, 2023; Tartea, 2020).

In this context, the relevance of ambidexterity manifests itself on several levels: First, VSEs generally operate in dynamic and turbulent environments. Ambidexterity allows them to adapt their strategy in real-time, investing in new opportunities while preserving their current revenue stream (Turner et al., 2013; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). As a result, they become more resilient to market changes, avoiding the risk of obsolescence.

Secondly, exploration is essential for the growth of VSEs. Ambidexterity fosters continuous innovation by encouraging the search for new ideas while effectively managing current operations (Brion & Mothe, 2017). This allows VSEs to create innovative products or services that set them apart from the competition, improve their market position and drive growth.

In addition, the management of limited resources is a major concern for both VSEs and SMEs (Richomme-Huet & d'Andria , 2010). Ambidexterity allows them to optimize the use of their resources by focusing their efforts on the most promising areas (Servajean-Hilst et al., 2018).

This means they don't waste valuable resources on less profitable activities, which is crucial for their long-term survival.
In addition, VSEs and SMEs often face financial constraints (Dietsch& Mahieux, 2014; Hefnaoui & Darkawi, 2020). Ambidexterity helps diversify revenue streams, reducing their dependence on a single sector or product (Tartea, 2020). This diversification can mitigate financial risks, improve stability, and promote growth.
Moreover, SMEs and VSEs that adopt ambidexterity are better placed to anticipate market trends and opportunities (Ouniniss & Berrad, 2023). This ability to anticipate changes in the business environment and adapt quickly is crucial to staying competitive in an ever-changing world.
Finally, ambidexterity fosters a culture of learning and adaptability among VSEs and SMEs. It encourages employees to remain open to new ideas, to take initiative, and to learn from mistakes, which is essential for innovation and continuous growth (Gotteland et al., 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Framework and Sampling

The methodological framework adopted in this research is that of an exploratory qualitative approach, given the emerging nature of the problem addressed (Wacheux & Rojot, 1996). We conducted semi-structured interviews with managers of Moroccan VSEs, which were recorded and transcribed, and then analysed using inductive thematic analysis.
The interviewees chosen are managers of very small enterprises (VSEs) located in the geographical area of Tetouan, in the north of Morocco, operating in various sectors of activity. To constitute our sample, we opted for a non-probability sampling method for convenience. The selection of participants followed a deliberate approach, aiming to include individuals whose experience and perspectives are particularly relevant to the research question.
The selection of and the contact with participants were facilitated by our partner, the Mediterranean Association for Development and Training (AMDEF). This association plays a crucial role in promoting and supporting businesses in the Tetouan region of Morocco. The association maintains regular links with many Moroccan VSEs and has an in-depth knowledge of the local economic fabric.
The collaboration with AMDEF allowed us to directly contact the leaders of the VSEs located in the Tetouan region. We consider the leaders or owners of these VSEs to be key informants because of their central role in decision-making and the implementation of ambidextrous practices.
We therefore selected a sample of ten small businesses whose managers agreed to participate in the interviews and expressed their interest in sharing their experiences with us. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, codes were assigned to the selected companies.
Descriptive statistical analyses were applied to characterize the companies' sample according to relevant variables such as age, industry, height, etc. The sample is made up of VSEs with a diversity in terms of size and sector of activity. The average age of the selected VSEs is 3 years and 3 months, with an average workforce of 5 employees. The average age of the managers interviewed is 27 years and the sample consisted of 4 men and 6 women. Among them, 2 entrepreneurs have obtained their bachelor's degree, 2 have a level of education corresponding to high school, 5 have a level of secondary school, and 1 have a level of primary school.

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Table 1: Characteristics of the sampled firms and respondents

	Enterprise			**Respondents**			
Code	**Scope of activity**	**Year of creation**	**Size**	**Quality**	**Age**	**Genre**	**Level of education**
ESE 1	Traditional and modern sewing	2020	3	Manager-Owner	23	woman	Secondary school
ESE 2	Traditional and modern sewing	2020	6	Manager-Owner	38	woman	Secondary school
ESE 3	Traditional and modern sewing	2023	2	Manager-Owner	28	woman	High school
ESE 4	Sewing of the Ready-to-Wear leather garment	2020	4	Manager-Owner	32	woman	Primary school
ESE 5	Carpentry workshop (modern)	2020	7	Manager-Owner	32	Man	High school
ESE 6	Carpentry workshop (traditional and modern)	2020	4	Manager-Owner	31	Man	Secondary school
ESE 7	Cooperative: production of medicinal plants, essential oils, beauty products	2016	9	Manager	36	woman	Bachelor degree
ESE 8	Cooperative: Production and sale of natural honey and its derivatives	2018	7	Manager	31	woman	Secondary school
ESE 9	Bakery - pastry shop	2022	4	Manager-Owner	32	Man	Bachelor degree
ESE 10	Production of copper-based decoration products	2020	4	Manager-Owner	33	Man	High school

Source: Authors

3.2. Data collection and analysis

The data collection was carried out by means of semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the managers of the selected VSEs, and their average duration is 35min. A pre-established interview guide served as a basis, while providing flexibility to allow for unexpected themes to emerge. The questions focused on the following themes: the company's practices and approaches in terms of exploration and exploitation, the capacities and skills required to carry out these two activities, the difficulties and challenges encountered and finally the role of collaboration and support in reconciling these two activities. The questions were designed to encourage detailed answers and open discussions.

The analysis of the data was carried out in several stages. First, the interviews were recorded and accurately transcribed, considering the participants' speeches to obtain rich and relevant information. Then, a thematic analysis was undertaken to identify emerging themes a posteriori, such as time and tasks allocation... which have been coded to identify relevant categories and subcategories.

This thematic approach helped structure and categorized the information collected, exploring in depth the emerging themes, trends and patterns of the interviews. Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities and differences between participants, VSEs, and specific contexts. The analysis was carried out independently by the authors, then pooled to note similarities and discuss differences in appreciation.

4. Analysis of the results and discussion

The analysis of the interviews focuses on identifying the difficulties and challenges that VSEs managers confront when trying to combine exploitation and exploration activities. It is also aimed at fathoming the role of support programs and collaboration in achieving organizational ambidexterity.

4.1. The Challenges and Barriers to Ambidexterity

The analysis of the interviews identified several factors hindering the effective implementation of ambidextrous practices within the selected companies. The constraint of financial and human resources has emerged as a major challenge. Several managers pointed out that they often face budget and personnel constraints, face difficulties in allocating the necessary resources both to maintain efficient operation and to invest in exploration activities.

"Whenever I consider buying modern equipment to improve our productivity, I have to give it up because I have to pay the suppliers' bills or maintain the existing machines first. We are stuck in traditional methods." (Artisan carpenter)

Interviewees shared real-life experiences that describe the tension felt between the need to reduce operational costs and the need to invest in new opportunities. These stories shed light on the lived reality of managers, who face real-world dilemmas that force them to make difficult decisions. The testimonies thus reflect the complexity of the decision-making process of managers, who are under pressure to reconcile cost control and exploration and opportunities seeking orientation.

The interviewees' accounts highlight a reality where access to finance is becoming a major obstacle, fuelling the fear of resorting to bank loans or some financial support programs. The concern related to the possible inability to meet financial deadlines emerges as a source of anxiety, likely to compromise the financial stability of the company.

"Bank loans are scarier than anything else. Even when we are offered attractive rates, the idea of having to repay every month without knowing if customers will pay on time paralyzes us. We prefer to grow slowly, but safely." (Seamstress)

In addition, interviewees highlighted the need for continued attention to working capital management, client creditworthiness and product diversification. These aspects, as narrated by the interviewees, reveal the perpetual challenges faced by their companies, highlighting the crucial importance of vigilance in these areas to ensure sustainable financial stability.

Interviews revealed that skills shortages, combined with a small workforce, sometimes force employees to work overtime. This first-hand testimony from interviewees highlights the pressure on workers to overwork that can ultimately have a negative impact on their health and productivity. *"We lack qualified staff, so those who are there often have to work overtime."* **(***Bakery-Pastry Shop Director)*

The interviews revealed that among the frequently mentioned constraints, time constraints were identified as a major obstacle. Interviewees described different experiences marked by the need to react quickly to operational challenges, thus absorbing most of the managers' time. This context severely limits their ability to engage in exploratory activities. The tension between operational urgency and the need to step back to explore new opportunities was highlighted as a complex challenge in the stories collected. Managers described the difficulty of juggling the immediate imperatives of operational management with the critical need to invest time in exploration initiatives to ensure the sustainability and growth of their business.

"Operational urgency takes up all the space, you never have time to think about anything else"(Seamstress)

The managers interviewed repeatedly stressed the reality of having to balance the short-term objectives of development with the longer-term imperatives of exploration. They shared the experience of constant pressure to achieve immediate results, a pressure that often-relegated

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exploratory initiatives to the background. This dynamic sometimes compromises the company's long-term vision.

A concrete example of this delicate balance is the reconciliation between daily customer orders and the need to maintain series production. Managers described the need for meticulous planning to meet both imperatives effectively. However, the lack of manpower and machinery, as well as insufficient financial resources, were identified as major obstacles, further complicating the management of this duality.

In addition, three interviewees noted the difficulty of measuring the results of exploration. While the returns on investment of exploitation activities can often be assessed in a more tangible way, the benefits of exploration, such as gaining new knowledge or attending a fair in a new region, can be more difficult to assess. This uncertainty has been reported as a deterrent for managers, sometimes preventing them from investing significant resources in exploratory initiatives.

4.2. The Role of support programs in Developing Ambidexterity

The role of support and coaching programs emerges as facilitating elements in the implementation and strengthening of practices related to the operations and exploration of small businesses. These support and coaching programs include initiatives such as the INDH and implemented by different entities, including associations such as the AMDEF.

"It is thanks to the support and guidance of the INDH and AMDEF that we have been able to completely review our way of managing stocks and planning production. They really opened our eyes to more modern methods" (Artisan carpenter)

The managers highlighted the diversity of forms of support for their companies, either financial or non-financial. The first aspect is through financial support, including grants, preferential loans, or tax incentives. These measures actively encourage small businesses to invest in more efficient business practices, thereby strengthening their competitiveness in the market.

In addition, according to the opinions collected, the support received goes beyond the financial dimension, and this is done through training programs and strategic consultancy. In this sense, the managers stressed the importance of the role of coaching in helping them to optimize their exploitation and exploration practices, which could include advice on the efficient management of resources and the implementation of more efficient operational processes, as well as the facilities granted in terms of the adoption of modern machinery to increase efficiency.

However, different interviewees highlighted the importance of developing tailor-made training programs that are specifically adapted to the needs of their business. These programs must be designed in such a way as to integrate key elements related to management, accounting, marketing, etc.

These forms of coaching contribute significantly to informed decision-making and the implementation of ambidextrous practices, where the company can both effectively leverage its existing resources and explore new opportunities with confidence.

"We have learned to make better use of our resources, but also to think about new products to reach another market segment" (Director of Cooperative Producing Medicinal Plants, Essential Oils, and Beauty Care Products)

4.3. The Role of Collaboration in Achieving Ambidexterity

The role of collaborations, both internal and external, has also been identified as a determining factor in the development of organizational ambidexterity within the VSEs studied. The managers stressed the importance of building strategic partnerships, thus promoting the effective reconciliation of existing activities with new opportunities.

At the internal level, collaboration is seen as an essential mechanism to make full use of available human, technical and financial resources. In this sense, the managers interviewed

shared several essential points of view on organizational management, highlighting the importance of communication, collaboration and continuous control.

Managers emphasized the preference for oral and direct communication. This approach aims to facilitate the rapid transmission of information between teams, thus promoting mutual aid and collective problem-solving. The idea is to create an environment conducive to the rapid flow of information, strengthening organizational responsiveness.

"Here, we prefer to talk directly, face to face, it's faster. When there is a problem, we meet immediately to discuss it" (Artisan carpenter)

Periodic meetings and collective decision-making were identified as key practices. These regular meeting times have contributed to efficient management, both in the day-to-day operation and in the exploration of new opportunities. Team collaboration and collective participation in decision-making fostered an inclusive and adaptive approach to management.

The directors also stressed the importance of continuous monitoring to ensure quality and compliance in exploitation and exploration activities. This vigilance helps ensure consistency and reliability of operations, which are crucial to the long-term success of the business.

Externally, collaboration is seen to explore new markets and benefit from new opportunities to access new capabilities and skills, thus reducing time and costs, and offering higher operational efficiency. Additionally, it is relevant to distinguish between two types of partnerships, as they respond to different needs; scale-based and Scope-based partnerships that bring crucial skills, expertise or capacity that broadens the company's horizons.

Scale-based partnerships are designed to strengthen a company's operational capacity, increasing its production or ability to meet growing demand. As mentioned by the manager of a small company specializing in modern sewing, who has partnered with a company that is an expert in making buttons. This partnership allowed the small company to focus on its core business, the design and production of clothing, while delegating the production of buttons to a specialized partner. This not only simplifies its manufacturing process, but also helped maintain operational flexibility, while providing access to additional production capacity without incurring the high costs associated with expanding its own facilities.

"We couldn't do everything ourselves. By working with another workshop for the buttons, we saved time and quality. We can now focus on creation" (Seamstress)

Scope-based partnerships**,** on the other hand, aim to bring specific skills or crucial expertise that the company does not have, opening new opportunities. Such is the case, for example, of a small carpentry company, which collaborated with a company specializing in computer modeling and design. This carpentry company did not have the necessary in-house skills to model the products manufactured. To broaden its scope and bring added value to its creations, it has established a partnership with a company specializing in computer design and modeling. Through this partnership, the company was able not only to optimize the design process, but also to offer more complex and customized designs.

"We also started working with a company that does computer design. Thanks to them, we were able to reach customers that we would never have reached on our own", (Director of an Artisanal & Modern Carpentry)

In this sense, the managers stressed that partnerships with other companies, suppliers, customers or even competitors, in divers' fields, often offer new perspectives, complementary expertise and opportunities for exploitation or exploration that are difficult to develop internally. However, it is important to note that some managers expressed some reluctance to form partnerships. This reluctance stems from a variety of factors such as fear of losing control, distrust in potential partners, or a preference for a more autonomous approach.

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5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the thematic analysis conducted from interviews with Moroccan VSE (Very Small Enterprise) managers made it possible to better understand the inherent tensions in managing organizational ambidexterity within a context marked by limited resources, intense competitive pressure, and a necessary strategic agility. This study reveals that, despite structural constraints, managers deploy various adaptive mechanisms to balance exploitation, focused on optimizing existing resources and processes, and exploration oriented toward innovation, diversification, and anticipating market developments.

This investigation revealed significant elements that contribute to an in-depth understanding of the issues inherent in the management of organizational ambidexterity in this specific context. Among these mechanisms, collaboration, whether internal or external, stands out as a central lever. Internally, it facilitates communication, involves teams in decision-making, and optimizes the use of human and technical resources. Externally, it serves as a gateway to new skills, expanded markets, or enhanced technical capacities, often inaccessible internally. This strategic partnership dynamic, whether based on scale or scope, enables VSEs to gain efficiency and responsiveness while exploring opportunities for innovation. Coaching and support programs also emerge as facilitators of ambidexterity. They provide a structured framework, suitable management tools, and strategic support that enhance managers' capacity to step back, rethink their business models, and gradually integrate exploratory approaches without compromising day-to-day operations.

Thus, this study contributes to the literature by shedding light on the complex dynamics faced by Moroccan VSE managers, highlighting the strategic importance of ambidexterity and highlighting concrete ways to strike the balance between exploitation and exploration in these structures.

There are some limitations to this exploratory study. First, our sample TPEs is relatively small. This limits the generalizability of our results. Second, we used a qualitative method, which limits the possibility of testing causal relationships. Future research could use quantitative methods to test the impact of the variables discussed on the relationship between organizational ambidexterity and VSE performance.

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