STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS IN CONTINUUM: RESILIENCE AND AGILITY PATHWAYS TO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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ABSTRACT
Organisations in developing economies encounter distinct contextual constraints and competitive dilemmas. They face intensifying operational challenges when seeking competitive advantage. However, limited research addresses how strategic orientations function in such contexts. This theoretical study addresses this research gap, by examining how exploration and exploitation distinctly influence competitive advantage, investigating their mediating and moderating relationships, and institutional mechanisms. The framework demonstrates that exploration driven resilience fosters competitive advantage through adaptive strategic competencies, knowledge diversification, and operational alignment. Whereas, exploitation driven strategic agility facilitates positional leverage through procedural and operational optimisation, and structured resource realignment. Competitive intensity and market turbulence act as critical boundary conditions enhancing the theorised relationships. Leveraging dynamic capabilities and contingency theories, this framework conceptualizes ambidexterity as balancing exploration and exploitation in continuum rather than their simultaneous pursuit. Where, strategic orientations are configured for regulatory and contextual intricacy. The developed framework yields actionable insights guiding capability development and contextual responsiveness. Whereby organisations can mitigate structural and capability limitations.

Keywords: Strategic Orientations, Competitive Advantage, Organisational Resilience, Strategic Agility, Market Turbulence.
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STRATEJİK YÖNELİMLERİN SÜREKLİLİĞİ: REKABET ÜSTÜNLÜĞÜNE GİDEN YOLDA DAYANIKLILIK VE ÇEVİKLİLİK

ÖZ
Gelişmekte olan ekonomilerdeki organizasyonlar, kendilerine özgü bağlamsal kısıtlamalar ve rekabet ikilemleriyle karşı karşıyadırlar. Organizasyonlar rekabet avantajı elde etmeye çalışırken artan operasyonel zorluklarla mücadele etmektedirler. Ancak, stratejik yönelimlerin bu tür bağlamlarda nasıl işlediğine dair araştırmanın sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir. Bu kuramsal çalışma, bu araştırma boşluğunu doldurmayı amaçlamakta; keşif (exploration) ve yararlanma (exploitation) stratejilerinin rekabet avantajını nasıl farklı şekillerde etkilediğini incelemekte, aracı ve düzenleyici ilişkilerini ile kurumsal mekanizmaları araştırmaktadır. Çalışmada geliştirilen çerçeve, keşfe dayalı dirençliliğin; uyarlanabilir stratejik yetkinlikler, bilgi çeşitliliği ve operasyonel uyum yoluyla rekabet avantajını desteklediğini göstermektedir. Öte yandan, yararlanmaya dayalı stratejik çeviklik; süreçsel ve operasyonel optimizasyon ile yapılandırılmış kaynak yeniden düzenlemesi yoluyla konumsal avantaj sağlamaktadır. Rekabet yoğunluğu ve piyasa dalgalanması, öne sürülen ilişkileri güçlendiren kritik sınır koşulları olarak işlev görmektedir. Dinamik yetenekler ve

durumsallık teorilerinden yararlanan bu kuramsal çerçeve, çift yönlülüğü (ambidexterity) keşif ve yararlanma arasında süreklilik içinde bir denge olarak kavramsallaştırmakta, bunların eşzamanlı yürütülmesinden ziyade bağlamsal ve düzenleyici karmaşıklığa göre yapılandırılmasını önermektedir. Geliştirilen bu çerçeve, yetkinlik geliştirme ve bağlamsal duyarlılık konularında uygulanabilir içgörüler sunmakta; böylece organizasyonların yapısal ve yetkinlik temelli sınırlılıklarını azaltmalarına olanak tanımaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Stratejik Oryantasyonlar, Rekabet Avantajı, Örgütsel Dayanıklılık, Stratejik Çeviklik, Pazar Türbülansı.
Araştırma Alanı: İşletme
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1. INTRODUCTION

In developing economies, like Pakistan, technological disruption alters operational dynamics (Teece et al., 2016), introducing challenges that require strategic flexibility and adaptation capabilities (D'Aveni et al., 2010). Having response mechanisms distinct from those in developed economies (Malik & Kotabe, 2011), developing economies require localised market knowledge assimilation (Bashir & Verma, 2019), dynamic resource reallocation (Anwar et al., 2018) and augmented organisational robustness (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), to transition from ambidextrous approach to directional strategies (Lavie et al., 2010).

Exploration entails investigation, experimentation and innovation, while exploitation incorporates operational excellence (O'Cass et al., 2014). Although both orientations strengthen competitive positioning, simultaneous engagement thereof depicts challenges in emerging economies (Lavie et al., 2010; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008), where traditional ambidextrous approach yields performance inefficiencies (Parida et al., 2016; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008), questioning their utility (Sirmon et al., 2011).

In transitioning economies, competitiveness is operationalised through divergent strategic orientations, where, exploration orientation catalyses innovative opportunity optimisation (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008), exploitation orientation underpins operational excellence optimisation (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Doz & Kosonen, 2010), resilience sustains adaptive continuity capacity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2017), agility differentiates dynamic capabilities reconfiguration (Teece et al., 2016), competitive intensity amplifying rivalry driven advantage pressures (D'Aveni et al., 2010), and market turbulence exacerbates environmental dynamism premium (Teece et al., 1997; Bashir & Verma, 2019). These factors bridge competing strategic demands, by establishing and maintaining preferable market position, despite environmental constraints (Parida et al., 2016).

In developing and transitional economies, resilience building is a key strategic pillar (ADB, 2021; Weber et al., 2024), where, resilience and agility translate strategic orientations to competitive advantage (Musa & Enggarsyah, 2025; Doz & Kosonen, 2010), enabling market capitalisation (Rizki et al., 2023). Amid resource constraints, resource-intensive ambidextrous approach is not feasible (Ahammad et al., 2021), therefore, context and capabilities specific strategic orientations are more beneficial (Adomako et al., 2022; Ahammad et

al., 2021). This is relevant to south Asian economies, where focused strategic orientations are key to competitiveness (van Lieshout et al., 2021).

In the South Asian context, academic review identifies five important research gaps: first, strategic orientations are primarily analysed in resource rich environments, neglecting constrained contexts (Jurado-Salgado et al., 2024). Second, as agility operates differently in constrained contexts, research questions the applicability of established frameworks (Abdalla et al., 2025; Trieu et al., 2024). Third, mechanisms that translate orientations to competitive advantage remain under explored (Khan et al., 2022). Fourth, mediating roles of resilience and agility as differential translators of strategic orientations, require further theoretical development and empirical validation (ADB, 2021; Duchek, 2020). Fifth, boundary conditions of market turbulence and competitive intensity to the strategic orientations-advantage model, function in unique manner, requiring further deliberation (Zhong et al., 2022; Purnomo et al., 2021).

This research proposes boundary conditions for translating strategic orientations to competitive advantage, by empirically investigating and analysing: (1) how exploration and exploitation act as distinct strategic approaches; (2) how exploration develops resilience; (3) how exploitation influences agility; (4) how resilience enhances exploration-induced competitive capabilities; (5) how agility augments exploitation to competitiveness; (6) how market rivalry shapes the direct and indirect strategic pathways; and (7) how market turbulence facilitates resilience-competitive dynamics. Thereby, advancing theory and practice for developing, emerging and transition economies.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploration is characterised by strategic pre-emption and differentiation, for risk propensity, and disruptive market innovation (Zhou & Li, 2012; Jansen et al., 2006). Conversely exploitation entails operational efficiency (March, 1991; Porter, 1985), and systemic refinement (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Jansen et al., 2006).

Sequential balancing of orientations ensures optimised performance (Khanna & Palepu, 2010), where configuring organisational predispositions for competitiveness enables capabilities development and resource management (Lavie et al., 2010).

Resilience, an organisational dynamic disruption absorption capacity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), comprises foresight and reconfiguration flexibility (Williams et al., 2017). It sustains core operations and leverages exploit potential (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Hamel & Välikangas, 2003). Agility, an operational adaptive capacity (Doz & Kosonen, 2010), entails: collective commitment to strategic objectives (Lewis et al., 2014); resource fluidity for resource mobilisation and market acuity (Teece et al., 2016); and strategic sensitivity, addressing commercial prospects through market intelligence framework (Fourné et al., 2014; Kale et al., 2019).

Competitive intensity represents competitor density and behavioural unpredictability (Porter, 1985). It is attributed to differentiation pressures and market constraints (Auh & Menguc, 2005). Market Turbulence is characterised by consumer preference volatility, technological disruption and institutional instability (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). It represents the dynamism of market based environmental shifts (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Together they contribute towards operational and commercial value generation (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2019).

Competitive advantage represents an organisation's superior market positioning compared to its competitors (Porter, 1985). It ensures value generation, unmatched resources and competence, and stakeholder satisfaction (Teece et al., 1997). It manifests as cross functional exogenous and endogenous collaboration mechanisms, and situation specific knowledge and capabilities deployment (Khanna & Palepu, 2010; Malik & Kotabe, 2011), cultivating innovation (Anwar & Shah, 2020).

Exploration contributes knowledge diversity (Zhou & Li, 2012), experimental innovation, and market shaping capacity (Malik & Kotabe, 2011). Exploitation manifests performance refinement capabilities (Benner & Tushman, 2003) for efficiency driven competitive positioning (Anwar et al., 2018). Together these strategic orientations shape organisational posture.

Amidst environmental constraints, markets cannot foster simultaneous explorative and exploitative orientation, as ambidextrous pursuit results in sub-optimal performance (Parida et al., 2016). Faced with operational hindrances, organisations navigating exogenous impediments, require sequential strategic operationalisation (Lavie et al., 2010).

Resilience enhances the exploration-advantage pathway through capabilities' orchestration (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016) and opportunity capitalisation (Bashir & Verma, 2019). Agility strengthens exploitation-advantage pathway through market posture calibration and operational alignment (Teece et al., 2016).

Market disruption enhances competitiveness through resilience mediated advantage (Teece et al., 1997), thereby tackling disequilibrium (Zeb et al., 2021) in developing economies.

Competitive intensity supports explorative-innovative market disruption (Auh & Menguc, 2005), exploitative-efficiency (Porter, 1985), and market superiority (Wilden & Gurdergan, 2015).

Novel strategic orientations develop flexible capabilities for operational excellence (Anwar & Shah, 2020). 'Exploration-induced-resilience' reinforces regulatory compliance (Bashir & Verma, 2019). 'Exploitation-induced-agility' establishes capability leveraging (Yasmin et al., 2020), thereby cultivating strategic fit.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

'Figure 1' illustrates the conceptual framework and research propositions; and 'Figure 2' delineates the theoretical framework.

3.1. Integrated Theoretical Framework

3.1.1. Governing Theories

This research postulates an analytical framework based in dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997), ambidexterity theory (March, 1991), contingency theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), and institutional voids theory (Khanna & Palepu, 1997); delineating the role of operational transformation, competitive posture, strategic market fit, resource realignment, and capabilities building. It establishes 'strategic orientations in continuum' in developing and emerging economies similar to Pakistan's.

3.1.2. Regulating Theories

Resource based view (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) supports the direct 'orientations-advantage' pathways (P1, P2). Exploration allows 'structural-environmental' adaptability (Patel et al., 2012) through diversified expertise (Abeysekara et al., 2019) and strategic flexibility (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). It supports 'resilience-driven' competitive transformation via turbulence exploitation (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). Exploitation ensures structural adaptability (Doz & Kosonen, 2010), systematic resource distribution (Adomako et al., 2022), and dynamic value capture (O'Cass et al., 2014).

Knowledge based view (Grant, 1996; Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nonaka, 1994) and complex adaptive systems theory (Holland, 1995; Kauffman, 1995) together govern the 'exploration-resilience' pathway (P3). Exploration supports resilience by capacity expansion (Duchek, 2020), strategic preparedness (Anwar et al., 2018), strategic plasticity, and contextual reactivity (Williams et al., 2017).

Resource orchestration theory (Sirmon et al., 2011) and organisational routines theory (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Nelson & Winter, 1982) regulate exploitation-agility pathway (P4), where strategic agility is strengthened through systematic resource reallocation, coordinated resource flexibility, and regulated adaptation protocols (Tufan et al., 2023).

Institutional voids theory (Khanna & Palepu, 1997, 2010; Mair & Martí, 2009) regulates the agility-advantage (P5) and resilience-advantage pathways (P6). Agility through strategic repositioning, sustained coordinated trajectory implementation, strategic exploitation and strategic alliance formation, counters competitive uncertainty (Adomako et al., 2022). Resilience translates to advantage through market arbitrage (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016), operational stability (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021), and resource preservation (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

Knowledge transformation theory (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1996; Nonaka, 1994) regulates the mediation pathways. Exploration-resilience-advantage (P7)

enables adaptive market arbitrage (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016) through diverse knowledge (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011) and capabilities deployment (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Exploitation-agility-advantage (P8) through efficiency mechanisms (Weber & Tarba, 2014), and strategic resource deployment enables rapid market realignment (Ferraris et al., 2022).

Environmental dynamism (Dess & Beard, 1984) and resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) theories establish the boundary conditions (P9 & P11). Competitive intensity strengthens the orientation-advantage pathways (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015), where institutional complexity amplifies differentiation imperatives (Yasmin et al., 2020) and efficiency trade-offs (Malik & Kotabe, 2011; Porter, 1985).

Dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997) regulates the moderation-mediation pathways (P10 and P12), where competitive intensity strengthens both exploration-resilience-advantage and exploitation-agility-advantage pathways (Adomako et al., 2022) through amplifying adaptive imperatives (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015), and competitive response competencies (Zeb et al., 2021; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015).

Environmental dynamism mechanisms (Dess & Beard, 1984; Duncan, 1972) regulates the resilience-advantage pathway via moderator market turbulence (P13), where market uncertainty amplifies resilience-based competitive advantages (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015).

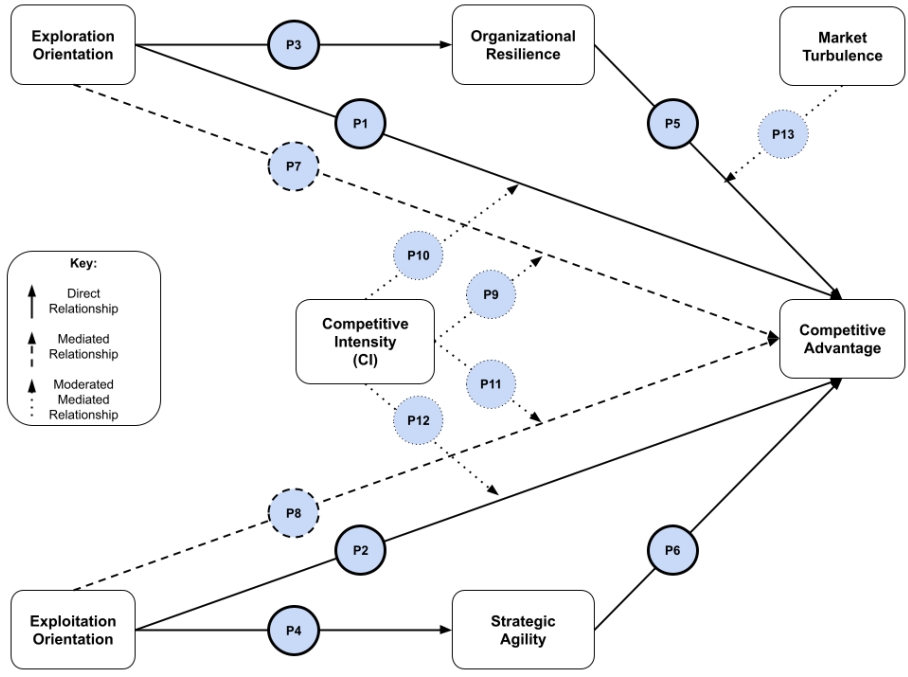

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework and Research Propositions

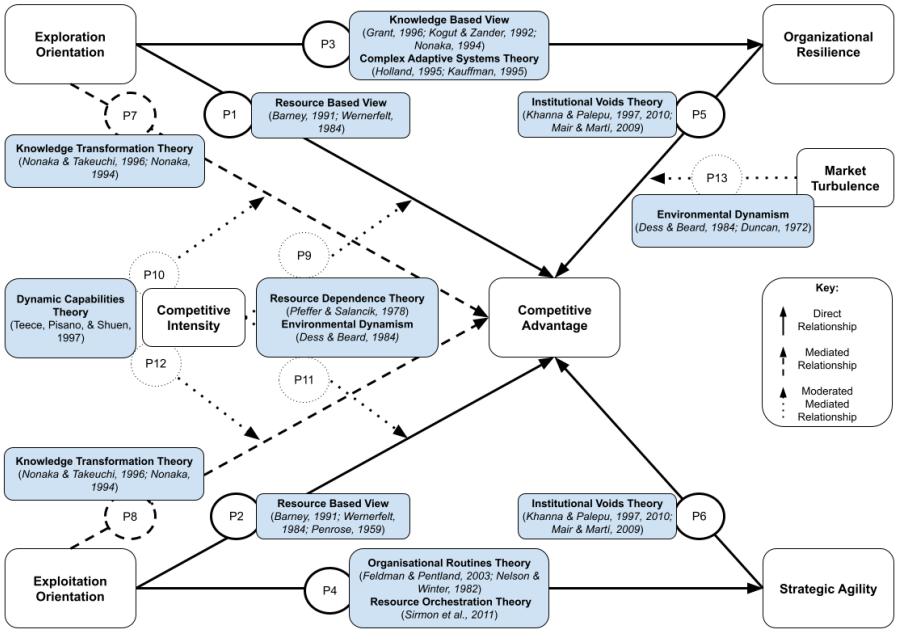

Figure 2. Theoretical Framework

3.2. Conceptual Model and Proposed Variable Interactions

3.2.1. Direct Relationships

Exploration supports competitive advantage by preempting market disruption through proprietary capabilities and first mover differentiation (Suarez & Lanzolla, 2007; Xiao et al., 2021; Zahra & George, 2002), technological leadership (Wang et al., 2025), thereby, securing defensible-differentiation and sustainable competitive renewal (Clauss et al., 2021; Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). How local exploration strategies leverage institutional voids (Khanna & Palepu, 2010) and resource constraints (Malik & Kotabe, 2011) requires further research. Therefore:

Proposition 1 (P1): Exploration orientation positively influences competitive advantage.

Exploitation orientation demands operational excellence through systematic efficiency enhancement (Jansen et al., 2006), consequently developing inimitable core competencies for operational superiority and market agility (Bashir & Verma, 2019). Exploitation forms inimitable competencies for operational robustness (Annarelli et al., 2020), market dominance (Patel et al., 2012), and sustainable advantage (Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore:

Proposition 2 (P2): Exploitation orientation positively influences competitive advantage.

Exploration orientation's learning depth (Teece et al., 1997), and innovation driven adaptability (Jansen et al., 2006), fortifies resilience through network redundancy, knowledge diversity (Linnenluecke, 2017), crisis management, and opportunity capture (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2011). Exploitation employs strategic flexibility and resource reconfiguration mechanisms (Guillén et al., 2022; Purnomo et al., 2021), which correlate with resilience development (Anwar & Shah, 2020), demonstrating post-disruption recovery in developing economies. Therefore:

Proposition 3 (P3): Exploration orientation positively influences organisational resilience.

Exploitation, through operational excellence (Jansen et al., 2006), absorptive capacity refinement (Feldman & Pentland, 2003), and strategic alignment infrastructure (Fourné et al., 2014), enhances strategic agility's components: collective commitment, resource fluidity and strategic sensitivity. It ensures infrastructure integration (Kale et al., 2019), develops standardised operational framework, streamlines decision making (Martínez-Román et al., 2025) and establishes strategic coherence (Ahammad et al., 2021). It is necessary for market responsiveness (Ahammad et al., 2021). Therefore:

Proposition 4 (P4): Exploitation orientation positively influences strategic agility.

Resilience generates post-disruption competitiveness through sustained operations (Duchek, 2020), and market recalibration (Hamel & Välikangas, 2003). It is critical for competitiveness (He et al., 2023). It fosters stakeholder trust (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003) and value creation (Pilav-Velic et al., 2024), opportunity exploitation (Linnenluecke, 2017), service reliability (Williams et al., 2017), shock resilience optimisation (Kantur & İşeri-Say, 2012), and strategic platform resilience (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2011). In Pakistani context, resilience sustains performance during economic volatility (Zeb et al., 2021), for which, organisations operating in developing economies require institutional boundary spanning competencies (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). Therefore:

Proposition 5 (P5): Organisational resilience positively influences competitive advantage.

Collective commitment through unified leadership (Doz & Kosonen, 2010), resource fluidity through rapid redeployment mechanisms (Weber & Tarba, 2014), and strategic sensitivity through situational awareness mechanisms (Fourné et al., 2014), enhance competitive advantage (Teece et al., 2016; Kale et al., 2019;). This is possible through agile operations (Rizki et al., 2023; Ahammad et al., 2021) and operational refinement (Abdalla et al., 2025; Trieu et al., 2024). Therefore:

Proposition 6 (P6): Strategic agility positively influences competitive advantage.

3.2.2. Mediating Mechanisms

Exploration supports resilience through sense-making, knowledge integration (Wang and Ahmed, 2007), and stability in strategic orientation (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). It maintains stakeholder confidence (Pilav-Velic et al., 2024; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021) through risk mitigation (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003; Hamel & Välikangas, 2003), business continuity and strategic resource transformation (Zhang et al., 2025). Therefore:

Proposition 7 (P7): Organisational resilience facilitates the relationship between exploration orientation and competitive advantage.

Exploitation orientation builds collective commitment, resource fluidity, and strategic sensitivity through operational efficiency, competitive insights, strategic coherence, and strategic alignment (Fourné et al., 2014). It establishes a structured operational framework and protocols (Tufan et al., 2023; Martínez-Román et al., 2025), for systematic decision making (Ahammad et al., 2021). It is a competitive differentiator (Abdalla et al., 2025), ensure strategic coherence for rapid strategic reconfiguration (Adomako et al., 2022; Ahammad et al., 2021), and market response (Trieu et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2022). Therefore:

Proposition 8 (P8): Strategic agility facilitates the relationship between exploitation orientation and competitive advantage.

3.2.3. Contextual Influences and Moderating Effects

Exploration embodies competitiveness through uncontested market space development, first mover distinction (Porter, 1985), and non-replicable strategic advantages (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). Competitive intensity reinforces this by market disruption premium (Auh & Menguc, 2005; Zhou & Li, 2012), localised value creation (Malik & Kotabe, 2011), resolving contextual challenges (Weber et al., 2024), and forming barriers to entry (Zhang et al., 2025). This relationship is pronounced in dynamic markets (Indriyani et al., 2025); therefore:

Proposition 9 (P9): Competitive intensity facilitates the relationship between exploration orientation and competitive advantage.

Exploration promotes resilience, and consequently competitive advantage, using strategic flexibility (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), knowledge integration (Patel et al., 2012), and innovation capabilities (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). Competitive intensity reinforces this construct, through environmental sensing (Zhang et al., 2025), rapid knowledge integration, and strengthening systemic robustness (Auh & Menguc, 2005). Industry competition translates organisation's reactive resilience capacity to proactive strategic advantage (Trieu et al., 2024). Competitive pressures transform an organisation's reactive capacity to proactive strategic advantage (Trieu et al., 2024). Western frameworks inadequately explain the dynamics of competitiveness in developing economies (Pilav-Velic et al., 2024); therefore:

Proposition 10 (P10): Competitive intensity facilitates the indirect effect of exploration orientation on competitive advantage through organisational resilience.

Exploitation promotes competitive advantage via operational consistency, incremental improvement (Jansen et al., 2006), process refinement (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993), and price advantage (Porter, 1985). Competitive intensity, amidst adversity, enhances this relationship by developing institutionalising core competencies (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015), and establishing specialised exploitation pathways (Khanna & Palepu, 2010). Competitive pressures incentivise specialised capability development (Adomako et al., 2022; Tufan et al., 2023), by leveraging precision execution (Annarelli et al., 2020) through sustainable differentiation (Rizki et al., 2023). Therefore:

Proposition 11 (P11): Competitive intensity facilitates the relationship between exploitation orientation and competitive advantage.

Exploitation orientation strengthens strategic agility (Jansen et al., 2006; Weber & Tarba, 2014), promoting competitive advantage (Ahammad et al., 2021) through strategic sensitivity and resource fluidity (Ahammad et al., 2021; Clauss et al., 2019). Competitive intensity improves established competencies (Auh & Menguc, 2005), institutes pre-requisites to agility (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015), hones customer centric strategies (Wang & Ahmed, 2007), demands circumstantial resource allocation (Khan et al., 2022), and creates competitive barriers to entry (Abdalla et al., 2025). Therefore:

Proposition 12 (P12): Competitive intensity facilitates the indirect effect of exploitation orientation on competitive advantage through strategic agility.

Organisational resilience enhances competitive advantage through adaptive operational responsiveness, proactive organisational transformation (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), and strategic market fit (Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). Market turbulence facilitates resilience through strategic risk control (He et al., 2023). It translates resilience into sustainable advantage (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021; Guillén et al., 2022). Therefore:

Proposition 13 (P13): Market turbulence facilitates the relationship between organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Theoretical Implications

Dynamic capabilities translate differently in each environmental context (Yuan et al., 2018), therefore, this research analyses strategic pathways to competitive advantage in developing economies. First, it develops ambidexterity theory (March, 1991); traditionally bearing simultaneous pursuit of exploration and exploitation in institutionally robust economic frameworks, as pursuit of strategic orientations in ‘sequence and continuum’ in dynamic economic contexts. Second, it dilenates dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997; Indriyani et al., 2025), where exploitation-agility and exploration-

resilience operational pathways foster value generation for context dependent operational efficiency. Third, it extends institutional voids theory (Khanna & Palepu, 1997), emphasising the importance of adaptive strategic competence, knowledge integration (Sondhi et al., 2024), and responsive operational and structural adjustments. Fourth, relying on configurable approaches (Meyer et al., 1993; Xiao et al., 2021), this research investigates optimal organisational configurations dependent on strategic capabilities, amid resource constrained and regulatory lacking environments. Fifth, it extends contingency theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Musa & Enggarsyah, 2025), by proposing unique parameters of strategic orientations for strategic fit.

4.2. Managerial Implications

This research provides actionable recommendations for management strategists aiming for enhanced competitive advantage while operating in complex ecosystems. First, developing on Khanna and Palepu's (2010) emphasis on resource allocation, for optimal resource utilisation strategic orientations should be sequentially time distributed (Trieu et al., 2024). Second, development of capabilities should be contingent on environmental risk mitigation, opportunity exploit potential, and strategic agility (Tufan et al., 2023; Trieu et al., 2024), whereby adaptive competence allows for exploitation (He et al., 2023), and agile operations strengthen competitive positioning (Adomako et al., 2022). Third, establishment of collaborative governance is contingent on sustained operational excellence, facilitating linkages between formal and informal market segments (EY, 2025; Khan & Lew, 2018). Fourth, fostering operational harmony is necessary for balancing strategic orientation trade-offs (Williams et al., 2017; Teece et al., 2016). Fifth, to develop localised expertise and competitive advantage competencies, strategists should comply with global management and operational standards (Anwar et al., 2018; Malik & Kotabe, 2011).

4.3. Policy Implications

This research offers insights for policymakers in developing and emerging contexts. First, regulatory frameworks should be less bureaucratic, support strategic agility and innovation, and be backed by institutional support (ADB, 2021; Fratto et al., 2021; Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021). Second, government initiatives should facilitate institutional capacity building through knowledge sharing platforms and innovation ecosystems (Yang et al., 2022; Abiad et al., 2012). Third, the government should support market-support initiatives through reduction in information asymmetry and transaction costs (Khanna & Palepu, 2010). Fourth, diversification policies should support strategic redundancies in critical sectors (Delechat et al., 2024). Fifth, educational policies must address capability gaps in workforce development (UNDP, 2022).

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