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Organizational Ambidexterity in Practice

An Exploratory Study to Examine the Implementation of Selected Individual-Level Design Dimensions

Vera Scholz (50599)

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

João Castro

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Abstract (Group Part)

Organizational Ambidexterity (OA) is increasingly coming into the focus of researchers and practitioners due to increasing market dynamics. Yet, questions about its practical implementation remain largely unanswered. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to fill this research gap by developing a research framework based on existing literature that includes design dimensions at both the individual and organizational levels. The dimensions of *Strategy*, *Structure and Processes*, *Culture and Mindset*, and *Leadership* enable a holistic view of OA. Drawing on expert interviews and subsequent qualitative content analysis, the study findings add to existing knowledge by shedding light into how OA design dimensions are implemented in practice.

Abstract (Individual Part)

In the past, research on the topic of ambidexterity has concentrated strongly on the organizational side of managing exploration and exploitation. In contrast, individual requirements, the cultural environment and what it means for managers and employees involved have so far been little reflected. Based on qualitative research, this thesis answers the question of how the organizational culture and mindset as well as leadership style is shaped in practice.

Keywords: Organizational Ambidexterity, Ambidexterity, Exploration, Exploitation, Innovation, Qualitative Research

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1 Introduction

1.1 Relevance of the Research Topic

"Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." (John F. Kennedy 1963)

What former President John F. Kennedy already acknowledged back in his days is more present today than ever before: whether in private or professional life, continuous change is unavoidable and requires taking action. Fueled by digitalization and technological progress, companies in all industries and markets are exposed to increasing pressure and intensifying market dynamics (Schumacher 2020). Across the globe, organizations are competing with numerous rivals for market share and technological advancements are giving rise to new entrants that bring substitutes to the market or pose the threat of disruptive change. As a result, many companies are increasingly forced to question their current business model, test their existing products and services, and enter new markets to survive in the competitive business landscape (Schumacher 2020). Young innovative companies, on the other hand, face the hurdle of becoming profitable once they have established products. Simultaneously with the pressure to innovate, the intensely competitive environment also increases cost pressure, requiring ever greater operational efficiency to be able to market products and services cost-effectively to withstand competition (Raisch et al. 2009; Turner et al. 2013). It is therefore essential for companies to optimize their day-to-day operations, make processes efficient and reduce internal costs. The balance between innovation and efficiency, the ability to both exploit current capabilities and explore new ones, puts companies in a dilemma every day (Duncan 1976; March 1991; Raisch et al. 2009). The challenge lies in the contradiction between exploration and exploitation, first highlighted by March (1991): "Both exploration and exploitation are important to organizations, but they compete for scarce resources. As a result, organizations make explicit and implicit choices between the two" (71). To drive innovation, resources are required to invest in new technologies and digital business models in good time and under a company's own steam. Organizations often fail in this reconciliation of day-to-day business and innovation work; instead, they encounter a trade-off between optimization and further development. Furthermore, research suggests that the simultaneous pursuit of exploration and exploitation goals requires structures and actions that are fundamentally opposed, making it difficult to pursue both goals simultaneously (March 1991; Tushman & O'Reilly 1996). A term that is becoming increasingly relevant in this sense is Organizational Ambidexterity (OA), describing the ability of companies to both preserve their core business by continuously increasing efficiency and to identify future market trends and shape them through their innovation activities. While trade-offs between these two goals were often considered insurmountable, research on organizational ambidexterity has demonstrated that the simultaneous pursuit of efficiency- and innovation-enhancing activities is both feasible and associated with positive effects on company performance, ultimately making a significant contribution to ensuring long-term competitiveness (among others Gibson & Birkinshaw 2004; He & Wong 2004; Lubatkin et al. 2006).

1.2 Objective of the Research

Due to the increasing interest in ambidexterity in recent years, a growing body of scientific work has accumulated on this topic. However, there is no consensus on what this concept entails exactly and how it can be achieved in practice (Cao et al. 2009; Gupta et al. 2006; Raisch et al. 2009). O'Reilly and Tushman (2011) agree that an understanding of the mechanisms required to enable ambidexterity is needed: "what is missing is a clear articulation of those specific managerial actions that facilitate the simultaneous pursuit of exploitation and exploration" (8). The overarching objective of this thesis is to address this research gap and to expand the existing literature by fine-grained insights into how OA dimensions are implemented in practice. For this reason, the wealth of literature on ambidexterity is reviewed and synthesized into a research framework that encompasses design dimensions at both the organizational and individual impact levels. With the help of qualitative expert interviews, the framework is reviewed and consequently contributes to the discourse on how OA is managed in practice and to what extent tensions between exploration and exploitation can be mitigated or even resolved. Finally, the goal is to develop managerial implications regarding the implementation of OA, taking into account the role of dimensions at the organizational and individual levels to ultimately promote the simultaneous pursuit of explorative and exploitative activities.

Summing up, the following research questions (RQ) were derived:

RQ1: How is the concept of "Organizational Ambidexterity" conceived in practice?

RQ2: How are selected organizational-level design dimensions implemented in practice?

RQ3: How are selected individual-level design dimensions implemented in practice?

1.3 Structure of this Work

This thesis is divided into a total of seven chapters. After the relevance of the research topic has been demonstrated and the objective of the thesis has been derived in the first chapter, the following chapter provides an overview of the theoretical background and serves to create a uniform state of knowledge. In addition, a research framework is developed based on existing research findings, which are to be reviewed by empirical investigations. Chapter 3 addresses the empirical study by first explaining the research methodology, the process of the data collection, and subsequently the data analysis using appropriate evaluation methods. After the results are elaborated on in Chapter 4, the following Chapter 5 is dedicated to discussing the findings, including a derivation of theoretical and managerial implications. This is followed by an explanation of the limitations of the study and possible starting points for further research in Chapter 6, as well as a final conclusion in Chapter 7.

2 Theoretical Background

The primary objective of this chapter is to delineate the theoretical frame of reference that has been drawn upon in order to establish a common understanding of the theoretical considerations and empirical findings to date. For this purpose, it is first explained what is meant by the concept of organizational ambidexterity. Furthermore, the characteristics of exploration and exploitation are contrasted. In addition, research from widely cited publications by recognized experts (among others Duncan 1976, O'Reilly & Tushman 2008, Raisch & Birkinshaw 2008; March 1991) will be consulted to derive a research framework.

2.1 Definition Approaches of Organizational Ambidexterity

After the term organizational ambidexterity was initially used by R. Duncan (1976), the concept gained increasing interest in empirical and theoretical research. Against this background, a considerable number of definitions and conceptualization approaches corresponding to the different perspectives of research fields (such as innovation, change, learning, and strategy) accumulated. Yet they are similar in essence, as it is invariably a matter of pursuing two strategic goals simultaneously (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996; He & Wong 2004; Raisch & Birkinshaw 2008; Simsek 2009). For instance, Hill and Birkinshaw (2014) frame OA as "the capacity to capitalize on an existing set of resources and capabilities while at the same time developing new combinations of resources to meet future market needs" (1899). Gupta et al. (2006) argue that "ambidexterity refers to the synchronous pursuit of both exploration and exploitation" (693). Thus, the specific paradoxes that are at the center of the discussion around the term ambidexterity can be described as exploration, i.e. the discovery of new things and the development of new alternative knowledge, and exploitation, i.e. the efficient use and optimization of existing and already known knowledge (March 1991). By reconciling exploration and exploitation activities, companies attempt to simultaneously meet current business needs and anticipate potential future changes in requirements (Gibson & Birkinshaw 2004; Raisch et al. 2009). The argument advanced by scholars, however, is that tensions are created by the fact that exploitation and exploration compete for scarce resources, place conflicting demands on management, and build on different capabilities (He & Wong 2004; O'Reilly & Tushman 2008). Exploration strategies serve to anticipate future changes in the corporate environment and to seize corresponding opportunities (March 1991). However, considering the large investment and uncertainty associated with exploration, focusing exclusively thereon can be detrimental to business performance (Levinthal & March 1993). Contrastingly, exploitation enables the capitalization of previously made investments and the creation of value (Choi & Shepherd 2004). Although it seems particularly tempting for firms since exploitation allows for relatively predictable, short-term performance improvements and returns, focusing only on existing opportunities at the expense of identifying new ones, may sacrifice long-term firm performance (Gupta et al. 2006; Levinthal & March 1993). Hence, balancing both exploration and exploitation is crucial (Birkinshaw & Gupta 2013; He & Wong 2004; March 1991).

2.2 Types of Organizational Ambidexterity

Although mostly mixed forms occur, OA scholars propose structural, sequential and contextual approaches (see Figure 1) for attaining "an appropriate balance" (March 1991, 71) between the opposing activity patterns (Raisch & Birkinshaw 2008).

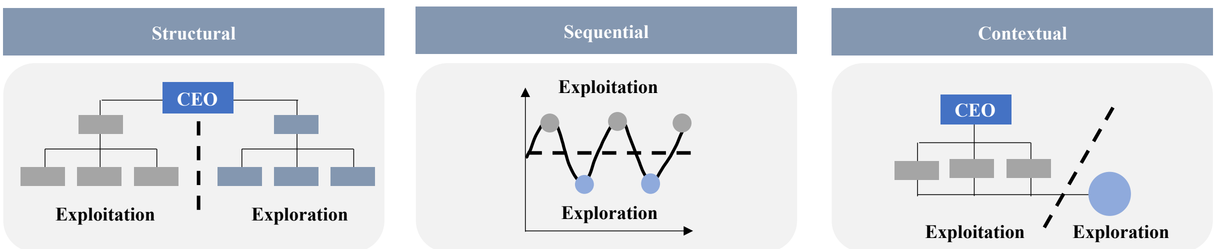

Figure 1: Implementation Approaches of Exploration and Exploitation
(Own illustration based on Schimpf & Olivan 2019)

Initially described by Duncan (1976), the concept of *structural ambidexterity* addresses the balance between explorative and exploitative activities through dual organizations. As a result, exploration and exploitation take place in distinct organizational units that either exploit or explore (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996). Hence, the underlying mechanism is the organizational (typically spatial) separation, for example when explorative actions are pursued in the R&D department and exploitative actions in production. This separation into two subunits is reflected not only in different tasks, processes and subcultures but also in incentive and control systems (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996).

As an alternative balancing approach, *sequential ambidexterity* refers to a temporal separation between both exploitation and exploration. In comparison to the remaining two modes of ambidexterity, explorative and exploitative activities are not pursued simultaneously but balanced by taking place one after the other. Thus, the underlying mechanism is temporal separation. Organizations must switch between the exploration and exploitation modes and alter their strategies, structures and processes to attain sequential ambidexterity (Duncan 1976). Additionally, this calls for managers to change their priorities over time, from stabilizing or pursuing incremental innovation to radical innovation, or conversely (Mom et al. 2007).

Lastly, *contextual ambidexterity* is realized by organizations establishing an environment that enables employees to coordinate both exploration and exploitation independently. Thereby, individuals are encouraged to use their own judgment in deciding how to divide their time between the conflicting demands of adaptation (i.e. exploitation) and adaptability (i.e. exploration) (Gibson & Birkinshaw 2004). With its 80/20 rule, one of the most-cited examples of implementing the idea of contextual ambidexterity is Google LLC, whose employees are allowed to devote 20% of their working time to innovative topics away from day-to-day business (Chen 2017).

2.3 Antecedents of Organizational Ambidexterity

Besides the before-mentioned types of ambidexterity, numerous theoretical papers as well as empirical studies shed light on design dimensions and factors that contribute to the implementation of OA in organizations (among others O'Reilly & Tushman 2008; Schneeberger & Habegger 2020; Junni et al. 2015; Simsek 2009, Simsek et al. 2009; Fojcik 2015). After reviewing the literature, this paper focuses on two dominant publications to derive central design dimensions. These are utilized as a basis for the research framework of this thesis, which then serves as an instrument for further verification based on qualitative research. The two publications referred to for this purpose will be discussed in the following:

(1) In the pioneering work of O'Reilly and Tushman (2008), OA implementation requirements were examined through interviews in 15 chosen sample firms that either adopted OA effectively, only after going through a relearning process, or unsuccessfully. They identified five requirements that must be satisfied for the successful application of ambidexterity:

Strategic intent: First of all, a compelling formulation of the strategic intent including the importance of both exploration and exploitation is imperative, given that otherwise short-term needs will mostly prevent management from devoting sufficient time and resources to exploration activities. Further, without the rationale of strategic purposes for explorative activities, financial metrics would serve as the only performance measure.

Common vision and values: An overarching vision and values are intended to counteract the question of why disparate entities should work together rather than compete. Thereby, a common identity and connection amongst different units can be established and collaboration enhanced. Furthermore, O'Reilly and Tushman (2008) found that a long-term mindset, as a basis for exploration, is reinforced by a common vision and shared values.

Consensus on strategy: Coherent communication and a leadership team that is uniformly aligned are essential. Indeed, the lack of a clear consensus about the significance of both exploration and exploitation runs the risk of reduced information sharing, the sending of conflicting messages and several avoidable controversies.

Separate aligned units: According to O'Reilly and Tushman (2008), separate units for exploration and exploitation are preferable when resources are distributed and controlled by an integrated leadership team. This is due to the risk associated with disparate units, that is, units are not aligned, organizational advantages are exploited, and ineffective resource utilization and unclear coordination occur.

Leadership: As the organization will inevitably confront resource allocation disputes and trade-offs, it is critical to have a leadership team being able to tolerate contradictions, foster discussion and take action while resolving possible resulting tensions.

(O'Reilly & Tushman 2008)

(2) A more recent study was carried out by Schneeberger and Habegger (2020), who used qualitative research to set up a five-stage maturity model to measure the maturity of ambidexterity in organizations. The model takes into account five specific characteristics: Management and Leadership, Strategy, Organizational Structure, Resource Allocation and Corporate Culture, each with three integration mechanisms. The design elements are measured using the following research questions:

Management: Does management think and behave in accordance with the ambidextrous concept's principles? The researchers found that the highest ambidexterity maturity stage is evident if, throughout the management team, the balance of exploitation and exploration is highly valued and measures to that aim are in place. Moreover, managers demonstrate their readiness to change and the importance of change is transmitted to employees.

Strategy: Does the corporate strategy reflect ambidextrous principles? In addition to specifically anchoring both exploration and exploitation in the strategy, the strategy formulation is clear, straightforward and simple. Further, it is conveyed frequently throughout a mature ambidextrous organization.

Organizational structure: Are the fundamentals of organizational ambidexterity covered by the organizational structure? Schneeberger and Habegger (2020) classify an ambidextrous company as having a high maturity level, when structural ambidexterity is routinely used, but also when exploration is integrated and knowledge sharing among all personnel is encouraged.

Resource allocation: Are resources handled in such a way that organizational ambidexterity can be applied? The researchers found that resources need to be distributed top-down and flexibly based on the likelihood of success and the necessity.

Corporate culture: Is the corporate culture beneficial to the effective application of organizational ambidexterity? According to Schneeberger and Habegger (2020), the transition to an ambidextrous firm must be represented in the norms and values. Furthermore, incentive structures must be fundamentally linked with ambidexterity, whilst not necessarily through monetary incentives but rather through soft rewards such as praise.

(Schneeberger & Habegger 2020)

2.4 Description of the Research Framework

As explained in Chapter 2.3, the repeatedly cited publications of O’Reilly and Tushman (2008) and Schneeberger and Habegger (2020) proved to be adequate to serve as the foundation for deriving relevant design dimensions for this study. Yet, two modifications are required to arrive at an appropriate selection of relevant elements for this research framework. First, the design dimension *Mindset* is incorporated to enable a comprehensive covering of individual-level factors. The introduction of the dimension *Mindset* recognizes that the transition to an ambidextrous company necessitates a degree of change readiness and a corresponding mindset (Wobser 2022). The second required modification is to consolidate design dimensions in order to minimize complexity and explain interdependencies. Despite the fact that organizational ambidexterity is typically characterized as an ability of an organization (see Chapter 2.1), the role of individuals in organizational ambidexterity is increasingly recognized (O'Reilly & Tushman 2013; Raisch et al. 2009). Therefore, to provide a structured approach to the derived dimensions that support the implementation of ambidexterity, the dimensions are clustered into two levels, namely the organizational and individual levels of impact. This does not only help in categorizing the antecedents but also allows for illuminating how they interact and contrast with each other, thus creating a better understanding of their implementation. The derivation of suitable design dimensions as well as the resulting outcome after adjustments are illustrated in the following overview (see Figure 2).

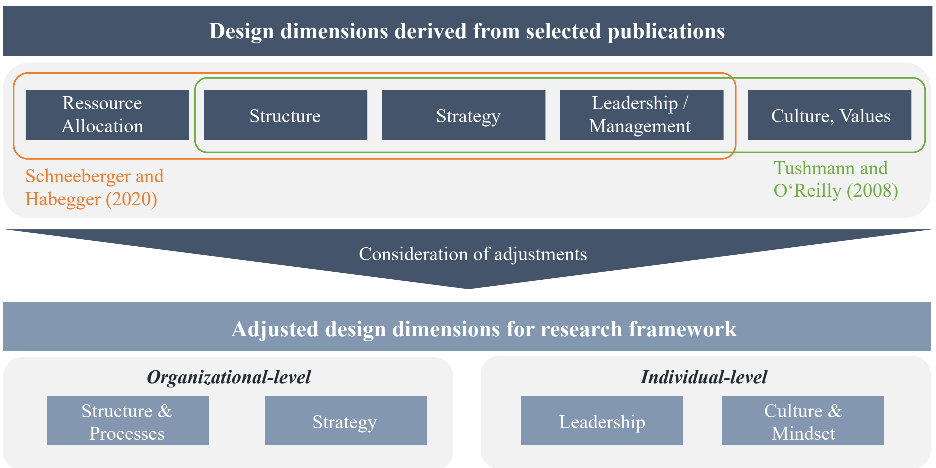

Figure 2: Derivation of Appropriate Design Dimensions
(Own illustration)

As the identified design dimensions included in the research framework do not stand in complete isolation but are frequently interrelated, they are concretized content-wise in the following. The section discusses which fundamental aspects should be considered in the implementation and draws on findings from the extensive literature on organizational ambidexterity.

2.4.1 Individual-Level Design Dimensions

Culture and Mindset. This design dimension investigates the role that organizational culture and mindset have in the implementation of OA. According to He and Wong (2004), exploration and exploitation require fundamentally different organizational cultures. A culture favorable to ambidexterity must therefore include not only values for adherence to hierarchies and communication processes, but also critical values for innovation and creative processes, such as openness, autonomy, initiative, risk-taking and tolerance of uncertainty (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996). Ireland and Webb (2009) also argue that a positive learning culture, where feedback is encouraged and mistakes are seen as opportunities for advancement, is critical to creating an environment for organizational exploration. Such a learning culture is characterized by an acceptance of experimentation. Furthermore, it tolerates the risks and uncertainties involved and accepts potential mistakes (Ireland & Webb 2009).

The term mindset is frequently used in the context of culture to refer to a person's essentially malleable thought process, which in turn prompts action or inactivity and is also influenced by surroundings. While this kind of mindset, labeled a bureaucratic mindset, often emphasizes the past and preservation of the core business, an agile mindset is considered to exist when it can be cultivated particularly effectively (Wobser 2022). Actual research demonstrates the importance of an agile mindset, for instance, in the application of open innovation (Engelsberger et al. 2021).

Leadership. The design dimension *Leadership* looks at the extent to which the behavior of managers affects the implementation of OA. The requirement for leadership stems from the need to coordinate actions of individuals in pursuit of the desired goals (Macharzina & Wolf 2018). Leadership is not to be confused with mere management but is understood as the setting of a direction, the existence of a vision, the ability to inspire others with this vision and to facilitate its realization through effective strategies (Kotter 2015). Particularly for a successful ambidextrous organization, corresponding leadership is an essential aspect as leaders are considered key success drivers (Birkinshaw & Gupta 2013; Jansen et al. 2008, O'Reilly & Tushman 2008). This has been proven by numerous empirical studies accordingly (e.g. Zacher & Rosing 2015; Renzl et al. 2013). In addition to certain leadership styles that favor exploitative or explorative activities, the leadership design dimension also reflects characteristics and skills that leaders should be endowed with. Throughout the transition from an existing business to an innovation business, the behavior of an ambidextrous leader changes between a more directive and task-oriented to an employee-oriented leadership approach (Kollmann et al. 2020). Which leadership style is most appropriate for a given circumstance must be determined in the context of interactions with the relevant employees. Studies have demonstrated that a leadership style encouraging employees to experiment and take risks has a positive effect on exploration, whereas a leadership style taking corrective measures, sanctioning missteps and monitoring goal achievement promotes exploitation (Klonek et al. 2020). According to Rosing et al. (2011), "leaders need not only to possess the intuition of when and how to act but also they need to flexibly switch between behaviors according to situational requirements" (972).

Regarding specific characteristics and attributes of an ambidextrous leader, first and foremost, a comprehensive awareness of OA and its importance is required (He & Wong 2004). To successfully embed OA across hierarchies in an organization, it is essential that leaders embody a willingness to change and, in turn, pass this willingness on to employees. Thus, an important role of leaders is to serve as a visible instance or role model of the entire organization's readiness for change (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996). For leadership to promote the initiative and independence of their employees in their own workplace or the team, there should also be a relinquishment of control, a transfer of responsibility and a delegation of freedoms within the hierarchy (Schneeberger & Habegger 2020).

3 Methodology

Based on the research topic, the empirical approach is outlined in the following. The first sub-chapter begins with the justification and description of the selected research design, followed by an elaboration of the data collection. Finally, this chapter concludes with a description of the applied data analysis approach.

3.1 Research Design

In order to address the research gap mentioned in Chapter 1.2, a qualitative research technique is chosen. Qualitative designs are especially preferable for establishing new theoretical approaches, enhancing established ones and for gathering in-depth information (Edmondson & McManus 2007). Since the main objective of this study is to investigate how organizational ambidexterity is entrenched and implemented in practice, exploratory research is being undertaken (Blumberg et al. 2014). In addition, Agostini et al. (2016) state that given its inherent complexity, organizational ambidexterity necessitates a qualitative research methodology and cannot be encompassed by any other research design. The expert interview is one specific technique of qualitative research that considers an informant in his or her specialized function in a defined study setting (Gläser & Laudel 2006; Pfadenhauer 2009). Against the backdrop of this research interest, the specific form of the semi-structured expert interview based on a guideline is decisive. In particular, this is characterized by the interviewee's openness and freedom in terms of answer alternatives, as the interviewee is not constrained by established answer criteria (Mayer 2013). The partial standardization provided by the underlying interview guideline allows for flexible adaption to the interview circumstances while still ensuring comparability of the interview outcome (Döring & Bortz 2016). Since each company has a distinctive organizational setup, partial standardization facilitates to understand the different perspectives of the companies concerning the design of the dimensions under investigation. In summary, this methodological approach proves to be the most fitting to enable the generation of new understanding about how concepts are entrenched in real-world business contexts, why they operate the way they do and how they build on the ambidexterity theory (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016).

3.2 Data Collection

Interview guide conception and pre-testing. The first stage in preparing for the expert interviews is to create the underlying guideline. In research practice, Helfferich's SPSS technique, i.e. sampling, proofreading, sorting and subsuming questions, has demonstrated its value in ensuring a systematic approach to guideline conception and is therefore used (Helfferich 2011). The initial phase in this process is to gather all questions that are of relevance with respect to the research object. The questions are critically reviewed in the second stage based on prior knowledge, openness and relevance. After filtering out the most relevant questions, the final step is clustering them into a meaningful order (Helferrich 2011).

The structure of the interview guideline adopts a deductive approach and builds on the dimensions that emerged from the literature analysis. The questions are organized into six main thematic sections and are predominantly open-ended to allow the respondents to share in-depth insights while still focusing on the research objectives. The first thematic section focuses on the familiarity and usage of the terminology in the work environment. The second section examines how the two activity patterns of exploration and exploitation are anchored in the organization, as well as the extent to which the balance leads to tensions. Furthermore, two more sections focus on the derived design dimensions at the individual level, namely *Culture and Mindset* as well as *Leadership*. The interview guide concludes with a question intended to enable the interviewee to voice any questions or further thoughts.

To check for inconsistencies among the questions and the completeness of the topics asked, the guide is subjected to a pre-test prior to the expert interviews (Mayer 2013). After minor adjustments, the interview guide was finalized (see Appendix 4). Furthermore, an internal guideline, being more extensive and including an introductory text as well as prepared follow-up questions and notes, was set up (see Appendix 5).

Selection of experts. After developing and testing the interview guide, the goal of the sample selection is to identify a particular group of interviewees who are suitable to provide insights into the topic under investigation (Meuser & Nagel 2009). In the context of this study, purposive sampling is chosen as the sampling method and experts are interviewed who possess special experiential knowledge about the research topic (Döring & Bortz 2016; Patton 2015). To ensure that the recommendations for action to be developed for companies have high practical relevance and present different perspectives, the following criteria were defined for the selection of experts: Employees working in companies that pursue organizational ambidexterity, whose positions are in the broader field of innovation management, business or corporate development or innovation strategy and who belong to the company for at least one year. In addition, the study aimed to deliberately include different industries and company sizes to gain comprehensive insights. Finally, to find suitable interview partners for this study, a direct research technique was adopted (Kruse & Schmieder 2015). Table 1 provides an overview of the twelve experts along with their expertise. For the purpose of anonymity, the interviewees are abbreviated "I" and named "I1" to "I12" in line with the interview sequence.

ID	Position	Industry	Length of service with the company	Company size (number of employees)
I1	Corporate Development Consultant & Executive Assistant to the CEO	Automotive	1 year and 3 months	530 employees
I2	Project Manager Corporate Innovation	Automotive Supplier	5 years and 3 months	72,000 employees
I3	Innovation Manager	Automotive	2 years and 10 months	300 employees
I4	Senior Vice President & Plant Manager	Technology and Services	20 years and 11 months	402,600 employees
I5	Corporate Development Manager	Automotive IT-Services / IT-Consulting	2 years and 10 months	100 employees
I6	Innovation Manager & Head of Smart Farming	Mechanical Engineering	4 years	9,500 employees
I7	Head of Innovation Strategy	Athletic Sportswear and Equipment	7 years and 6 months	79,100 employees
I8	Executive Assistant to the CEO	Medtech	1 year and 5 months	53 employees
I9	Team Lead Digital Innovation & Partnerships	Automotive	3 years and 9 months	173,000 employees
I10	Process Transformation & Innovation Manager	Software Development	7 years and 11 months	107,400 employees
I11	Head of Product Aftersales	Automotive	1 year and 7 months	500 employees
I12	Innovation Manager	Digital Services for TIC-Branche	2 years and 3 months	83 employees

Table 1: Overview Expertpanel

Interview procedure and transcription. The twelve interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams between October 18 and November 04, 2022 and lasted between 50 and 70 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English, except for one interview as the interviewee felt more comfortable speaking the native language. The risk of a possible translation error is considered low due to the researchers‘ language skills. The residual risk was accepted to gain as many insights as possible that would otherwise not be available due to the lack of specialized vocabulary. Prior to the interviews, a written declaration of consent to participate in the interview including permission to record was obtained. The interviews began with a mutual introduction as well as a brief explanation of the research objective and the interview procedure. Furthermore, to avoid knowledge asymmetries (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015), the researchers defined key terminologies such as exploitation and exploration. Subsequently, the questions of the interview guide were asked and dependent on the situation complemented with follow-up questions. The audio recordings were then transcribed for further data analysis. The transcription was performed manually according to the procedure of Kuckartz (2010). Finally, the transcripts were anonymized by removing any personal or organizational data that may be used to identify the interview partners or associated organizations.

3.3 Data Analysis

To analyze the material gathered from the expert interviews, qualitative content analysis in the form of content structuring is applied (Mayring 2015). The procedure aims to analyze the material systematically and to filter out the most essential aspects. At the center of this analysis is a category system, with the help of which the material is classified according to themes. Categories can be defined inductively or deductively, whereby a mixed form is also conceivable (Mayring 2016). Since the objective of the research is explorative in nature and the subjective perspectives of the interview partners are to be taken into account, a deductive-inductive approach was chosen for this study (Mayring 2015). In the first step, the main categories were deductively developed based on the research questions and the research framework. Subsequently, all coded text passages with similar statements were inductively formed into subcategories based on Mayring's three-step procedure (Mayring 2015). An exemplary inductive category formation is shown in Figure 3. To ensure a clear structuring of the material as well as intersubjective comprehensibility, a coding guide was developed (see Appendix 6). In a final coding process, the entire material was revised (see Appendix 7). The table in Appendix 8 provides a comprehensive overview of the developed category system.

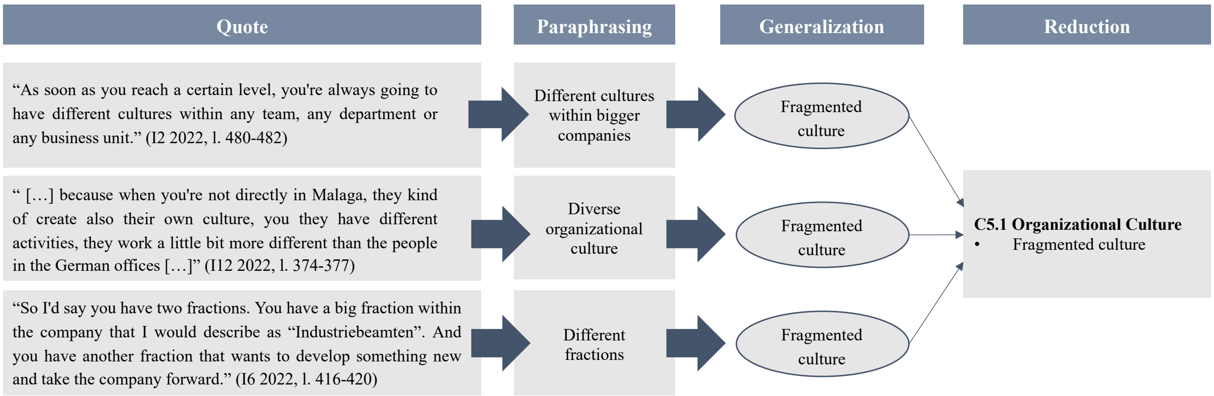

Figure 3: Exemplary Inductive Category Formation (Own illustration)

4 Results

The results of the expert interviews are presented in the following sections utilizing the established category system and concise reference examples. The sub-chapters are based on the categories of the coding guide. Due to the scope of this work, only the most relevant results are provided.

4.1 Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity

In order to find out whether and to what extent the term "Organizational Ambidexterity" finds use in working environments, the interviewees were asked if they were already familiar with the terminology before the interview, whether the term is used within the workplace and if there are other equivalents for the concepts.

Table 2 illustrates that eight out of the twelve interviewees did not know the terminology before the interview (e.g. I1, 29-30; I9, 16). However, the approach itself, exploration versus exploitation, was known to three of those respondents (e.g. I2, 14-17). Half of the respondents do not use the terminology or synonyms within the company (e.g. I3, 13-14). One expert pointed out that with "most things that are academic or theoretical models, the concept is used frequently, but the terminology is not used frequently" (I7, 45-47).

<table>
<tr><th>Nr.</th><th>Category</th><th>Expressions</th><th>Frequency</th></tr>
<tr><td>C1</td><td colspan="3">Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">C1.1</td><td rowspan="4">Familiarity of the terminology</td><td>Term unknown</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Methodology familiar</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Comparison to other strategic model</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Term known</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">C1.2</td><td rowspan="5">Usage of the terminology or synonyms within the company</td><td>No usage of the terminology or synonym</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Using the term partly within the company</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Unknowingly following the meaning of the term</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>Using other term for the meaning</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Usage of the terminology</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2: Category System Excerpt - Familiarity of the Terminology
(Own illustration)

4.2 Exploration vs. Exploitation

To get a first impression of the extent to which the two activity patterns are represented in the company, it was asked to what degree exploration and exploitation are implemented within the company and how the allocation of resources to the two activity patterns behaves. In only two of the twelve companies surveyed, the pursuit of the two activities is balanced (I1, 62-65). Only one interviewee stated that both objectives were pursued, but that they are "doing mainly explorative work" (I5, 41-42). According to the experts, eight of the twelve companies pursue both goals, but the focus is on the area of exploitation (e.g. I4, 52-53; I10, 54-70). Two of the interviewees have indicated that their organizations had focused rather on exploration in the past but are now moving to a more exploitation-focused approach (I9, 58-60; I12, 221-233).

While a clear separation of activities is present in three of the companies (e.g. I3, 27-29), in two companies the separation is not possible (I12, 49-51). One interviewee stated that its organization concentrates first on exploration and then on exploitation, whereas two other companies combine several ways of implementing both activities. This result already gives a first impression of the forms of OA implementation (structural, sequential or contextual), which will be discussed in the following sub-chapter regarding organizational-level design dimensions.

The finding that the majority of organizations focus on exploitation is also reflected in the distribution of resources, as the majority of companies allocate more of the available resources for exploitative work (e.g. I3, 111-115). While some companies have a fixed budget for explorative work that is clearly separated from the rest of the core business, yet not all companies reported this separation and distinct budgeting (e.g. I5, 120-127). In addition, one of the interviewees noted that while more resources are devoted to exploitation, the explorative work generally takes more time (I2, 127-128). According to one of the twelve experts, the allocation of resources also varies according to the level of the hierarchy. Thus, at higher hierarchical levels, more budget is allocated to innovations, while the lower hierarchical levels tend to take on a more executive role (I4, 105-112).

In addition to resource allocation, the study also examined whether other metrics are used to balance the two activity patterns. Overall, a clear picture emerged regarding the difficulty of measuring the two activity patterns, such that in practice different metrics are used for both (I8, 117-128). Five interviewees reported using a mix between soft targets and key figures (e.g. I4, 161-166). One form of measuring corporate goals used by most companies surveyed is the tracking of Objectives and Key Results (OKR) (e.g. I3, 130).

4.3 Individual-Level Design Dimensions

Culture and Mindset. In order to be able to answer RQ3, three core questions of the guideline (see Appendix 4) on the topics of each organizational culture and mindset, feedback and failure culture, and the existence of certain values are aimed at examining their practical implementation in companies.

As can be seen from the excerpt of the category system in Table 4, four out of the twelve experts interviewed reported an exploration-fostering agile mindset within their organization. While "nurturing these mindsets of thinking outside of the box" (I5, 362-363) is highly valued, „learning mindsets, which includes being curious to learn more than just your day-to-day" (I5, 382-384) further contribute to an organizational culture conducive to exploration. While interviewees reported that much has changed and transformed in recent years (I2, 423-425; I6, 431-432), an agile mindset and openness towards change in particular were noted as essential to keep up with the competition (I6, 441-444). Other values embedded in the organizations observed are, for instance, transparency, autonomy, willingness to take risks as well as trust (e.g. I7, 596-599; I11, 590-592; I12, 405-406). The latter mentioned was reported to be especially decisive for promoting explorative teams as "you need to allow space and freedom, empowerment. You need people to blossom" (I8, 305-306).

Nr.	Category	Expressions	Frequency
C5	**Dimension: Culture and Mindset**		
C5.1	Organizational culture	Agile mindset	4
		Cultural change within the last years	2
		Changing the mindset takes time	2
		Collaborative culture	1
		Fragmented culture	5

Table 3: Category System Excerpt - Organizational Culture
(Own illustration)

It is worth highlighting that five of the respondents unsolicited commented about a fragmented culture within their organization making it difficult to create belonging to the overall culture (e.g. I2, 478-482; I6, 408). I9 reported that there is “kind of mindset of us against them kind of in some areas of the company” (I9, 611-612) confining employees to their silos.

Despite the challenge of fragmented cultures within companies, the interviews revealed that the feedback culture is well-developed across all organizations. Seven out of the twelve interviewees reported fixed feedback processes and a general openness to giving and receiving feedback. In many organizations, it is part of the company’s DNA and culture which “enforces that open feedback and that speak up culture” (I11, 643). Two interviewees highlighted that there is in fact dedicated training for employees on how to give and receive feedback (I5, 597-598; I12, 420-421). Moreover, several approaches for encouraging feedback were discussed throughout the interviews. For instance, one expert reported using a designated feedback app that actively motivates employees to give feedback. The more feedback one gives, the more points one receives, which in return could be spent on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities (I9, 641-648). Another corporate example of how feedback can be encouraged was the establishment of a so-called “Feedback Friday” (I12, 417), where employees can invest an hour in an intensive feedback discussion with a colleague of their choice if they wish. Besides, in one of the organizations so-called “Feedback Walks” are implemented, where employees walk around outside the office with their supervisor and give feedback in an open and informal atmosphere (I2, 472-474). Concerning the difficulties associated with feedback, it was noted that, in practice, there is a “struggle [...] that people actually have the time for it“ (I5, 599-600). In addition, one of the interviewees doubted that certain feedback, such as the type of 360-degree assessments, is rarely open and honest but rather political. Instead, it was considered questionable that a subordinate would give negative feedback to the supervisor who is ultimately responsible for promotions (I6, 514-517).

Most of the experts interviewed also reported a strong culture of failure within their organization. In fact, interviewees explicitly acknowledged that innovation is not feasible without a corresponding failure culture. I9 pointed out “if you avoid failure, then you also avoid innovation. Because innovation is always somehow bound to fail” (I9, 669-671). Other interviewees revealed that mistakes are indeed welcome and encouraged. Moreover, they are actively communicated in the context of dedicated events, such as Fuck-Up Nights (I9, 667-668; I11, 196; I4, 441). Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that mostly failures are not perceived as negative, but rather as an opportunity for learning and further development (I5, 567). One interviewee emphasized that “over time, if something is not coming to fruition and you would call it a failure, we actually have rebranded them as learning opportunities or learning experiences” (I7, 622-624). Similarly, I11 supported the idea that a “mindset […] should be also enforced that every failure is also learning and the growth opportunity for individuals, for teams, for an organization“ (I11, 657-659). According to the interviews, a culture of failure also entails cultivating a mindset of trial and error. For instance, I7 emphasized that it is not possible to “[…] innovate and always set out with the idea that everything’s going to be successful” (I7, 614-615). Being able to bury ideas in time if they do not develop as planned should therefore become a habit, and admitting missteps on the way to innovation is considered indispensable (I7, 617-619).

Leadership. Three central questions of the guideline (see Appendix 4) aim, in the context of answering RQ3, to investigate the implementation of an ambidextrous understanding of leadership and the corresponding role model function of leaders. Additionally, the goal is to learn more about the leadership styles, the willingness to change and dealing with tensions in practice.

With regard to leadership behavior, it became clear that this is difficult to generalize, as leadership styles vary greatly within an organization, especially with increasing company size (I9, 697). However, this variation in leadership styles is perceived as something beneficial to the organization in general. According to one interviewee, “the cultural mix alongside the leadership expertise and the skill set that you bring to the table creates a really interesting and healthy dimensionalization around types of leaders that you see and how they're effective within the organization" (I7, 689-693).

In addition to the consensus on varying leadership styles, the interviewees also addressed differing behaviors of managers in explorative and exploitative units, for instance in production (I9, 699-792; I5, 709-712). In fact, the majority of respondents emphasized the necessity for situational adaptability of leadership style. As such, "if you have an established product portfolio, often it's understood what needs to be done and then it's just more task-oriented" (I6, 627-629), whereas "if you're in an explorative approach, you would need to give even more freedom to your people, even more, a free way to come up with your own ideas and safe space to do that" (I5, 709-712). In this respect, two experts shared their concrete implementation of a Servant Leadership style in explorative activities focusing on "enabling, empowering from bottom up and supporting" (I5, 642-643), while "of course, clear guidance and vision and our purpose towards that" (I11, 730-731) are given simultaneously. In terms of encouraging explorative activities, the vast majority, eight out of twelve respondents, reported that a leadership style giving employees the freedom to make decisions and carry out their tasks independently is applied (e.g. I4, 523-524; I8, 304-306; I10, 473-474). In this regard, it was remarked that few decisions are made from the top down (I9, 703-704) and that the emphasis is on employee initiative and responsibility in exploring various issues or ideas (I3, 422-423).

Besides the situational alignment between task orientation for exploitative teams and employee orientation for explorative units, some interviewees further referred to an adjustment at the individual level as being decisive (e.g. I2, 676-580). Drawing on own experiences, I12 shared: „my leader, he always adjusted to people, so where he has a trust in the skill set, he let the people be quite freely in their daily work, where he felt like they need a little bit more steering, he was a little more task oriented. So yes, the good leaders at our companies were able to adapt"

(I12, 502-507). Above all, the significance of generational differences in this context was further addressed. While leaders among the elderly generations are reported to have a very tight and hierarchical style of leadership (I9, 706-711; I12, 473-478), contrarily, the "young team leads […] that are coming up have a much more empowering, much more young innovative culture" (I9, 708-710). Reportedly, this is also reflected in the leaders' attitude and willingness to change, as changing established ways of thinking and discarding longstanding habits and routines pose a hurdle (I6, 579-582). Another respondent shared this argument, claiming that the closer people get to retirement, the less willing they are to change (I10, 221-222).

It is generally noted, that fostering change readiness is not an easy leadership task, especially in a long-standing company (I3, 494-499). Hence, experts expressed that dealing with such resistance among employees requires leaders to not only effectively communicate and create transparency to "get those people on board" (I9, 738) but also "making employees really a part of this change" (I5, 670-671). Moreover, interviewees argued that while dealing with tensions and change, leadership's transparency is most valuable to "explain to the people where certain things come from and why there might be tensions" (I9, 729-731). One interviewee reported that this is put into practice by regular "one-on-ones every month with individuals in their team so they can address doubts, fears, […] concerns related to that change" (I5, 664-666). In this context, three of the experts mentioned trust as a vital leadership trait for allowing employees the freedom required (e.g., I5, 266-267; I9, 353-354).

In general, the interviews indicated that managers' behavior is perceived as role modeling. For instance, I9 stated „people always look at how the manager up there is doing it. If he doesn't do it, then I don't have to do it either. Therefore, it is a very elementary important point that this is lived from the top down" (I4, 401-404). Nevertheless, one expert critically reflected on the current leadership culture and recognized a concrete need for action, for instance concerning transparency or people orientation within the management level (e.g. I11, 749-745).

5 Discussion

The main objective of this research is to shed light on how companies shape different dimensions of work practice relevant to ambidexterity, thus, complementing the current state of research with practical insights of practitioners. In the following, the most important findings obtained through the empirical research are summarized and elaborated on the basis of the research questions RQ1 and RQ3 defined in Chapter 1.2. Furthermore, it is discussed to what extent these results are in line with the basic theoretical assumptions of this thesis.

5.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion

5.1.1 Integration of the Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity in Practice

"As with most academic or theoretical models, the concept is used frequently, but the terminology is not" (I7, 45-47). This statement of one interviewed practitioner reflects what Birkinshaw and Gupta (2013) have already phrased with the comment "Practicing managers don't use the term." (290). In response to the first research question (RQ1), this thesis' research reveals that the majority of interviewees neither know nor utilize the term organizational ambidexterity in their respective organizations. Nonetheless, it becomes clear that there is an intuitive understanding of both exploring and exploiting activity patterns within the organizational setting. Even though all of the organizations investigated pursue both goals, in some cases, it appears that the distinction between both activities by means of incremental innovation, which can be classified in the area of exploitation (O'Reilly & Tushman 2008), and radical innovation, which can be classified in the area of exploration (O'Reilly & Tushman 2008), is not clear to some interviewees. Nevertheless, it is generally recognized that the two domains cause certain tensions, yet they are not fundamentally mutually exclusive. Hence, the intensifying frictions are perceived, there is awareness regarding the paradoxical demands placed on companies and the need to balance these tensions and establish certain measures to deal with them is recognized. Against this background, it can therefore be concluded that organizational ambidexterity is a theoretically elusive construct, but one that is of high relevance in practice.

5.1.2 The Simultaneous Pursuit of Exploitation and Exploration

The competition for scarce resources is frequently cited as a fundamental challenge when combining explorative and exploitative activities (March 1991; Hill & Birkinshaw 2014). OA scholars such as He and Wong (2004) and O'Reilly and Tushman (2008) have noted that the conflicts in implementing OA are created by the struggle for scarce resources, place conflicting demands on the management and the fact that they build on different capabilities. This thesis' research indicates that, in fact, scarce resources are a critical factor for organizations in practice, both financially and in terms of time. As suggested by Schneeberger and Habegger (2020), resources should be allocated top-down and flexibly based on the likelihood of success and necessity. This is also evidenced in business practice, where resource allocation is mainly top-down due to the predominantly hierarchical organizational structure. However, some of the companies have dedicated budgets for both exploration and exploitation. Another issue affecting the distribution of resources is the uncertainty associated with large investments caused by exploration. Nevertheless, Levinthal and March (1993) point out that it can be detrimental for companies to focus only on exploration for this reason. The fact that exploration is financially dependent on exploitation is also reflected in remarks made by practitioners. Exploration requires more time, as radical innovations have a lengthy development process and, according to practitioners, always involve many attempts until a final breakthrough. However, since no revenue is generated during this time, financing relies on the core business. This thesis' research makes it clear that in corporate practice, explorative activities are only possible in combination with well-established exploitation activities, which in turn underlines the high significance of finding an appropriate balance between both. To support and ensure the right balance between exploration and exploitation, the theory emphasizes the use of proper metrics. Schneeberger and Habegger (2020) suggest that to achieve the highest maturity stage of ambidexterity, metrics must be in place to support this goal. The expert interviews acknowledge how difficult it is to find metrics for the right balance of the two activities in practice. While numerous KPIs are used for the core business, for instance by measuring cost efficiency, net sales or profitability, it is more difficult to measure explorative activities. In this case, companies rather look at time, milestones and overall business growth. Despite the difficulties, several companies have indicated measuring activities with both numerical and soft goals, often supported by the use of OKRs. The theoretical recommendations are thus largely reflected in the practical implementation.

Additionally, different demands and especially conflicting interests of the management can cause conflicts in pursuing OA. Nevertheless, the greatest point of conflict occurring from the expert interviews and following the theoretical knowledge is the fact that the two activity patterns build on different capabilities. Thus, combining the different mindsets of the employees is a big challenge for the companies that need to be mastered.

5.1.3 Individual-Level Design Dimensions

Culture and Mindset. Tushman and O'Reilly (1996) already stated: "[..] a common organizational culture is like the glue that holds the organization together" (26). The capabilities needed for exploitation differ from those required for exploration. Hence, to optimally support and accommodate balance, a culture that promotes such integration and unifies the organization across disciplines is critical for fostering ambidexterity (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996). Accordingly, an ambidextrous mindset needs to be entrenched that balances exploitation and exploration and promotes mutual understanding of both domains (Güttel & Konlechner 2009). First and foremost, the present study suggests that keeping up with changing environments and transformations across industries make a change in mindset indispensable. The study shows that particularly older generations often have difficulties with such a change in thinking. Possible explanations in this context lie in the difficulty of bringing about a rethink and a change in entrenched views among experienced employees and managers. The findings demonstrate that practitioners are embedding values such as trust, openness and transparency in their organizations to engage employees and thus counteract resistance to change.

Furthermore, the research literature implies that overarching cultural values should counter the question of why different entities should collaborate rather than compete (O'Reilly & Tushman 2008). The study findings reveal that exploration-promoting values such as openness, autonomy, trust, and transparency are most prevalent in the companies surveyed. Exploitation-promoting values such as adherence to hierarchies, however, are mainly evidenced in long-standing and mature companies. Thus, the balance called for in the literature does not seem to be present in most cases in corporate practice. Rather, the focus is on fostering an innovative climate and culture. This result may be based on the fact that an agile, exploration-promoting culture correlates positively with the generation of innovations and is therefore anchored as a focal point of practicing companies.

In terms of emerging challenges, the research findings suggests that practicing organizations often encounter the emergence of a fragmented culture, especially when there is a structural separation approach to ambidexterity. In particular, the competitive nature between subunits presents a significant conflict of tension in practice. Furthermore, it can be deduced that companies have great difficulties in establishing a common identity and connection between different units and in promoting cooperation. The finding reflected in the research might be based on the fact that the organizational culture itself, is difficult to change.

According to the literature, a positive learning culture in which feedback is encouraged and mistakes are seen as opportunities for further development is considered as a prerequisite for creating an environment for organizational exploration (Sonntag & Stegmaier 2008). Against this backdrop, a culture of tolerance for failures, purposeful addressing of failures and embracing risk and uncertainty emerges as essential (Ireland & Webb 2009). The present study confirms the awareness that explorative activities inevitably involve mistakes and failure in practice. Moreover, findings suggest that the organizations surveyed explicitly attempt to improve the handling of mistakes and to facilitate a learning process in an effort to achieve ambidexterity. In this sense, a variety of methods and mechanisms can be identified, such as "Fuck Up Nights", where mistakes are publicly communicated and possible courses of action are discussed. Potential failure, experimentation and, in the end, exploration, can only be implemented in harmony with appropriate feedback processes. Generally, in practice, the feedback processes of companies surveyed are well-established. However, the findings suggest that agile structures and flattening hierarchies are fundamentally changing classic top-down feedback. Alternative innovative concepts, such as dedicated feedback apps, feedback walks or so-called “Feedback Fridays” are therefore being used.

In summary, it can be deduced that the basic prerequisites of values conducive to exploration, a correspondingly innovation-fostering culture and adaptation of the mindset are predominantly present in corporate practice. In particular, the organizations surveyed proved to be very advanced in terms of strengthening a feedback and failure culture, ultimately, to create space for their employees to experiment and fail. The study reveals, however, that with regard to culture and mindset, tensions arise in breaking down entrenched ways of thinking in some cases. In addition, it seems difficult to establish an overarching culture that unites subcultures, creates a common identity throughout different units and fosters change readiness.

Leadership. According to numerous studies (among others Gibson & Birkinshaw 2004; Jansen et al. 2008; O'Reilly & Tushman 2008; Simsek 2009), the behavior of leadership is essential in determining how firms explore, exploit, and ultimately exhibit ambidexterity. The original idea of ambidextrous leadership is grounded in the premise that a team or organization can only be innovative if the leader is ambidextrous in his or her leadership approach, i.e. can seamlessly shift between explorative and exploitative leadership behaviors (Rosing et al. 2011). The results show that it is difficult to generalize and define a predominant leadership style across all units. However, the findings confirm that in everyday business, most practicing leaders not only adapt their leadership style to the individual needs of their employees but also choose situationally between an explorative and an exploitative nurturing leadership style. This is consistent with long-standing research, as exploration and exploitation tasks involve completely different activities and mostly require different skills and management styles (Leonard-Barton 1992; Quinn 1984). The findings of the study suggest that the predominant leadership behavior in practice for promoting explorative activities is to allow freedom to employees to perform tasks and make decisions. By imposing less direction from above, employees can solve problems independently with little direction from supervisors. Furthermore, what clearly emerges from the findings is the prominence of the leadership in creating a culture of failure. Consequently, it can be deduced that the acceptance of failure is an important identified leadership principle that is used in corporate practice as part of the exploration. Hence, creating a sense of safety, experiencing trust and not receiving sanctions for making mistakes reinforces employees to experiment. Summing up, the results strongly suggest that there is a tendency for more exploration-favoring leadership attributes in practice. One possible explanation for the particular importance attached to exploration-enhancing leadership could be the fact that these activities require more risk-taking and experimentation and thus more sponsorship on the part of the manager.

According to previous studies, it is essential that top management convincingly communicates and exemplifies the basic idea of ambidexterity, i.e., an equal need for exploration and exploitation (O'Reilly & Tushman 2008; Tushman et al. 2011). From the results, it appears that leaders serve as a role model for ambidexterity in practice by exemplifying norms of behavior. For example, the findings show that by modeling norms such as transparency and practicing a culture of failure and feedback, leaders inspire their teams to share knowledge and ideas. Further, OA scholars suggest that leaders need to demonstrate their willingness to change by leading by example and communicating this to employees (O'Reilly & Tushman 2011; Raisch et al. 2009; Schneeberger & Habegger 2020). In practice, this seems to be only partially successful. According to the present study, it is primarily attributable to generational differences within the management level. The organizations surveyed generally note that promoting a willingness to change is difficult to implement, especially in a long-standing traditional company.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

In previous OA literature, theoretical publications have described distinct design dimensions that need to be considered when implementing OA in organizations. However, according to O'Reilly and Tushman (2011), there is a knowledge gap in understanding how ambidexterity is handled in organizations. As a result, the major contribution of this study is to fill this research need in the present literature by using a qualitative research methodology. Since ambidexterity is a complex and challenging concept to understand in practice, practitioners' perspectives help to clarify the organizational challenges of being ambidextrous and viable measures to overcome them. In light of the numerous influencing parameters that need to be taken into account when implementing ambidexterity, this study contributes a more holistic view of the concept spanning several critical dimensions, thus enriching the perspective of previous empirical research mostly focusing on one dimension or micro-level impact perspectives solely.

5.3 Managerial Implications

Against the background of increasing empirical evidence regarding the positive effect of OA to firm performance (among others Cao et al. 2009; Lubatkin et al. 2006; He & Wong 2004), and the resulting practical relevance of ambidexterity, one objective of this study is to derive helpful implications for practice. Among the wealth of findings, essential managerial recommendations are identified, which can be used by practitioners as an impulse to perceive and address emerging areas of tension more consciously. Due to the limited scope of this work, the following paragraphs focus on three implications for practice deemed most important.

Finding a balance between agility and stability

The tension between stability and agility is an increasingly common theme not only in the recent literature on OA. The practitioners interviewed also reconcile agility and agile working models with the pursuit of exploration. However, it should not go unnoticed that agility and stability constitute mutually dependent poles of tension (Gergs & Lakeit 2020). Our findings confirm that the exclusive orientation towards agile organizational forms such as Holacracy leads to far-reaching difficulties, while strongly hierarchical organizations with an abundance of bureaucracy and structures are seen as inhibiting innovation. It is therefore necessary to find an individually adapted balance for each organization. In that sense, management must question traditional systems such as using solely numerical KPIs or strict adherence to calendar-based corporate planning and examine the extent to which this rigidity fundamentally collides with the requirements of agility and trying out new things.

Finding a balance between proximity and distance

It is widely acknowledged that organizations should create a balance between exploration and exploitation, as focusing exclusively on one pattern of activity is likely to keep organizations in a sub-optimal equilibrium. There is, however, no precise answer to the issue of what combination of exploration and exploitation rates constitutes an optimum balance. Since the majority of the surveyed organizations applies ambidexterity in a structural separation approach, this managerial implication focuses on the difficulty of managing tensions that arise between explorative and exploitative teams within the company, i.e. finding an optimal equilibrium between proximity and distance between the two units. While being too proximate to the corporation, for example by means of adhering to predefined structures and exploitative interests, can hinder creativity, being too distant may also be inadequate, as the explorative units are always dependent on existing assets and resources (e.g. human or monetary resources). In addition, the distance between units can lead to cultural friction. Ensuring a strong flow of information as a bridge between exploration and exploitation units can achieve adequate proximity while building trust in the explorative teams and their working techniques is necessary to generate enough distance for unique ideas away from the core activities.

Finding a balance between stability and change

The implementation of organizational ambidexterity necessitates the adoption of an entirely new mindset. The interviews revealed that this occurs at varying rates of speed or slowness for individuals. Therefore, creating an awareness that this transition process can take several years and that there may be resistance to change is indispensable. Finding a balance between organizational change and giving the employees stability is essential. In order to foster a willingness and ability to change, creating stability does not necessarily have to be perceived as counterintuitive. On the contrary, stability aims to give individuals a stronger sense of control and consistency, for example through conscious communication as a basis for building trust, confidence, understanding and predictability.

6 Limitations and Further Research

The present study made it possible to derive helpful implications for managers on how OA can be introduced more successfully in companies. The research framework (see Chapter 2.4) has proven to be an appropriate approach for providing a holistic view of the topic. By distinguishing the dimensions, deep insights into relevant areas for the implementation of OA could be gained and no deductive dimension needed to be added. Despite its diverse contributions, there are limitations to the present study.

Qualitative research in the form of expert interviews is, besides the advantages of providing fine-grained insights, also subject to limitations. Due to the experts' individual perceptions of their companies, the interviews are characterized by a certain subjectivity that cannot be avoided (Helfferich 2014). As a result, different personnel perceptions come to the fore, possibly biasing the results of the study. This subjectivity leads to generally limited generalizability of the interviews. Roles within the organization may also influence these perceptions. Since the interviews were conducted with employees in different positions, the perspectives of the experts also vary, and so do the perceptions of particular aspects (Döring &

Bortz 2016). Apart from the subjectivity of the interview partners, a subjectivity of the researchers also leads to limitations. In particular, this plays a role during the analysis of the interviews. To reduce this risk, the analysis of the empirial data and the classification into the category system was carried out twice independently.

In addition, the selection of the sample results in limitations for the study. As already described in Chapter 4, certain factors, such as strategy communication, depend on the size of the company. In addition, the interviews revealed differences between industries and between manufacturing and non-manufacturing companies. Even though the inclusion of different company sizes and industries in the study limits comparability, it also allows for comprehensive and cross-industry insights.

Some of these limitations give reason to further extend the present research and and to consider individual aspects in more detail in the future. First of all, the choice of sample provides a starting point for further research. The limited comparability of the companies due to different industries and sizes can be addressed and thus investigated in greater depth in the form of separate studies. Further research could examine companies of the same size and in the same industry and subsequently compare them with each other to reveal differences or similarities in the implementation of OA. Secondly, future studies might extend this research by using other research methods such as surveys or focus groups to neutralize subjectivity and achieve greater generalizability. Furthermore, during the investigation of this thesis, the correlation between the different dimensions became clear. This suggests the approach for further research to investigate the extent to which the individual dimensions are interdependent and influence each other.

7 Conclusion

In today's highly competitive environment with increasing cost pressure and the demand to withstand competition, Organizational Ambidexterity (OA) is increasingly coming into focus. However, the question of how ambidexterity is concretely shaped in organizations remains largely unanswered. The present study therefore aimed to contribute to the to-date neglected empirical findings on the concrete understanding and design of ambidexterity in corporate practice and to enrich the current knowledge on how to cope with exploration and exploitation at the organizational as well as individual level. Using the research framework proposed in this thesis (see Section 2.4), it has been possible to gather first-hand practical insights on the dimensions of *Strategy*, *Structure and Processes*, *Culture and Mindset*, and *Leadership* that helped to discuss and to better understand ambidexterity in organizations. As a final conclusion, findings have provided a detailed but demarcated description of how exploration and exploitation occur within twelve organizations and what kind of tensions arise in the practical implementation of OA. The study proved that approaching ambidexterity in an organization is a challenging accomplishment and that the dimensions studied are often closely interrelated. Consequently, looking at one single aspect in isolation is not useful as multiple factors on every dimension are influencing a company's ability to balance both activities. Thus, this thesis pointed to three managerial implications to serve as overarching thought-provoking impulse on how organizations can address the right balance between exploiting current capabilities for the present and exploring new capabilities for the future. For as quoted at the very beginning "[...] those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future" (John F. Kennedy 1963). Although the terminology has not yet been fully adopted in corporate practice, the awareness of the need to link exploitation and exploration is ultimately the basis for the continued existence and successful development of companies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Abbreviations

HR	Human Resources
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
OA	Organizational Ambidexterity
OKR	Objectives and Key Results
RQ	Research Question
R&D	Research and Development
TIC	Testing, Inspection, Certification

Appendix 2: List of Figures

Appendix 3: List of Tables

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

Expert interview within the scope of the final thesis on the subject of
"Organizational ambidexterity in practice - An exploratory study to examine the implementation of selected organizational- and individual-level design dimensions"
at the NOVA School of Business and Economics

Question category		Guiding questions
C1	**Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity**	• Were you already familiar with the term "organizational ambidexterity" (OA) before the interview? • Is the term OA used in your everyday work within your organization?
C2	**Exploration vs. Exploitation**	• To what extent does your company pursue the following business objectives: *Exploitation* (i.e. build on and extend core competencies) and *Exploration* (i.e. promoting innovation e.g. by entering new markets)? • If you would have to rate on a scale of 0 to 10, how important is each of these goals in your business? • Where do you see conflicts in pursuing the two business goals mentioned above? • How would you describe the allocation of time and resources related to exploration and exploitation activities in your company? • Are there any measures in your organization to balance exploration and exploitation activities?
C3	**Dimension: Strategy**	• To what extent are the two activity patterns anchored in the corporate strategy and/or vision? • How is the corporate strategy communicated to employees? • What kind of difficulties do you see in implementing the corporate strategy? • To what extent is the corporate strategy present for the employees in their daily work?
C4	**Dimension: Structure & Processes**	• Please describe the organizational structure in your company. • Is there a structural separation between the above mentioned areas of activity (i.e. focus on core business and innovation activities)? • Please describe the extent to which your employees can drive forward innovative topics away from day-to-day business in their working hours. • How do HR processes look like in your company that encourage explorative and exploitative employee behavior? In terms of: - Incentive systems - Staff selection - Knowledge transfer and management

		• Do your company's processes tend to be rather flexible or structured?
C5	**Dimension: Culture and Mindset**	• How would you describe the organizational culture in your company? • Please describe how feedback and failures are dealt with in your company. • Please describe the extent to which the following values are embedded in your company's organizational culture? - Independence - Willingness to take risks - Transparency - Self-initiative
C6	**Dimension: Leadership**	• Please describe the leadership style in your organization. • Is the leadership style rather task-oriented or employee-oriented? • Is innovation business driven by top management decisions or employee initiatives?

Appendix 5: Internal Interview Guide

- **General Introduction**
  Thank you for your participation, before we start we would like to introduce ourselves and then would be happy to also get to know you a bit better, learn more about your current position, etc.

- **Introduction Researchers + Upcoming Interview**
  Before we start, let me give you some details about the upcoming hour we have together: Timing about 1h; completely voluntary; recording to transcribe and evaluate the insights; information is treated confidentially; statements will be anonymized and not evaluated with names

START RECORDING

- Before we start, we would like to share the fundamental understanding of the topic of ambidexterity so that we have a common base of understanding. The concept of an ambidextrous organization describes the ability to simultaneously exploit current competencies (referred to as exploitation) and explore new opportunities (referred to as exploration) and thereby secure their competitiveness in the long run.
- In other words, the aim is to assert oneself in established markets with the core business through efficiency and continuous optimization and rather incremental innovation (exploitation), as well as to develop future business potential for possible new markets in a flexible, experimental and creative way by rather radical innovations (exploration).

Question Category		Guiding questions	Notes / Further Questions
K1	**Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity**	• Were you already familiar with the term "organizational ambidexterity" before the interview? • Is the term OA used in everyday work in your organization?	*If no*: Do you use any other synonyms dealing with both goals in your organization? *If yes*: Would you say dealing with both exploitation and exploration is Organizational Amidexterity in your opinion?

K2	**Exploration vs. Exploitation**	• To what extent does your company pursue the following business objectives: ***Exploitation*** (making profits in already developed markets, focusing on core business) and ***Exploration*** (promoting innovation and progress, e.g., by entering new markets)? • On a scale of 0 to 10, how important is each of these goals in your business? • Where do you see conflicts in pursuing the two business goals above in your company? • How would you describe the allocation of time and resources related to exploration and exploitation in your company? • Are there other measures in your organization to balance the two activity patterns?	
K3	**Dimension: Strategy**	• To what extent are the two action patterns anchored in the corporate strategy and/or your vision? • How is the corporate strategy and vision communicated to employees? • What difficulties do you see in implementing your corporate strategy and vision? • To what extent is the corporate strategy and vision present for the employees in their daily work?	Besides of the strategy, do you have an overarching vision giving an indication for a direction in which your organization should develop?

K4	**Dimension: Structure & Processes**	• Please describe the organizational structure in your company. • Is there a structural separation between the two areas of activity (core business and innovation activities)? • Please describe the extent to which your employees can drive forward innovative topics away from day-to-day business in their working hours. • How do HR processes look like in your company that encourage explorative and exploitative employee behavior? In terms of: - Incentive systems - Staff selection - Knowledge transfer and management • Do your company's processes tend to be flexible or structured?	
K5	**Dimension: Culture and Mindset**	• How would you describe the organizational culture in your company? • Please describe how feedback and failures are dealt with in your company. • Please describe the extent to which the following values are embedded in your company's organizational culture? - Independence - Willingness to take risks - Transparency - Self-initiative	• How important is it within your organization to adhere to hierarchies? • How important are values such as autonomy, initiative, risk-taking, openness and transparency in your organization? • How do you notice this? (Examples for verification)

K6	**Dimension: Leadership**	• Please describe the leadership style in your organization. • Is the leadership style more task-oriented or employee-oriented? • Is innovation business driven by top management decisions or employee initiatives?	Also, e.g., willingness to change, dealing with tension, delegation of responsibility Is the decision of task- vs. employee-orientation something that depends on the situation? Examples: • *Task-oriented:* Directive, delegative, hierarchical, strict following of rules and instructions • *Employee-oriented:* focused on empowerment of individual employees, self-organization and freedom of action

- Which of the discussed topics is the most important in terms of balancing the described activity patterns?
- Which of the discussed topics creates the most tension in your opinion?
- Do you have anything in mind that you would like to add, that seems important for you?
- Do you have further contacts that might be an interesting interview partners for us?

Appendix 6: Interview Coding Guide

Nr.	Category	Definition	Examples	Coding rules
C1	**Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity**			
C1.1	Familiarity of the terminology	All statements that provide information about the awareness of the terminology "Organizational Ambidexterity" or synonyms.	"So the word ambidexterity means you can work with both hands, I think. So in an organizational aspect I wasn't familiar with that" (I3 2022, l. 4-6)	The definition must be applicable.
C1.2	Usage of the terminology or synonyms within the company	All statements that provide information about the use of terminology in everyday work.	„As with most things that are academic or theoretical models, the concept is used frequently, but the terminology is not used frequently." (I7 2022, l. 45-47)	The definition must be applicable.
C2	**Exploration vs. Exploitation**			
C2.1	Pursuit of the two activity patterns	All statements that provide information about the pursuit of exploitative and explorative activities.	"We spend a disproportionate amount of our time in that exploratory nature" (I7 2022, l. 81-82)	The definition must be applicable.
C2.2	Conflicts in pursuing the two activity patterns	All statements that provide information about conflicts in pursuing exploitative and explorative activities within the company.	"[…] it is very important to reflect on a sustainable growth because just growing could lead to problems or conflicts with the goal of improving the day-to-day life or our delivery capability […]" (I11 2022, l. 113-116)	The definition must be applicable.
C2.3	Resource allocation related to the two activity patterns	All statements that provide information about the resource allocation related to exploitative and explorative activities.	"So we have some budget for exploration, but it's very small compared to what the other departments have for exploitation." (I3 2022, l. 111-113)	The definition must be applicable.

C2.4	Measures to balance the two activity patterns	All statements that provide information about other measures to balance the two activity patterns.	"I think the metric is business opportunity in terms of not realized sales, when you look at exploration. When it comes to exploitation, then it's essentially market share" (I6, 2022, l. 128-130)	The definition must be applicable.
C2.5	Most important dimension for enabling organizational ambidexterity	All statements that provide information about the most important dimension for the implementation of organizational ambidexterity	"So, having this structure in place I think is the most important thing to start." (I12 2022, l. 540-541)	The definition must be applicable.
C2.6	Dimension that generates the most tensions	All statements that provide information about the dimension that generates the most tension combining the two activity patterns	"I would say culture and mindset and leadership might be the most challenging dimensions when it comes to the combination of both patterns, in my opinion" (I11 2022, 859-861)	The definition must be applicable.
C3	**Dimension: Strategy**			
C3.1	Anchoring the activity patterns in the corporate strategy and vision	All statements that provide information about anchoring of explorative and exploitative activities in the corporate strategy and vison.	"So I would say also in strategy, we have kind of a balance between developing new service but also digitalizing services and building digital service." (I11 2022, l. 135-138)	The definition must be applicable.
C3.2	Communication of the corporate strategy and vision	All statements that provide information about the communication of the corporate strategy and vision	"I mean we have Intranet, we have different events, internal employee events, where our marketing department of course always communicates what the new strategy is. I mean this is really something that is communicated top down. Everyone knows it pretty well I would say." (I2 2022, l. 188-193)	The definition must be applicable.

C3.3	Implementation difficulties of the strategy	All statements that provide information about difficulties in the implementation of the strategy.	"So there are so many entities or little companies so to say within the *[company name]* world doing their own stuff, who are in the regions and providing services so that is always the tricky part to communicate it to also these own little companies, so to say" (I12 2022, l. 186-190)	The definition must be applicable.
C3.4	Employee awareness of the strategy	All statements that provide information on the extent to which the corporate strategy is present to employees in their daily work.	"But I see it as a very important because it gives also the employees kind of meaning and purpose for this daily work if he can identify himself with the company and the company's goals. So I see that as very important and a topic where I think you are never finished." (I11 2022, l. 213-217)	The definition must be applicable.
C4	**Dimension: Structure & Processes**			
C4.1	Organizational structure	All statements that provide general information about the structure of the company.	"[…] we have a matrix organization which was implemented one and a half years ago." (I3 2022, l. 231-232)	The definition must be applicable.
C4.2	Implementation of organizational ambidexterity	All statements that provide information about the structural implementation of explorative and exploitative activity patterns.	"That is purposefully separated to allow enough of the budget on investing year over year to be able to be funneled towards new products" (I7 2022, l. 377-379)	The definition must be applicable.
C4.3	Opportunities for employees to drive innovation	All statements that provide information to which extend employees have the opportunity to drive innovation topics within their worktime	"[…] employees are allowed to spent 20% on impact projects, which can be something innovative, which can be something other meaningful […]" (I11 2022, l. 374-377)	The definition must be applicable.

C4.3	HR processes to encourage explorative and exploitative employee behavior	All statements that provide information about HR processes to encourage explorative and exploitative employee behavior	"We don't have any sort of incentive system yet. It's more based on intrinsic motivation." (I1 2022, l. 266-268)	The definition must be applicable.
C4.5	Internal processes	All statements that provide information about company's processes	"[…] we want to implement more professional processes for sure for certain activities like HR and all stuff. But currently it's really more flexible […]" (I12 2022, l. 353-355)	The definition must be applicable.
C5	**Dimension: Culture and Mindset**			
C5.1	Organizational culture	All statements that provide general information about	"I would say that if shifted in the past towards more openness, more open-mindedness, more orientation also towards the customer" (I9 2022, l. 534-536)	The definition must be applicable.
C5.2	Importance of adherence to hierarchies	All statements that provide information about the importance to adhere to hierarchies within the organization	"So everybody will be using hierarchical terms and you can hear it in everyday life, in everyday conversations, that hierarchy plays a huge role." (I9 2022, l. 561-563)	The definition must be applicable.
C5.3	Anchoring values in the organizational culture	All statements that provide information about the anchoring of certain values in the corporate culture	"[…] we really strive for high level of autonomy and also the teams should be able to take the required risk that that are needed to really drive that way and challenge their problems that they are facing […]" (I11 2022, l. 605-609)	The definition must be applicable.
C5.4	Dealing with feedback	All statements that provide information about the organization's handling of feedback	"I'd say we have a really good feedback culture. […] Where we struggle a bit is that people actually have the time for it" (I5 2022, l. 590-600)	The definition must be applicable.

C5.5	Dealing with failure	All statements that provide information about the organization's handling of failures	"[..] *[company name]* is in many regards a safe space or a place of psychological safety. So failure is welcomed and part of every day's business [...]" (I1 2022, l. 392-394)	The definition must be applicable.
C6	**Dimension: Leadership**			
C6.1	Leadership	All statements that provide general information about the leadership style	"And speaking of leadership, I would say in an agile world it is not the classical one that a lot of firms and also our *[company name]* is used to work and it's more a servant leadership style […]" (I11 2022, l. 723-726)	The definition must be applicable.
C6.2	Task-oriented or employee-oriented leadership style	All statements that provide information about whether the management style is more task-oriented or employee-oriented	"We are moving toward like a lot more people-oriented leadership" (I5 2022, l. 682-683)	The definition must be applicable.
C6.3	Source of innovation in the company	All statements that give information about innovations tend to be driven by employees or top down by management.	"Now when it comes to new product development or innovations, then this is very much driven by the shareholders themselves, who are very strongly interconnected in the market and with other entrepreneurial families" (I6 2022, l. 54-58)	The definition must be applicable.

Appendix 7: Interview Transcripts

Interview Transcripts can be provided upon request (50599@novasbe.pt).

Appendix 8: Category System with Expressions

Nr.	Category	Expressions	Frequency
C1	**Terminology Organizational Ambidexterity**		
C1.1	Familiarity of the terminology	Term unknown	8
		Methodology familiar	3
		Comparison to other strategic model	1
		Term known	4
C1.2	Usage of the terminology or synonyms within the company	No usage of the terminology or synonym	6
		Using the term partly within the company	1
		Unknowingly following the meaning of the term	2
		Using other term for the meaning	3
		Usage of the terminology	1
C2	**Exploration vs. Exploitation**		
C2.1	Pursuit of the two activity patterns	Balance exploitation vs. exploration	2
		Sequential ambidexterity	1
		Doing both with focus on exploitation	8
		Doing both with focus on exploration	1
		Separation between both not possible	2
		Separation between both activity patterns	3
		Combining multiple ways of doing both	2
		Focus changes from more explorative to exploitative	2
C2.2	Conflicts in pursuing the two activity patterns	Limited resources	2
		Exploration monetary dependent on exploitation	2
		Different employee mentality	5
		Conflicting interests	2
		Risk of cannibalization	1
		Conflicts perceived as beneficial	1
		Rigid processes hold back innovations	1
		Unsustainable growth	1
		Missing understanding for the relation of the two patterns.	1
		Depending on the maturity stage of the company	1
C2.3		No dedicated budget for innovation	1

	Resource allocation related to the two activity patterns	Exploration takes a lot of time	1
		More resources for exploitation	4
		Dedicated budget for innovation	3
		Dependent on the hierarchical level	1
C2.4	Measures to balance the two activity patterns	No measures	1
		Measured both with figures and soft goals	5
		Difficulties to find metrics for innovation	2
		Different focus in measurement for activity patterns	1
C2.5	Most important dimension for enabling organizational ambidexterity	Structure and processes as basis	4
		Leadership	4
		Environment for ambidexterity	3
		Interrelatedness of multiple dimensions	2
		Strategy	1
C2.6	Dimension that generates the most tensions	Resource allocation	1
		Strategy	2
		Lack of understanding of different departments	1
		Difficulties to change the mindset	1
		Leadership	3
		Structure and processes	5
		Culture and Mindset	1
C3	**Dimension: Strategy**		
C3.1	Anchoring the activity patterns in the corporate strategy and vision	Clear (explorative and/or exploitative) strategic intent not defined	4
		Focus on sustainable growth	1
		Focus on growth	2
		Both activity patterns clearly anchored	3
		Implicit anchoring of both activities in the strategy	4
		Clear (explorative and/or exploitative) intent not defined in the vision	1
		No defined vision	1
		Clear focus on exploitation only	1
		Importance of regular revision of the strategy	1
C3.2	Communication of the corporate strategy and vision	Improving communication	1
		Application of OKRs	4
		Regular communication measures	8
		Easy communication across hierarchies	1
		Structured top-down communication	3

		Developing the strategy together with the employees	1
C3.3	Implementation difficulties of the strategy	Missing purpose/vision	2
		Less commitment to the strategy due to top-down communication	4
		More discussions about the strategy in smaller companies	1
		Limited resources	2
		Difficulties to implement something new	1
		(Older) Employees stuck in their comfort zone	1
		Different companies within the corporate	1
C3.4	Employee awareness of the strategy	High awareness because of a small company size	1
		Entrepreneurial nature within the company	1
		Less understanding when changing significantly	1
		Depending on the willingness of the employees	1
		Missing overarching purpose	1
C4	**Dimension: Structure & Processes**		
C4.1	Organizational structure	Missing structure	1
		Hierarchical structure	7
		Matrix organization	1
		Changing the structure because of the company size	1
C4.2	Implementation of organizational ambidexterity	No structural separation	2
		Dedicated roles for exploration	2
		Structural separation by departments	7
		Exploration through development of start-ups	1
		Dependent on the level of seniority	1
C4.3	Opportunities for employees to drive innovation	Dedicated time for innovation	6
		No dedicated time for innovation	4
		Innovation platform	4
		Incubator program	2
		No time for additional innovative work	2
		Employees working together with the innovation department	1
C4.4	HR processes to encourage explorative and exploitative	No monetary incentives for innovations	6
		HR processes focusing on exploitation	2
		Inefficient use of knowledge management platform	1
		Monetary incentives for start-ups	1

	employee behavior	Knowledge management system	8
		Employees don't want variable salary	1
		Difficulties with knowledge management	1
		Incentives through performance measures	2
		Mentorship program to share knowledge	2
		No HR processes focusing on ambidexterity	1
		No knowledge management system	1
		Recruiting process focusing on explorative skills	2
		Ambidexterity anchored in HR processes but not lived	1
		Knowledge transfer through job changes supported	2
		Depends on the manager	1
		HR processes to foster ambidexterity	2
		Job shadowing to foster knowledge exchange	1
		Job rotation to foster open-mindedness	1
		Support rather than incentives	1
C4.5	Internal processes	Flexible processes	3
		Inefficiency due to missing processes	2
		Less bureaucracy due to flexible processes	1
		Lack of data quality	2
		Increasing efficiency due to standardized processes	2
		Different level of flexibility in different departments	6
		Structured processes to be efficient	1
		Very structured processes	1
C5	**Dimension: Culture and Mindset**		
C5.1	Organizational culture	Commitment to the company	1
		Focus on developing a good organizational culture	1
		Agile mindset	4
		Different mindset depending on the activity pattern	1
		Cultural change within the last years	2
		Changing the mindset takes time	2
		Collaborative culture	1
		Fragmented culture	5
		Entrepreneurial spirit within the organizational culture	1

		Ambition to be the best anchored in the culture	1
		High importance of culture to enable innovation	1
C5.2	Importance of adherence to hierarchies	Different importance depending on the team and people	1
		Not important in innovation team	1
		Important role of hierarchies	2
		No important to adhere to hierarchies	1
C5.3	Anchoring values in the organizational culture	Open mindset anchored in the values	3
		Employees not willing to take risk	1
		Transparency not actively pushed	1
		Self-initiative anchored in the values	2
		Transparency depending on the teams and employees	2
		Importance of leaders serving as role model	1
		Strict consequences for not living the values	1
		Independence actively promoted	1
		Willingness to take risk	2
		Autonomy, self-initiative and risk taking are not anchored in the values	3
		Autonomy, self-initiative and risk taking depend on the employee's willingness	1
		Transparency anchored in the values	1
		Autonomy, self-initiative and risk taking anchored in the values	1
C5.4	Dealing with feedback	Demand for more feedback	2
		Feedback integrated regularly	7
		Dependent on the team/manager	2
		Lack of time for feedback	1
C5.5	Dealing with failure	Failure is welcome	6
		Failure is partly seen as something bad	1
		Events to present recent failures	1
		Failure culture needs to be improved	3
		Failure seen as something bad	1
		Failure needs a sponsor	1
C6	**Dimension: Leadership**		
C6.1	Leadership Style	Allowance of freedom	8
		Defined leadership principles	1
		No common leadership style	4
		Age as influencing factor for leadership style	3

		Leadership is not a priority	1
		Positive perception of leadership	2
		Transparency to deal with tensions and change	4
		Participating leadership style	1
		Strong top-down leadership	1
		Focus on consistency	1
		Processes to ensure good leadership	1
		Negative leadership experience with Holacracy	1
		Servant Leadership	2
		Focus on trust	3
C6.2	Task-oriented or employee-oriented leadership style	Employee-oriented leadership	3
		Situational leadership	4
		Mixture between task- and employee oriented	3
		Depends on the department	4
		Task-oriented on a higher hierarchical level	1
		Employee-oriented on a lower hierarchical level	1
		Rather task-oriented	2
		Strive for more employee orientation	1
C6.3	Source of innovation in the company	Incremental innovation top-down	2
		Radical innovation bottom-up	2
		Innovation from both ways	3
		Management only giving the budget	1
		Incremental innovation bottom-up	3
		Radical innovation top-down	3
		Innovations driven more bottom-up	1
		Innovation mainly driven by the management	1