Interfirm cooperatives enabling organizational ambidexterity, a case study of the printing industry in Colombia

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Abstract
Research into organizational ambidexterity at the interorganizational level is limited, but it is even more scarce when considering emerging markets and alternative organizational forms such as the cooperative enterprise. We will attempt to fill these research gaps by offering in-depth case studies of three interfirm cooperatives within the printing industry in Colombia. We analyze how interfirm cooperatives enable organizational ambidexterity in its small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and explore which factors are hindering ambidexterity. Our findings indicate that lower socioemotional wealth in SMEs undermines the need to invest in exploration. Additionally, cooperation within an interfirm cooperative appears to be entirely reliant on its component SMEs agreeing on the right balance of social and economic values. We conclude that, although the interfirm cooperative may play an important role in facilitating ambidexterity in emerging markets, transitioning from a primarily transactional role to a higher role as intermediary of ambidexterity poses significant challenges.

KEYWORDS
cooperative Enterprise, emerging markets, Interfirm cooperative, Latin America, organizational ambidexterity, SME

1 | INTRODUCTION
Organizational ambidexterity has received much scholarly attention over the past decades (Jansen, Tempelaar, van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2009; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013; Tushman & O'reilly, 1996). These studies provide evidence that ambidextrous firms—those involved in both exploration and exploitation activities—perform better financially and have higher survival rates (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004; Gupta, Ken, & Shalley, 2006; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Therefore, firms' long-term successes rely on their talent to explore new competencies (i.e., search for new knowledge) as well as exploit its current capacities—that is, enhance efficiency- (March, 1991). Organizational ambidexterity research initially focussed on the firm as a single unit of analysis (Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013; Gupta et al., 2006; Lavie, Stettner, & Tushman, 2010) but later shifted to a firm's larger ecosystem (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). So far, most studies on organizational ambidexterity at the inter-organizational level have looked at strategic alliances (Lavie et al., 2010; Lin, Yang, & Demirkan, 2007), usually in settings such as high-tech, biotech, or pharmaceutical industries in mature economies (Lavie & Rosenkopf, 2006; Lin et al., 2007; Rothaermel & Deeds, 2004). Yet, less is known about how organizational ambidexterity plays out in less knowledge-intensive sectors, especially in emerging markets.

In emerging markets, the organizational form of the cooperative enterprise (CE) plays an important role in economic development by responding to societal needs, addressing socio-economic problems, and overcoming market failures (Costa, Andreaus, Carini, & Carpita, 2022). This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes. © 2022 The Authors. Thunderbird International Business Review published by Wiley Periodicals LLC.
In this study, we focus on a specific type of CE: the interfirm cooperative (IFC), which is a CE collectively owned by multiple firms in a specified relationship with a specific purpose (Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021; Hendrikse & Feng, 2013). These SMEs are often less diversified and largely depend on local markets. Their access to, and scale of, innovation is limited, and little budgetary slack is available to weather dire economic conditions (Hendrikse & Veerman, 2001). The IFC can help SMEs in overcoming these drawbacks; both in times of crisis and economic booms, IFCs can help their members to develop new business opportunities (exploration) and work more efficiently (exploitation). Studies on CEs have shown that market power and competition has pushed this type of organizational form to become highly efficient (Maïetta & Sena, 2008), aiming to be a cost-efficient player in their own industry (Alavosius, Getting, Dagen, Newsome, & Hopkins, 2009; Suzuki, 2009). So far, CE literature has mostly focussed on productivity, efficiency, and variance reduction for exploitation, but has devoted little attention to how CEs may facilitate experimentation, search, and variation for exploration (Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021). Therefore, we know little about how CEs can strengthen their exploration potential, and even less about how ambidextrous behavior within an IFC and its members can be improved. Hence, in this study, we address the following research question: What are the enablers and barriers for IFCs to foster organizational ambidexterity for its SME members in emerging markets?

Using a case study design (Yin, 2014), we conducted in-depth case studies of three IFCs in Colombia using an inductive approach (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The data was collected from semi-structured interviews, archival documents, online sources, and field observations. Our study provides an understanding of how organizational ambidexterity plays out within IFCs alongside supporting their SME members with exploration and exploitation activities.

Our study offers three contributions: first, we are contributing to the body of knowledge on organizational ambidexterity by analyzing the interorganizational relations between IFCs and their SME members, instead of a more standard interfirm alliance. Second, following the body of knowledge on organizational ambidexterity by analyzing SME members with exploration and exploitation activities. Third, we are contributing to the literature on organizational ambidexterity by specifically analyzing IFCs as enablers of ambidexterity for its SME members within a conventional manufacturing sector at the interorganizational level in emerging markets. Moreover, we are also contributing to CE literature on IFCs by providing guidance on how IFCs can move from a basic transactional level to a more strategic level as intermediaries of ambidexterity, with new functions such as enhancing innovation, commitment, sustainability, and collaboration with fellow IFC members in both the short and long term.

This paper is structured as follows: first, we offer a theoretical framework on the key elements of organizational ambidexterity, interorganizational ambidexterity, and CEs, including the role of its SME members. Then, we outline the methodology used to study our three IFCs within an empirical context. Next, we offer case descriptions of how ambidexterity evolved within our three IFC cases, after which we discuss the five main themes we found in relation to IFCs. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of our findings and implications.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 | Organizational ambidexterity

Organizational ambidexterity has attracted a substantial amount of attention from scholars and practitioners over the past decades (Jansen et al., 2009; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013; Tushman & O'reilly, 1996). Organizational ambidexterity is understood as the ability of an organization to both explore and exploit business opportunities. The constructs of exploration and exploitation are based on the seminal work of March (1991). Exploration is understood as “the pursuit of new knowledge, of things that might come to be known” and exploitation as “the use and development of things already known” (Levinthal & March, 1993, p. 105). Organizational ambidexterity has been identified as a key factor of successful organizations, in both the short and long term within a dynamic environment (Birkinshaw, Zimmermann, & Raisch, 2016). Hence, for organizations it is crucial to manage and balance the dynamics and tensions between both exploration and exploitation (Gupta et al., 2006). Research on organizational ambidexterity has shown how central it is to achieving competitive advantage (Turner, Swart, & Maylor, 2013). Firms that manage to balance exploration and exploitation activities enjoy higher levels of innovation, perform better financially, and have higher survival rates (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004; Gupta et al., 2006; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013).

However, exploration and exploitation activities can also cause conflict within organizations, as investing in these activities is essentially a trade-off among scarce resources (Gupta et al., 2006). Exploration activities carry a higher level of uncertainty, thus exploitation activities are the ones more likely to be executed (Rothaermel, 2001). To balance exploitation and exploration activities, organizations need to develop their own specific arrangements (Turner et al., 2013). Additionally, firms need to execute and implement these arrangements throughout the entire organization to seek out new opportunities. In order to do so, firms can achieve ambidexterity in a structural manner by establishing independent and autonomous units where exploration and exploitation activities are structurally separated (de Visser et al., 2010; Kauppila, 2010). For instance, an in-depth case study of Toyota identified how organizations can balance exploitation and exploration activities through structural ambidexterity in mass production and product development (Aoki & Wilhelm, 2017). The mass production unit’s focus is on exploitation and the product development unit’s focus is on exploration. Alternatively, firms can achieve ambidexterity in a sequential way by shifting structures over time (Chou,
Yang, & Chiu, 2017), while other organizations manage to achieve contextual ambidexterity by adjusting their exploration and exploitation activities to a specific space and time (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). Recently, dynamic ambidexterity was proposed as a framework that integrated these approaches in a multilevel perspective of the firm to achieve long-term survival (Chen, 2017). These approaches aim to deliver alignment and adaptability within organizations (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004) and can be seen as complementary rather than divergent.

2.2 | Interorganizational ambidexterity

More recently, research into ambidexterity has studied organizations that look beyond their internal boundaries to deal with what are, essentially, paradoxical requirements of exploration and exploitation. Scholars have indicated that interorganizational activities can enable both explorative and exploitative knowledge processes across independent firms (Raisch, Birkinshaw, Probst, & Tushman, 2009). Cooperation with other organizations is a determinant factor for growth (Hansen & Hamilton, 2011; Pullen, de Weerd-Nederhof, Groen, & Fisscher, 2012) and increases performance (Stuart, 2000).

SMEs can leverage their small size and limited resources by cooperating and thus exploiting complementary assets (Rothaermel, 2001) such as economies of scale, sharing knowledge, and increasing the speed to market (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Moreover, researchers have proposed that interfirm knowledge and learning processes also increase performance in the long term (Im & Rai, 2008; Zimmermann, Raisch, & Birkinshaw, 2015). For example, social networks provide access to timely information from others actors in the network and can improve knowledge transfer and integration (Obstfeld, 2005). Hence, entering into different configurations of interorganizational relationships may provide various benefits to firms (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). This is particularly the case for strategic alliances where exploration alliances can evolve into long-term exploitation alliances (Lin et al., 2007; Nielsen & Gudergan, 2012), especially for new product development in high-tech companies (Rothaermel & Deeds, 2004).

Nonetheless, finding the right partner is a challenge in itself, and previous studies have shed light on the process of partner selection for exploration and exploitation purposes (Belderbos, Carree, & Lokshin, 2004; Jiang, Xia, Cannella, & Xiao, 2018). Gulati and Gargiulo (1999) pointed out that interdependence is a necessary condition for cooperative ties. For example, Tiwana (2008) found that strong ties are required to integrate knowledge in the context of alliances, reinforcing the concept of interdependence between parties. Yet, very few studies focus on how organizations balance their explorative and exploitative collaborations (Hess & Rothaermel, 2011; Tiwana, 2008). Achieving ambidexterity within an interorganizational collaboration and creating value implies an alignment between parties through a combination of internal and external capabilities (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011). For instance, Kauppila (2010) reported how a firm successfully created ambidexterity by deploying its interorganizational exploration and exploitation partnerships. However, there is still a gap in our understanding of how organizational ambidexterity manifests itself in other interorganizational settings beyond strategic alliances and partnerships.

In this research paper, we aim to fill this gap by providing a comparative case study of a conventional, less knowledge-intensive industry in an emerging market: the printing industry. Similar to general interorganizational relations, IFCs help to solve market failures for SMEs, including a lack of access to markets and support services, as well as other barriers which IFC members cannot overcome on their own (Hendriks & Veerman, 2001). Scholars point out that a firms’ resource endowment moderate ambidexterity’s effect on performance (Kyriakopoulos & Moorman, 2004). In particular, for small firms the lack of resources affect their attainment of ambidexterity (Lubatkin, Simsek, Ling, & Veiga, 2006), thus small firm members leverage their constraints through a direct relationship with the IFC. Studies have shown that market power and competition trigger CEs to be highly efficient (Maletta & Sena, 2008), aiming to be a cost-efficient player within their own business (Alavosius et al., 2009; Suzuki, 2009). However, as studies on CEs’ benefits mainly focus on productivity, efficiency, and variance reduction (exploitation), our knowledge on experimentation, opportunity, search, and variation (exploration) is rather limited, as well as our knowledge on barriers and intermediators for balancing exploitation and exploration.

3 | METHODOLOGY

To extend the body of knowledge on organizational ambidexterity, especially at the interorganizational level in emerging markets, we chose the printing industry in Colombia as our research context in Latin America. In this context, we aimed to find out if our cases had recurrent behaviors that enable or constrain its SME members in the conducting of exploration and exploitation activities. To answer our research question, we required access to board members, general managers, and staff to fulfill the criteria of using highly knowledgeable informants in a study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), and this was made possible in our research context thanks to the unique access the author of this paper has to these people.

While it is acknowledged that, of course, variation exists between Latin American countries, they are considered to belong to the same cluster of hierarchical market economies (Schneider, 2009). Furthermore, the printing industry provides a good representation of the wide range of Latin American manufacturing firms with a lower knowledge intensity but nonetheless operate in a dynamic market.

3.1 | Case selection

Currently, the global printing industry is suffering a structural crisis caused by new trends in digital marketing, digitalization of products, and technological changes. In addition, globally, there is a high fragmentation of the market with low barriers to entry, further increasing the number of companies competing in the market (PTP, 2012).
According to the Productivity Transformation Program (PTP), led by the Colombian Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (with financial support from World Bank), the Colombian printing industry consists of 97.2% small companies, 2.1% medium companies, and 0.7% large companies. Furthermore, 65% of companies are located in the capital Bogotá, 14% in the central western region, 10% are located in the western part, and 3% of companies are located in the eastern part of the country (PTP, 2012, pp. 23–24).

Of the five active IFCs in the country, we selected three of them as theoretically relevant cases based on the three following criteria: (1) The IFC's role in the market as a central point in the network between itself and member firms; (2) IFCs of different sizes, and (3) Geographical diversity, that is, different regions spread across the country (see Table 1). The selected cases are the East Cooperative located in Bucaramanga, the West Cooperative located in Cali, and the Bogota Cooperative, located in Colombia's capital city. All three IFCs are purchasing cooperatives, where the IFC provides a complete portfolio of raw material and products to its SME members, as well as to non-member customers. Some examples of products are rolls of paper, paper sheets for printing, cardboard, inks, glues, and other chemical products used in the printing industry. The IFCs also vary in their degree of support, but all three provide advantageous financial conditions in terms of prices and credit for its members.

### Table 1: Overview of case IFC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFC</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Year founded</th>
<th>Annual revenue (millions)</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Number of offices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East cooperative</td>
<td>SRM, PMS</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>$5.2 USD</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West cooperative</td>
<td>SRM, PMS</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>$6.5 USD</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogota cooperative</td>
<td>SRM, PMS, C, R, HWM</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>$15 USD</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Services: SRM (Supply raw material), PM (Platemaking service), C (consulting), R (paper recycling service), HWM (Hazardous waste management).

Source: This information was retrieved from annual reports, marketing material, and supplied by principals of each IFC during the field work.

#### 3.2 Data collection

To obtain access to empirical data we conducted a number of interviews. We followed the method deployed by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) in using a variety of highly knowledgeable informants who can offer varying perspectives of the focal phenomenon based on different hierarchical levels, functional areas, groups, and geographic locations. In total, we conducted 24 interviews: 17 with board members of the three IFCs (who are also SME owners), three with the general managers of each IFC, and four with management support staff. Our semi-structured interviews used a basic set of questions that varied depending on the interviewee's role. All interviews covered IFCs' internal activities regarding exploration and exploitation constructs as well as co-exploitation and co-exploration activities jointly developed between IFCs and its members. Interviews began with questions covering general topics: about the interviewee, the company, work experience, time involved in an IFC as a member and board member, the role of the cooperative in relation to his or her company, and a typical workday. For example, we asked IFC directors about the projects and activities their IFC runs for its members to enable an SME's effectiveness or efficiency. We also asked about projects, initiatives, and activities that IFCs were developing for their own benefit and/or for the benefit of its members. All interviews with board members, general managers, and staff members were conducted in Spanish by the first author of this paper. The interviews were recorded and lasted between 25 and 90 min. In addition, we collected archival data and examined industry reports and relevant internal documents of each IFC. During the visit, we also accessed annual reports produced by the firms and we found online sources to use as raw data for qualitative analysis, such as webpages and online videos (Hewson, 2014). Finally, nonparticipant observations were made during site visits. The first author took notes and examined the work environment and daily routines in all three IFCs' facilities and a number of member SMEs' factories (see Table 2). Interviews and observations were conducted between June 2016 and March 2017 Table 2.

#### 3.3 Data analysis

To apply qualitative rigor to our inductive research, we analyzed the data using the Gioia method (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). First, we developed a list of initial codes based on an inductive analysis of our collected data (Saldaña, 2016). Next, we refined these initial codes into our first-order concepts. These were, in turn, clustered into our second-order themes, after which we derived our final five aggregate dimensions. These five aggregate dimensions are: perceived importance of ambidexterity, ambidexterity of IFC and SME members, environmental factors, socioemotional wealth (SEW), and social and economic value (see Figure 1).

### 4 FINDINGS

Our findings constitute an initial overview of the three IFC's, followed by a discussion of the findings for each of the five aggregate dimensions. In this regard, we enable the analysis of the different levels of exploration within the three IFC's organizations and their potential causes. Next, we analyze the ways in which IFCs aim to strengthen ambidexterity by supporting member SMEs in their exploitation and
Table 2: Data sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFC</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Interviews*</th>
<th>Archival data*</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East cooperative</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chairman, board of directors</td>
<td>• Financial reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>General manager</td>
<td>• Project report by government support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 week—IFC facilities + 2 SMEs factories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West cooperative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chairman, board of directors</td>
<td>• Company website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>General manager</td>
<td>• Annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC Support Staff (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Activities report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 weeks—IFC + 4 SMEs factories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogota cooperative</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chairman, board of directors</td>
<td>• Company website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>General manager</td>
<td>• IFC activities report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC Support Staff (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Annual reports</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Institutional video</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Special report on TV about</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bogota cooperative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 weeks—IFC + 6 SMEs factories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>18 site visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This column summarizes the informants interviewed and their roles within the firm.

**This column summarizes the forms of archival data or secondary material collected from each firm.

exploration activities; for example, by the co-exploration of new business opportunities. Our other three aggregate dimensions shed light on reasons why exploration might receive less attention and a lower priority in IFCs and their SME members. We summarize our findings in Figure 2.

4.1 | Case study findings

Our interviews with some board members revealed the events that triggered the establishment of IFCs. In the late 1960s, a group of SME owners had met to discuss a way to tackle the monopoly of producers and dealers within the printing industry value chain. Several times, prices of raw materials had increased in a same period of time (1 year) making it almost impossible for small companies to bargain with dealers and producers. Furthermore, regulations and tax restrictions at that time prevented access to international suppliers’ higher quality products and better commercial conditions. The Colombian printing industry suffered further debilitating blows from the then ongoing shortage of raw materials, the obligation to buy high minimum orders, a lack of credit, and their complaints falling on deaf ears. The co-founder of the West Cooperative and chairman of the board of directors said:

In that time, each 3 or 4 months we received new price lists from the dealers with increments that change between 10% and 20% in the whole portfolio of products that we bought, that means the total percentage of increment in a year can be 70% or in the worst case 100%. Additionally, companies had to pay the products in cash.

4.2 | Overview of cooperatives

4.2.1 | West cooperative

In 1973, the West Cooperative was founded by 35 SME owners with the aims of creating a purchasing cooperative and establishing a distribution network to deliver raw material to its members. To extend its coverage and scope of action, the West Cooperative has several points of sale from where the IFC serves its members and clients.

4.2.2 | Bogota cooperative

In 1975, SME owners decided to unite with a single objective in mind: to fight against raw material price speculation. There were 89 members who signed the initial chapter to create Bogota Cooperative. In 1976, this cooperative became a legal entity and began to commercialize inks, cut paper, and wrapping paper. It also presented its first seminars on cooperative integration during this time. Three years later, the Bogota Cooperative started importing paper and cardboard. Between 2003 and 2005, Bogota Cooperative built a new warehouse to extend storage capacity and logistic operations. Nowadays, it is the second-largest paper distributor in Bogota.

4.2.3 | East cooperative

Founded in 1974, the origins and development of the East Cooperative followed the same path as the other two IFCs. After a stable period between 2000 and 2010, leading to a surplus in that decade, the board of directors sanctioned a project to build a new warehouse to extend storage capacity and logistic operations. However, unexpected issues in the process of building the new warehouse arose, leading to a doubling of projected costs. Partially as a result of this, the East Cooperative is focused on improving financial performance and stability as a primary goal.

4.3 | Perceived strategic importance of ambidexterity for an IFC

We have found that the three cooperatives differ in terms of the priority given by management to achieving ambidexterity. Where one
A board member of the Bogota Cooperative added:
In 2009, in an informal meeting we met some of the members of the board of directors to figure out how can we formulate and execute a strategic plan for our cooperative... It was our first real attempt to do something different... then, in a formal monthly meeting of the board of directors, we proposed the project and then in 2010 we made it with the support of an external consulting firm.

In 2010, the Bogota Cooperative formulated three main strategic initiatives as part of this plan: adoption of a planning process, strengthening of corporate governance, and business sustainability. Several activities were developed and continuously monitored for each of these initiatives, resulting in eight strategies, a scorecard per

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**FIGURE 1** First-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions

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cooperative is ambidextrous, another is exploring opportunities, and the third first needs to improve its exploitation. We found that the Bogota Cooperative demonstrated a relatively wide-ranging set of exploration activities while ensuring its exploitation activities did not suffer. For instance, in 2010 the Bogota Cooperative, with help from an external consulting firm, drew up a strategic plan to develop competitive advantages that would improve results. The chairman of the Bogota Cooperative’s Education Committee said:

These joint projects allowed us to allocate resources in a better way to find scale economies as well, we estimated how many members have to be involved, then we looked for members who are willing to allocate physical, financial and human resources, finally we executed the project.
area, and a financial scorecard to measure operational results and encourage company competitiveness.

Formulation and execution of the strategic plan has allowed us to consolidate the ideas that members have about the development of our cooperative, unifying criteria, such as the need for new services, new sources of income, different from paper itself, and the return of direct benefits to the members within corporate rules. The constant follow-up and participation of the partners who make up the committees guarantees the outcomes.

(Chairman, board of directors, Bogota Cooperative)

This orientation allowed the Bogota Cooperative to pursue its own projects such as quality management system certifications (e.g., ISO 9001, ISO 18000) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. The cooperative also implemented a new IT platform to improve customer service to members as well as non-member clients. It further created a special internal unit called SIC to establish new partnerships with government departments and institutions, including COLCIENCIAS: Government Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, and INNPULSA: a government unit supporting entrepreneurship, innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness of industry. Alliances with universities were also formed. However, the other two IFCs had different experiences in this regard. For instance, in the East Cooperative, the manager and board of directors are continuously working to improve the financial situation of the company and solely focus on improving the daily activities with efficiency to obtain healthy financial results. The general manager said:

We were working together with external partners (PTP & International Corporation of Productivity) to develop a project to improve our productivity.

The chairman of the board of directors said:

Although we don’t have enough money and resources to allocate for a project with a consulting firm, a friend of one of the board members who is an independent consultant helped us (with a cheaper rate for his services) to develop strategies to improve efficiency and effectiveness as soon as possible for the cooperative.

This funds restriction was the result of a big investment that the East Cooperative made into a warehouse just after the global financial crisis hit. Therefore, the focus for East is solely on exploitative behavior to improve the immediate financial situation. Also, the East Cooperative faced an internal conflict between the board of directors and the manager that certainly did not help overcome the IFC’s dire financial situation. As the chairman of the East Cooperative board of directors states:

If you don’t have a manager and a team aligned with the vision of the board of directors, we will not obtain good results. Some years ago we had a manager that really didn’t care about new ideas… She always replied ‘So what? Why? We are ok as we are now.

In the case of the West Cooperative, it is in a better financial condition to allocate resources than the East Cooperative. However, nowadays it is mostly exploring opportunities and possible paths for the future, but nothing has been confirmed. One board member of the West Cooperative said:

Our general manager and some members of the board hold some meetings with INNPULSA to look for opportunities, but nothing is concrete yet.

Currently, the West Cooperative manager and board of directors do not intend to develop new strategies for IFCs. Also, an existing conflict of power between both parties in the decision-making process has further frustrated decision-making in this respect. Therefore, IFCs also need to tackle agency problems between managers and the board of directors. In summary, All three cooperatives have made

FIGURE 2  Interplay of aggregate dimensions
substantial efforts in the field of exploitation activities. The Bogota Cooperative is actively balancing exploration and exploitation activities for its members, the West Cooperative is looking into exploration activities, and the East Cooperative has an urgent need to improve exploitation activities. A lack of resources and power struggles has hampered prioritizing exploration activities (Table 3).

4.4 Joint ambidexterity between IFCs and SME members

A key factor for a successful relationship between IFCs and their SME members is the way that buyer-supplier relationships are managed. Firstly, SMEs as resource users are engaged with the IFC at a transactional level, looking for price reductions to ensure sustainability in the short term. An East Cooperative board member said:

There are various benefits for members such as: financial support to attend fairs, special discounts, better prices in raw material, integration social activities for our members.

A West Cooperative board member said:

The cooperative is a great support in our daily activity, and gives us raw material with competitive prices.

Second, when members are closely engaged with the decision-making process of the IFC in committees, they can openly express their thoughts on, for instance, the necessity of seminars on topics such as color management, marketing, logistics, quality systems, and lean manufacturing. We can interpret these actions and events as ambidextrous behavior, where SMEs and IFCs reach agreements to enhance both exploration and exploitation capabilities:

Additionally, trainings are useful to improve our knowledge in technical issues, and management topics like marketing. Then we can apply it in our own company. (Board member, Bogota Cooperative)

IFC is the link between our members with other institutions such as PTP and the Chamber of Commerce. For instance, my company through IFC is involved in a project of high productivity organized by PTP. (Board member, West Cooperative)

We are planning to have several trainings in collaboration with SENA² in topics such as: digital print, offset print, digital prepress for publications and graphic design. All of them for member’s employees, staff and owners of SME members. (Chairman, education committee, West Cooperative)

A joint explorative behavior occurs when SMEs and IFCs work together in a project, sharing the risk in looking for new knowledge. It means that both IFCs and SMEs agree to a joint investment in particular projects:

We decided a few years ago to go further from simple trainings and seminars to more structured courses in collaboration with universities, allowing members, management staff of members and management staff of CE to improve their knowledge and skills to be better prepared. (Chairman, education committee, Bogota Cooperative)

An example about join work between IFC and SME members, Colciencias financed a joint project to implement innovation departments within the companies. 9 members decided to be in the project. (Chairman, board of directors, Bogota Cooperative)

All IFCs’ activities and projects for its members, for example, seminars, courses, international fairs, certifications in quality, lean and so on, include funding from the IFC. However, SMEs that decide to participate in these projects have to invest as well...it is a joint effort. (Board member, Bogota Cooperative)

In this case, IFCs and their SME members resolve constraints by working together in exploration and exploitation activities and by sharing risk and goals. IFCs encourage its SME members to involve ambidextrous behavior in their organizations as a prerequisite to mobilizing its internal resources and putting in place a specific organizational structure. This prerequisite guarantees that SMEs are then set up, avoiding negative impacts on its own profits. Furthermore, IFCs and SMEs reconcile inherent tensions between exploration and exploitation with their own organizational solutions to achieve ambidextrous behavior (Chang & Hughes, 2012). For instance, the East and West Cooperatives and its SME members display contextual behavior when organizing their actions according to the needs and goals they want to accomplish. However, in the case of the Bogota Cooperative and some of its SME members, structural separation seems to be an effective mode to achieve ambidextrous behavior. The Bogota Cooperative through its internal business unit, SIC, searches for new business opportunities and projects for its members but also for the IFC itself (i.e., intra-organizational initiatives with partners). Additionally, based on our observations and archival data, we found that some SME members in Bogota create their own innovation department to balance exploration and exploitation behavior via structural separation (see Table 4).

These IFCs have now changed their traditional role from a buyer-supplier relationship to a new role with innovation functions and new services (Howells, 2006; Yang, Klerkx, & Leeuwis, 2014) within the spirit of a CE. However, we are only scratching the surface of what roles alternative organizational forms like the CE can play to enhance the innovation process (Dalziel, 2007).

4.5 Environmental factors

Currently, the effects of the global financial crisis are still noticeable on Colombian printing industry. Furthermore, new trends and customer preferences in the printing industry are pushing the industry toward uncertain and discontinuous changes (DRUPA, 2017). The new digital world requires organizations to explore new pathways that allow them to reconfigure their business models.

Seven or six years ago we were 140 members at the cooperative. Nowadays we are just 80; the number of members has been reduced, many of them left the cooperative, because they were in bankruptcy due to the global financial crisis. (Chairman, education committee, West Cooperative)

Both management and members have grasped firmly the challenge of facing the globalization and new business models that come
up with the use of new technologies, seeking to ensure that the cooperative is in continuous evolution. (Manager, Bogota Cooperative)

These quotes exemplify that a firm’s environment is an important factor in considering the organizational ambidexterity of IFCs and SMEs. According to all interviewees, the environment highly affects both the industry and firms. To date, effects from the global financial crisis, new trends, and customer preferences are pushing this industry into a continuous dynamic of innovative behavior (DRUPA, 2017).

### Table 3: Perceived strategic importance of ambidexterity for IFC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrate service of processing plates</td>
<td>Integrate service of processing plates</td>
<td>Integrate service of processing plates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazard waste management</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alliances&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International corporation of productivity</td>
<td>Impulsa</td>
<td>PTP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sena</td>
<td>Colciencias</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Projects&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality system (ISO-9001)</td>
<td>Quality System (ISO 9001- FSC) best practice standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>New financial legal framework</td>
<td>New financial legal framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGSST, IT- (ERP, website)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Unit</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(SIC) – integrated quality systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for opportunities, new services to provide to its members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote joint projects with its members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>This row summarizes new business line to provide services to its members and clients.
<sup>b</sup>This row summarizes external partners involved in alliances and projects with IFC.
<sup>c</sup>This row summarizes new projects resulting from alliances made with external actors.

### Table 4: Joint Initiatives between IFCs and SME members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design and development</td>
<td>Design and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>New products based on new materials</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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<tr>
<td>QS- ISO 9001-14,001- GMP</td>
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<tr>
<td>12,647 color management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal framework SGSST-</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFRS-international financial reporting standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation departments within SMEs</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alliances &amp; partners&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities: ECCI University, EAN University, National University</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colciencias</td>
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<td>Innpulsa</td>
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<td>Sena</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamber of commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphic Communication Cluster</td>
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<tr>
<th>Outcomes&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>East cooperative</th>
<th>West cooperative</th>
<th>Bogota cooperative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 SMEs—Implemented management innovation program - funding by Colciencias- &amp; Aido, Spain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 SMEs- reported implementation of an innovation department within their companies - funded by Colciencias</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 SMEs—Reported merge</td>
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<tr>
<td>To allocate resources in an efficient way</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>This row summarizes external partners involved in alliances with joint projects between IFC and its members.
<sup>b</sup>This row summarizes some outcomes from joint projects with external partners.
The environment also impacts on how new endeavors and new initiatives are deployed within organizations. In this regard, scholars have stressed that local environmental aspects need firms to become ambidextrous (Levinthal & March, 1993; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). For example, during the last 5 years, both IFCs and their SME members have allocated a substantial amount of resources to comply with a new regulatory framework to implement new financial, labor, and employment laws:

Due to new regulations implemented by the government...we decided to create joint projects between external consulting firms, the cooperative, and our members to develop implementation programs, to fulfill the new regulation framework. (Chairman, education committee, Bogota Cooperative)

Interviewees recognized that environmental factors constrained economically both, their own firms and IFCs. As it called for an immediate organizational response to reallocate resources. Therefore, in order to reconfigure their business model, these organizations have to allocate and redistribute resources to meet the challenges that exogenous shocks provide, such as new regulations, uncertain discontinuous changes, new trends, costumer preferences, and technological breakthroughs (Lavie et al., 2010; Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990). For example, in this case, both SMEs and IFCs have to simultaneously address environmental demands as well as exploration or exploitation demands (Lavie et al., 2010; Lavie & Rosenkopf, 2006; Raisch, Birkinshaw, Probst, & Tushman, 2009).

4.6 Declining socioemotional wealth

According to our interviewees, the lack of successors is a key concern that affects SMEs and IFCs alike. This internal dynamic constrains SMEs' organizational strategy for short-term and long-term performance and sustainability (Kaur, Gupta, Singh, & Perano, 2019). Additionally, this factor is exacerbated for IFCs as only a few SME successors get involved as committee members or participants within an IFCs’ activities. There is an evident disinterest to take part in projects and new idea generation.

As an owner you have to work so hard to keep the business afloat, but such an effort, time and sacrifice ...in the end you don't have somebody to follow in your footsteps, you know what I mean? (Board member, West Cooperative)

In my case, and I'm pretty sure that many members are in the same position like me. My brother and I don't have a successor, we have worked so hard. So, for us, if you don't have a successor, it doesn't make sense to invest time and money in projects for an uncertain future, we don't know how much time we will continue with the company. (Board member, Bogota Cooperative)

My bigger worry is about owners' sons that they are not involved in their companies and, even more so, with the cooperative. For example, my sons know that I love the cooperative and my company as well, but they don't want to be involved in the business, they are living abroad...They have other opportunities, to be an entrepreneur is so hard. (Chairman, board of directors, East Cooperative).

In all three IFCs, interviewees acknowledge that, as a family business, they have challenges to overcome in order to obtain their strategic goals (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011). Thus, they need to deal with the internal dynamics related to declining socioemotional wealth. The lack of a successor will also affect a firm’s interest in exploration activities. Therefore, organizational identity provides a perspective on organizational goals, mission and logic that guide exploitation or exploration activities (Tripsas, 2009). Currently, it is proving difficult for SME owners to inspire second generations to become involved in their own business because many do not wish to follow in the footsteps of the first generation. This lack of successorship within SME members has a knock-on effect on IFCs because this collective ownership of IFCs by multiple firms has a deep interdependency (Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021). Therefore, commitment relies on members that want to continue working for a CE as an extension of their own company.

4.7 Social and economic value

Several interviewees openly expressed a personal conviction related to economic solidarity as part of the cooperative model. For them, this means putting the common good above personal and opportunistic interests. They understand the economic world beyond that of profit maximization, working together with friends, colleagues, and even competitors. These interorganizational arrangements are embedded in a hybrid logic of solidarity and the market.

I know the cooperative model. In the IFC not everything is about money, we have to bring benefits to our members. Therefore, our members would be happy. We cannot lose the focus on the member, and justify a social balance. (Board member, East Cooperative)

Some owners of companies don’t really understand the cooperative model yet; they don’t clearly see the benefits of being a member. (Board member, Bogota Cooperative)

We have to break the paradigm regarding the idea that people have about the cooperative model. We don’t make a financial investment into the cooperative, we give a contribution into the cooperative. (Chairman, board of directors, Bogota Cooperative)

Managing this conflict of logic is a crucial factor for firms to achieve their organizational objectives (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Turner et al., 2013). A double tension is in evidence for IFCs: IFCs as a social enterprise are facing a continuous conflict of logic between creating social and economic value (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014). On the one hand, SME members have a profit maximization orientation as an investor-owned firm; on the other hand, IFCs do not pursue profit maximization. Thus, managing dualities within organizations create value for firms (Julian Birkinshaw, Crilly, Bouquet, & Lee, 2016). Moreover, sometimes members within the IFC display opportunistic behavior and utilize IFC perks for their own benefit:

Although I'm a member from long time ago, I don't believe in the cooperative model, I believe in the capitalist model. If the cooperative would be a private company, things would be different, we could obtain better profits. However, I obtain some economic benefits from
the cooperative such as inventory reduction and competitive prices in raw material for my company. (Board member, East Cooperative)

This conflict of perspective makes it difficult to further develop exploration activities for IFCs as the exploitative benefits of lower prices are instantly clear from both a social and economic value perspective. The longer-term explorative benefits for the IFC are less tangible in a short-term and more transactional-opportunistic perspective. This issue especially surfaces in times of crisis when financial challenges are imminent. This dynamic makes it complex to find a fitting balance within the IFC organization but also for its various constituting members.

5 | DISCUSSION

Researchers have studied the performance of CEs for many years (Bonin, Jones, & Putterman, 1993). Results from empirical studies show that CEs can obtain higher or similar efficiencies than private companies or corporations (Terreros & Gorriz, 2011), where usually the rationale of cost efficiency drives IFC performance. This denotes that this type of organization mainly focuses on exploitative activities associated with refinement, choice, production, efficiency, selection, implementation, and execution; looking to optimize the joint benefits that result in higher income and profit for members (Choi & Feinerman, 1993; Enke, 1945; Sexton & Iskow, 1993).

However, CEs can be seen in three different ways. First, CEs are generally viewed as an independent business enterprise, where its primary goal is to maximize benefits for its members—especially by an increased scale. Second, CEs can be viewed as a coalition of firms, which assumes multiple—and sometimes conflicting—objectives to the cooperative as each member has its own interests. Third, CEs can be viewed as a vertically integrated firm where the primary goal is to maximize the profit of the CE and, likewise, maximize members’ benefits and profits (Soboh, Lansink, Giesen, & van Dijk, 2009).

Most studies depict CEs as independent enterprises that are fully focused on productivity, efficiency, and variance reduction; in other words: exploitation. CE exploration in the form of experimentation, search, and variation has so far received little attention from scholars. At the same time, considering the interorganizational relations shaped between IFCs and its members, an IFC can be seen as a firm with an interdependent nature. Therefore, participating firms are vertically integrated either upstream or downstream (Hendriks & Feng, 2013; Soboh et al., 2009). As a result, an interorganizational approach allows us to understand opportunities for co-exploration and co-exploitation, where IFCs and their SME members can jointly develop exploration and exploitation activities while sharing risk, resources, and goals for short and long term sustainability (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011).

Some key elements emerged in our empirical research that affects sustainability in both IFCs and SMEs. Next to the key role of the IFC senior team at the top level we found that environmental factors, socioemotional wealth, and the balancing of social and economic value are key themes for IFCs that complicate organizational ambidexterity. Moreover, understanding how ambidexterity play outs at the interorganizational level is a subject ripe for further research. We have used an emerging market context that provides meaningful insights from a specific type of lower knowledge-intensive industry that is in a discontinuous change. IFCs have operated for more than four decades, it is an indicator of their flexibility and adaptability over time, with long-term benefits for IFCs and its members (Birkinshaw et al., 2016). Furthermore, although IFCs do not pursue profit maximization as a central goal, the rationality of cost efficiency still substantially drives IFC performance. In other words, efficiency and alignment are key factors (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004) to compete with counterparts, no matter which tensions between flexibility and efficiency are present (Adler, Goldoftas, & Levine, 1999). Therefore, this specific context allows us to understand the internal dynamics and processes that IFCs develop to build exploration and exploitation capabilities and balance both of them. Furthermore, we found how IFCs and its members can converge in a joint effort for exploration and exploitation capabilities (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011).

This study highlights the above alongside structural, contextual, and sequential modes of ambidexterity within organizations, (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004). We add to the discussion the important role that other types of organizational forms such as CEs can play as intermediaries (Howells, 2006), especially intermediaries of ambidexterity. The three IFCs analyzed have tried to support its SMEs members in different ways: enabling access to external knowledge, connecting different actors and government institutions to provide resources, supporting learning processes with training, seminars, and innovation processes management, institutional support, and so on. As the case study of the Bogota Cooperative shows, a cooperative structure can drive exploitation by offering support for processes to increase efficiency but also facilitate exploration for its members by providing access to new knowledge through external partners, looking for new materials to be used in the industry, and initiating projects that involve risk taking.

This research confirms the important role of the drivers of ambidexterity. Besides, complement the existing antecedents identified in previous studies, such as structure, context, and environmental factors, which moderate the inherent interplay between exploration and exploitation orientation of organizations (Lavie et al., 2010; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). In this research, environmental factors emerged as a factor that have an effect on IFCs’ organizational development, from the foundation process of IFCs, facing a structural crisis in the digital age and the global financial crisis, to the new regulatory framework introduced in Colombia.

The cooperative model came into existence as a reaction against market pressures from producers and dealers as a social movement (Schnelberg, King, & Smith, 2008). However, these environmental upheavals have had a marked impact on IFCs and its members—their explorative or exploitative behavior have been undermined by limited resource availability allocated in initiatives.

Declining socioemotional wealth—in particular the lack of a successor—is a common concern discussed by the interviewees in our
study. We do not yet know the extent of its impact, but it is assured that it has a negative effect on ambidextrous orientation in SMEs—knowing there is no successor creates a short-term horizon for an SME owner; they tend to avoid allocating resources in plans, initiatives, or projects that require effort. Instead, they use existing knowledge associated with refinement, choice, production, efficiency, selection, and implementation, which leads to the execution of exploitative behavior. They avoid any type of activity that is associated with search, variation, risk-taking, experimentation, play, flexibility, and discovery—exploitative behavior (March, 1991). It is something that will affect, both directly and indirectly, IFCs’ and SMEs’ sustainability in the long term.

This study has contributed to a, currently, under-researched field (Jansen, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2006) of the role of senior teams at top executive level (Chebbi, Yahiaoui, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2017; Lubatkin et al., 2006). Within the interorganizational configuration between IFCs and its members, boards of directors, committee members, managers, and firm-owners have an important goal to achieve: the leadership qualities to attempt exploration and exploitation demands. Which requires an ambidextrous mindset to overcome tensions and challenges. All of them have to be aligned to contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation process of IFCs and SMEs, through the interorganizational network created around the IFC, to enhance collaboration with stakeholders and partners. However, it is acknowledged that the path to achieve this is not straightforward; internal conflicts of power between parties in the decision-making process will arise, exposing a lack of alignment between managers and boards of directors. This tension will negatively affect not only organizational performance but also, more significantly, hamper the ambidextrous behavior of the firms to achieve short and long-term strategies.

6 | IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes both to the existing literature on CE literature and especially to organizational ambidexterity at the interorganizational level, beyond of strategic alliances, and partnerships. Our research has provided a comparative case study of IFCs within the printing industry in an emerging market. Where IFCs and its members shaped interorganizational relationships to enable both explorative and exploitative behavior, from a managerial perspective, our study shows how SME managers can take advantage of a direct relationship as a member of a CE. Member organizations can join forces with a CE to create opportunities internally for developing both explorative and exploitative capabilities, allowing them to reconfigure their businesses. We believe that our observations are meaningful for organizational ambidexterity research. Furthermore, our findings will help managers to understand ambidextrous behaviors, and learn how to balance exploration and exploitation activities through cooperation between CEs and its SME members. Considering the roles and functions that a CE can develop as intermediary of ambidexterity, this study will reshape the conceptual perception of CEs and their future role in business and management.

7 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We acknowledge two main limitations in this study. Firstly, since a CE can take a variety of legal structures such as financial institution, credit provider, or agricultural cooperative (Mazzarol, Limnios, & Reboud, 2014) and types of CE in the market—as a worker CE, producer CE, seller CE, consumer CE, or purchasing CE (Camargo Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021), we cannot generalize our findings for all types of CEs that exist. Our analysis was centered on specific type of CE: IFCs configured in a particular industrial setting that is embarking on a big leap from traditional manufacturing processes to a digital world within the emerging market context. However, our analysis of IFCs in the printing industry highlights organizational behaviors. IFCs have beyond functions and roles embedded in a buyer–supplier relationship in order to achieve long-term performance. Our analysis also shows the potential of IFCs enabling ambidextrous behavior, building capabilities, and searching for opportunities for its SME members.

Second, although Colombia is considered to belong to the Latin American cluster of hierarchical market economies, there are variations in the national cultures of Latin American economies. Furthermore, while the printing industry might be a good example of an industry less knowledge-intensive in Latin America, it nonetheless has its own specific complexities in terms of market structure, and the industry is struggling globally with the impact of major technological developments in digitalization.

We would encourage future studies to extend our work in other types of CE, for instance, carrying out comparative studies with other sectors such as the agri-food industry, where CEs are well established, and aiming to find out similarities or contradictions. A comparative study with other countries belonging to emerging markets. Another area of future research lies in developing a conceptual study of the intermediaries of ambidexterity. Our research study provides insights into the role that the IFC plays as an enabler of ambidexterity for its SME members. This could be a starting point to research other organizational forms that provide a brokerage function for firms that are willing to develop ambidextrous behavior. Furthermore, Understanding how this joint effort could be optimally synchronized, including the mechanisms that coordinate interactions across multiple levels, so that all parties—boards of directors, committee members, managers, and firm owners—work together to achieve collective success.

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ENDNOTES

1 In Colombia, the law 905, from second August 2004, brings two parameters for classifying an enterprise, which are: a) full time employees, and b) Total Asset’s Value, based on the measure of Current Legal Monthly Minimum Salary (SMMVL).

2 SENA is the National Learning Service, a government institution that provides technical education in Colombia.

REFERENCES


AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

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