

# Organisational Ambidexterity in Tourism Research: A Systematic Review

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a concept, ambidexterity which appeared in 1976 is calling for a balance between exploration and exploitation (Duncan, 1976). Indeed, organisations focusing exclusively on exploration are hindered by the cost of research and development (R&D), with no guaranty of return on investments. As for organisations focusing on exploitation, they remain in a status-quo and their performance does not improve (Duncan, 1976). As a result, Nieto-Rodriguez (2014) came to the conclusion that to be successful organisations need to find a balance between both. This view is also shared by Mihalache and Mihalache (2016) who argued that ambidexterity enables firms in the tourism industry to make the most of their current capabilities while at the same time developing new ones to attract new customers.

Ambidexterity could therefore also be said to be about balancing focus on the present and the future (Filippini, Güttel, & Nosella, 2012; Mihalache & Mihalache, 2016). Ambidextrous organisation (AO) lies on current business demands, while also answers potential environmental changes (Schmitt, Probst, & Tushman, 2010). That said, to achieve organisational ambidexterity (OA) some changes are required. Among these are: leadership, culture, people skills, structure and governance, enterprise performance management, and systems and tools (Nieto-Rodriguez, 2014). These changes are what Visser (2015) is referring to as enterprise reform and future-fitness. “In tourism research, ambidexterity is a rather new concept and, therefore, scarcely used by scholars.” (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019: 6). Therefore, in tourism, investigating OA is important, as this approach “would seem as a natural and relevant approach for the industry, a systematic way of managing a destination or an

organisation (private or public tourism organisations) at macro and micro levels of the business environment.” (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019: 7). Additionally, this approach has the potential to improve the quality of products and services in the industry and turning them into competitive advantage (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019).

From a methodological point of view, literature review is going to be used to unveil the concept of ambidextrous management (AM) or AO or OA that is widely used in many areas, such as higher education, media studies, information technology, human resources management (HRM), professional services, leadership, management control system, entrepreneurship, customer service, finance, agriculture, pharmacy, etc. (Seraphin & Butcher, 2018) and still quasi unused in travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event management despite the logical benefits of OA (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2016; Seraphin & Butcher, 2018; Seraphin, Smith, Scott, & Stokes, 2018). Hence, this research offers not only the first comprehensive analysis of the use (and difficulties of applying) of OA or AM or AO (up until February 2019), but also a rationale why this management approach should be more widely used in travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event management research. The result of this research is going to open new avenues for research, and equally important, advance knowledge.

This research is placing itself as a continuity of a range of research (but still limited) in the area of OA or AM or AO in travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event management research:

(1) First and foremost, this review is a continuity of Mihalache and Mihalache (2016), who, through a research note introduced the concept of AM in general; then highlighted briefly

the benefits and challenges of the strategy. This research paper is going a step further as it is exploring in depth the scope of the current use of AM in travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event management research. The purpose of this research is therefore also in line with Martínez-Pérez, García-Villaverde, and Elche (2016) who are supporting in their conclusion the need for broader and disaggregated research.

(2) Cheng, Tang, Shih, and Wang (2016); Tsai (2017); Úbeda-García, Claver-Cortés, Marco-Lajara, García-Lillo, and Zaragoza-Sáez (2018); and Wang, Tang, and Cheng (2018) highlighted the fact that the results of their research on AM in hotels as a tool for innovation could not be generalised as based on a specific case study and on a convenient sample. The same issues were emphasised by Bouzari and Karatepe (2017) and Ma, Zhou, Chen, and Dong (2019) in their study on leadership and HRM. The present research paper because based on literature review is going to offer a wider view of the topic. Hammond and Wellington (2013) explained that literature review provides information on key findings, methods used, who has said what, etc. on a specific topic. The scope is therefore broader than a case study.

Because “limitations provide directions for future research” (Bouzari & Karatepe, 2017: 2193), the limitations of the preceded research are providing some grounds for this review. Thus, the present study attempts to answer the following research questions: (1) How many tourism studies on ambidexterity or AM or OA have been published? (2) How many tourism studies are theoretically, methodologically and/or empirically informed? (3) Which research methods are used (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method)? and finally (4) What are the research progress to date and opportunities for further research?

The structure of this paper has been essentially influenced by Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon's (2013) research paper entitled "*Residents' attitudes to tourism: A longitudinal study of 140 articles from 1984 to 2010*", Seny Kan, Adegbite, El Omari, and Abdellatif's (2016) paper "*On the use of qualitative comparative analysis in management*", and Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, and Arcodia's (2017) research "*A systematic literature review of risk and gender research in tourism*".

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Relevant literature review is important in all kind of academic research (Webster & Watson, 2002) for a variety of reasons: to uncover what is already known in a specific area, for advancing knowledge, facilitating theory and methodology development, uncovering areas where further research is needed, and to reveal boundaries of a specific area (Nunkoo et al., 2013). Recently, literature review has been used to: explore and understand residents' attitudes to tourism (Nunkoo et al., 2013); understand the connection between quality of life and tourism development (Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016); explain the topic of smart tourism in the context of tourism information services (Li, Hu, Huang, & Duan, 2017); map research on risk management and gender in tourism (Yang et al., 2017); introduce big data as a field of research in tourism (Li, Xu, Tang, Wang, & Li, 2018); unveil recent research and trends in cultural tourism (Richards, 2018).

In this study we employed systematic literature review. According to Pickering and Byrne (2014), to conduct a literature review there are a number of established methods which can be broadly categorized into the meta-analysis, traditional narrative review, and systematic

quantitative review. In line with previous studies (e.g., Gilal, Zhang, Paul, & Gilal, 2019; Palmatier, 2016; Rana & Paul, 2017; Yang et al., 2017), this study adopts a systematic quantitative approach to review existing travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, event studies concerning the use of AM. This approach highlights a systematic process to the literature search, extraction, and synthesis (Yang et al., 2017). On the other hand, a systematic and quantitative review is suitable for apprehending the landscape and boundary of knowledge by demonstrating what is known and what is yet to be known (Pickering, Grignon, Steven, Guitart, & Byrne, 2015). As underlined by Pickering and Byrne (2014), a systematic quantitative review is comprehensive because it can synthesize a heterogeneous collection of interdisciplinary research, conducted in different settings, using diverse research designs. Because this study reviews extant travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event researches concerning the use of AM, achieved in various situations and using different research designs, a systematic quantitative review is considered an appropriate approach.

### *2.1. Systematic review process*

Like previous research (e.g., Yang et al., 2017), the systematic review process adapted from Petticrew and Roberts (2006) and Pickering and Byrne (2014) is applied in this study.

The first step is to define the review aims and research questions, which have been detailed in the introduction section.

The second step relates to formulating a review protocol, which contains information on the search terms, list of journals, and selection criteria. To capture published papers that have investigated the ambidexterity concept, “ambidexterity” and “ambidextrous” were used as the search terms. This approach was decided based on Seny Kan et al. (2016), who adopted this

strategy when trying to determine the extent of research in the area of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). In addition, in previous studies using ambidexterity concept (e.g., Amankwah-Amoah, Chen, Wang, Khan, & Chen, 2019; Filippini et al., 2012; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Jansen, Simsek, & Cao, 2012; Mihalache & Mihalache, 2016; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008; Seraphin & Yallop, 2019), we recognised that the terms such as “ambidexterity”, “ambidextrous management”, “ambidextrous organisation”, “ambidextrous approach”, or “organisational ambidexterity” have been very often employed. Thus, using these two search terms enables us to cover all published tourism studies related to ambidexterity concept. Whilst some previous studies (e.g., Gilal et al., 2019; Li et al., 2018; Rana & Paul, 2017; Richards, 2018; Seny Kan et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2017) have searched the literature through academic databases (e.g., Ebsco, ScienceDirect, Scopus, etc.), in this review identifying published articles that have explored the ambidexterity concept was directly realised from academic journals related to travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event fields. Indeed, this approach is appropriate because the current review aims to embrace the use of ambidexterity concept in travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event studies published in these academic journals. In this respect, like Paul, Parthasarathy, and Gupta (2017), the 2018 Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) list was chosen because of its popularity in the management-related academic community and exhaustiveness in terms of journals specialised in the travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event fields. Of this 2018 CABS list, 53 English language academic journals related to travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event were identified (see Tab. 1). Any papers published in English in these 53 academic journals that contain the aforementioned search terms in the title, abstract, or keywords were deemed, and no timeframe was required while searching.

**Table 1**

List of identified journals.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Journal name</b>
1	Event Management
2	International Journal of Event and Festival Management
3	Journal of Convention and Event Tourism
4	Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events
5	Annals of Leisure Research
6	Leisure Sciences
7	Leisure Studies
8	Advances in Hospitality and Leisure
9	Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education
10	Managing Leisure: An International Journal
11	World Leisure Journal
12	Journal of Destination Marketing and Management
13	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
14	International Journal of Hospitality Management
15	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly
16	Hospitality and Society
17	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research
18	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
19	Advances in Hospitality and Leisure
20	Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research
21	FIU Hospitality Review
22	International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research
23	International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration
24	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education
25	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
26	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology: A Framework for Innovation
27	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management
28	Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism
29	Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism
30	Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes
31	Annals of Tourism Research
32	Tourism Management
33	Journal of Sustainable Tourism
34	Current Issues in Tourism
35	International Journal of Tourism Research
36	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing
37	Tourism Analysis
38	Tourism Economics
39	Tourism Geographies
40	Tourism Management Perspectives
41	Tourism Planning and Development

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42	Tourism Recreation Research
43	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
44	Journal of China Tourism Research
45	Journal of Ecotourism
46	Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism
47	Journal of Sport and Tourism
48	Journal of Travel and Tourism Research
49	PASOS Journal of Tourism and Cultural Heritage
50	Tourism Culture and Communication
51	Tourism Review
52	Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal
53	Journal of Travel Research

The third step concerns the literature search from the 53 identified journals. To ensure consistency, following Yang et al.'s (2017) approach, studies where the search terms did not figure in the author-supplied keywords but in the indexed keywords were ruled out. The assessment of papers was based on the abstracts, and the full texts were referred to when needed.

As a result of the second and third steps, 13 papers were identified as eligible and extracted. This is the fourth step (extracting literature). A summary table that contains the bibliographic details of these 13 papers and affiliations of leader author was established (see Tab. 2). As shown in Table 2, the number of published papers related to the travel, tourism, hospitality, leisure, and event fields that have investigated the ambidexterity concept is very limited, which confirms the statement established by prior research (e.g., Seraphin & Yallop, 2019). The ambidexterity concept has very recently drawn the attention of researchers in these fields; the first research that has called on this concept dates in 2014.

The fifth step consists in synthesising the findings. This last step is composed of analysing the summary table using the content analysis and reporting the review's findings.

**Table 2**

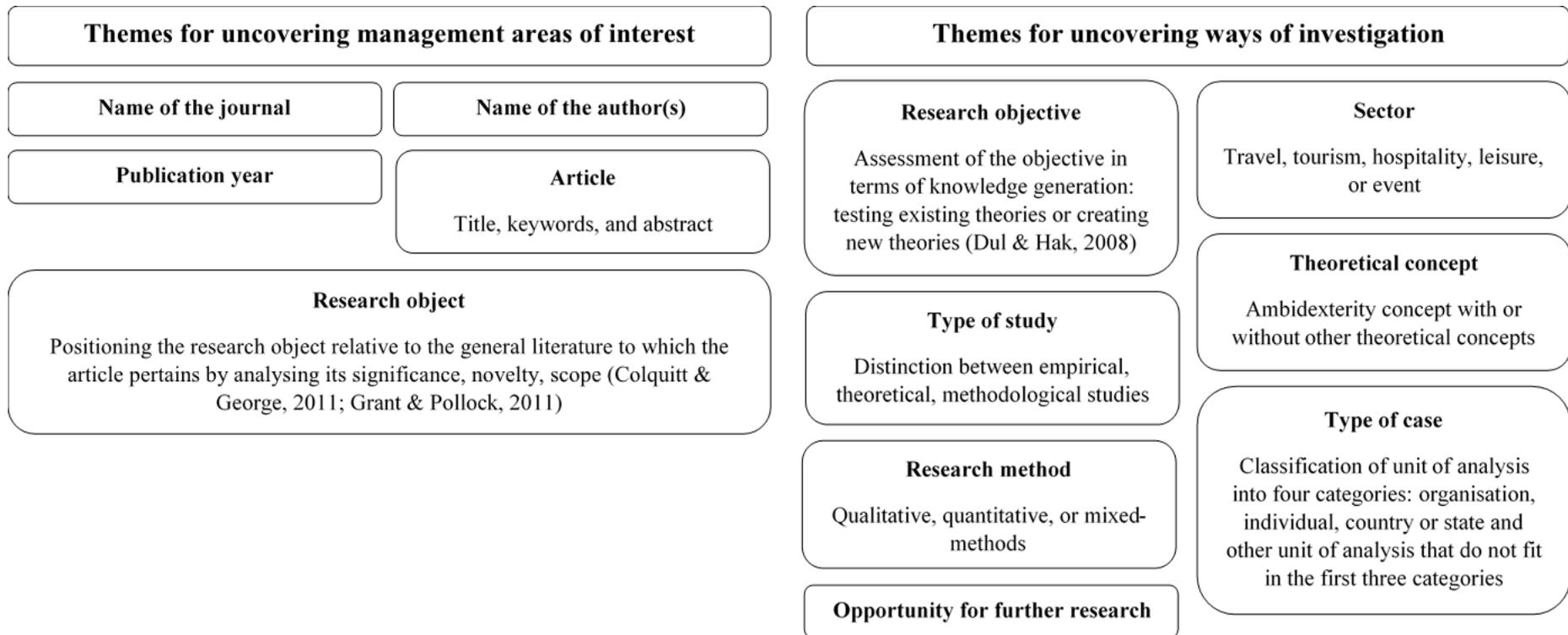
List of identified papers.

Journal name	Author(s) name(s)	Affiliation(s) of lead author	Publication year	Article title
Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	Seraphin, Smith, Scott, and Stokes	University of Winchester (UK)	2018	Destination management through organisational ambidexterity: Conceptualising Haitian enclaves
Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	Seraphin, Sheeran, and Pilato	University of Winchester (UK)	2018	Over-tourism and the fall of Venice as a destination
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Ubeda-Garcia, Claver-Cortes, Marco-Lajara, Garcia-Lillo, and Saragoza-Saez	University of Alicante (Spain)	2018	Continuous innovation in the hotel industry: The development of organizational ambidexterity through human capital and organizational culture in Spanish hotels
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Martinez-Perez, Garcia-Villaverde, and Elche	Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha (Spain)	2016	The mediating effect of ambidextrous knowledge strategy between social capital and innovation of cultural tourism clusters firms
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Wang, Tang, and Cheng	National Chi Nan University (Taiwan)	2018	Art-oriented model of hotel service innovation
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Bouzari and Karatepe	Eastern Mediterranean University (Turkey)	2017	Test of a mediation model of psychological capital among hotel salespeople
International Journal of Hospitality Management	Tang	Asia University (Taiwan)	2014	Becoming an ambidextrous hotel: The role of customer orientation
International Journal of Hospitality Management	Cheng, Tang, Shih, and Wang	National Chi Nan University (Taiwan)	2016	Designing lifestyle hotels
International Journal of Hospitality Management	Ma, Zhou, Chen, and Dong	Xiamen University (China)	2019	Does ambidextrous leadership motivate work crafting?
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Ubeda-Garcia, Claver-Cortes, Marco-Lajara, and Zaragoza-Saez	University of Alicante (Spain)	2016	Toward organizational ambidexterity in the hotel industry: The role of human resources

Annals of Tourism Research	Mihalache and Mihalache	NEOMA Business School (France)	2016	Organizational ambidexterity and sustained performance in the tourism industry
Current Issues in Tourism	Tsai	Shih Hsin University (Taiwan)	2017	Driving holistic innovation to heighten hotel customer loyalty
Leisure Studies	Seraphin and Yallop	University of Winchester (UK)	2019	Proposed framework for the management of resorts Mini Clubs: An ambidextrous approach

## 2.2. *Content analysis*

Following prior researches (e.g., Nunkoo et al., 2013; Seny Kan et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2017), a content analysis was conducted on the summary table. In this regard, to answer the research questions raised, a themes' dictionary adapted from Seny Kan et al. (2016) was implemented (see Fig. 1). This themes' dictionary comprises the themes for uncovering management areas of interest and ways of investigation. The journal name, article title, keywords, abstract, and research object helped to identify management areas of interest (Colquitt & George, 2011; Grant & Pollock, 2011). The research objective, sector, theoretical concept, type of study, research method, type of case, and opportunity for further research allowed to capture ways of investigation. The details of each theme can be found in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1.** Dictionary of themes for the articles' analysis.  
Source: Adapted from Seny Kan et al. (2016)

### 3. BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND WAYS OF INVESTIGATION

#### 3.1. Journals

With 4 articles *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* is the journal which has published the most articles in relation to the ambidexterity concept, followed by *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (3 articles). The other journals have only published between 1 and 2 articles in the investigated field (see Tab. 2).

Out of the three premier outlets (*Tourism Management*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*), only one (*Annals of Tourism Research*) has published in the field.

#### 3.2. Authors, affiliations, years of publication, and titles of articles

No specific academic is particularly emerging as an expert in the investigated field (apart from Seraphin who has published 3 papers in the area). As for the affiliations of leader authors, they are rather well balanced between Europe and Asia.

As a field of research, the investigated phenomenon is relatively new in tourism, hospitality, events, and leisure. From 2014 to 2019, between 1 and 4 papers were published with the exception for 2015 (no paper), with peaks reached in 2016 and 2018 (4 papers for each year) (see Tab. 2).

#### 3.3. Research objects and units of analysis

As for the research objects or management domains, they cover 3 domains (see Tab. 3):

Destination management and sustainability, leadership and HRM, and innovation and performance.

**Table 3**  
Research objects.

Destination Management & Sustainability	Leadership & HRM	Innovation & Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martínez-Pérez et al. (2016)</li> <li>• Seraphin, Sheeran, &amp; Pilato (2018)</li> <li>• Seraphin, Smith, et al. (2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bouzari &amp; Karatepe (2017)</li> <li>• Ma et al. (2019)</li> <li>• Úbeda-García, Claver-Cortés, Marco-Lajara, &amp; Zaragoza-Sáez (2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheng et al. (2016)</li> <li>• Mihalache &amp; Mihalache (2016)</li> <li>• Tang (2014)</li> <li>• Tsai (2017)</li> <li>• Úbeda-García et al. (2018)</li> <li>• Wang et al. (2018)</li> <li>• Seraphin &amp; Yallop (2019)</li> </ul>

Most authors have taken as unit of analysis either individuals or an organisation. Only two papers have focused on the analysis of the role of ambidexterity concept at the level of a destination (see Tab. 4).

**Table 4**

Units of analysis.

Author(s)	Categories of unit of analysis			
	Organisation	Individual	Country/State	Other
Bouzari & Karatepe (2017)	-	X 187 salespeople	-	-
Cheng et al. (2016)	X Single case study (1 hotel)	-	-	-
Ma et al. (2019)	-	X 290 front-line employees and 69 workgroups	-	-
Martínez-Pérez et al. (2016)	X 215 firms of the hospitality and tourism industry	-	-	-
Mihalache & Mihalache (2016)	-	-	-	X
Seraphin, Sheeran, et al. (2018)	-	-	-	X Destination
Seraphin, Smith, et al. (2018)	-	-	-	X Destination
Seraphin & Yallop (2019)	X Resorts Mini Clubs	-	-	-
Tang (2014)	-	X 126 senior executives and 697 department managers	-	-

Tsai (2017)	-	X 112 executive officers and 5723 customers	-	-
Úbeda-García et al. (2018)	-	X 100 HR managers	-	-
Úbeda-García et al. (2016)	-	X 100 HR managers	-	-
Wang et al. (2018)	X Single case study (1 hotel Relais & Châteaux)	-	-	-

### *3.4. Types of study, research methods, study sites, and sectors*

In terms of the types of study (empirical, theoretical, and methodological studies), the vast majority (69%) of the papers are based on empirical data; 31% on theoretical research (see Tab. 5).

Regarding the research methods, with 7 papers quantitative research through questionnaire represents 54% of published articles on the topic, while conceptual papers and qualitative research, respectively, account for 31% and 15% (see Tab. 5).

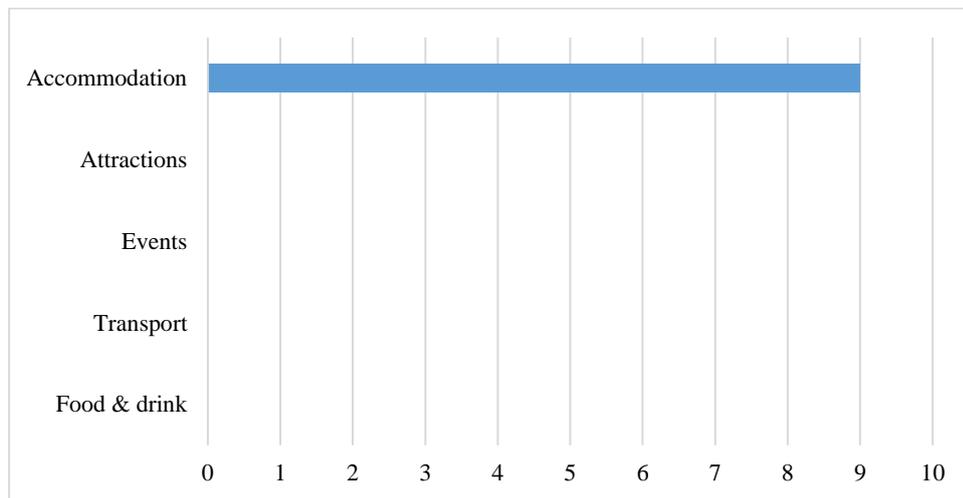
As for the study sites, all empirical studies have been done either in Europe or in Asia (see Tab. 5).

**Table 5**

Types of study, research methods, study sites, and sectors.

Author(s)	Type of study	Research method or approach	Sector	Study site
Bouzari & Karatepe (2017)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Iran
Cheng et al. (2016)	Empirical	Qualitative research (Single case study). Triangulation: files and records, documents, direct participation experiences, site observation, and interviews from executive managers, employees, customers, and scholars	Hospitality (Hotel)	Taiwan
Ma et al. (2019)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China
Martínez-Pérez et al. (2016)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality and Tourism	Spain
Mihalache & Mihalache (2016)	Theoretical	Literature review	Tourism	NA
Seraphin, Sheeran, et al. (2018)	Theoretical	Literature review	Tourism (Destination)	Italy
Seraphin, Smith, et al. (2018)	Theoretical	Literature review	Tourism (Destination)	Haiti
Seraphin & Yallop (2019)	Theoretical	Literature review	Leisure (Resorts Mini Clubs)	NA
Tang (2014)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Taiwan
Tsai (2017)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China
Úbeda-García et al. (2018)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Spain
Úbeda-García et al. (2016)	Empirical	Quantitative research (Questionnaire)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Spain
Wang et al. (2018)	Empirical	Qualitative research (Single case study). Triangulation: secondary data, field investigation, and semi-structured interviews with managers, employees, customers, and artists	Hospitality (Hotel)	Taiwan

Using the breakdown of the tourism industry (food and drink, transport, events, attractions, and accommodation) as suggested by Cooper and Hall (2011), the hospitality sector (accommodation) is the only researched area (see Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** Breakdown of the tourism industry.  
Source: The authors

#### 4. USE OF AM IN TOURISM, DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH AGENDA

##### *4.1. Destination management and sustainability*

Taking the example of Haiti, a post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destination, Seraphin, Smith, et al. (2018) have explained that the management of tourism resorts that can also be assimilated to enclaves in post-conflict and post-disaster destinations, needs to be managed in an ambidextrous way in order to ensure the sustainability and advancement of the activity on the long term. One of the major outcomes of this management approach would be less segregation and separation between tourists and local populations (Seraphin, Smith, et al., 2018). The latter is more important as since the summer 2017, many destinations worldwide

have been victim of tourismphobia and anti-tourism movements, as a result of the lack of real encounter between locals and visitors (Seraphin, Gowreesunkar, Zaman, & Bourliataux-Lajoinie, 2018). In the same line of thoughts, Martínez-Pérez et al. (2016) have argued that cultural tourism destinations should adopt an AM approach that would consist in bridging gaps between locals and outsiders. The final outcome would be the development of social capital. They have also added that World Heritage Cities have a strong potential to develop social capital because of their strong connection with cultural heritage, identity, and sense of belonging. Seemingly, Seraphin, Sheeran, and Pilato (2018) have called for a holistic innovation process in the tourism industry to tackle issues such as overtourism, and tourismphobia and anti-tourism movements. They have also argued that this holistic innovation process can arise from the application of an AM approach. Overall, OA could be said to have a strong link with the topic of sustainability in destination management (see Fig. 3).

However, although the need for every organisation to pursue both exploration and exploitation is supported by most previous studies, Gupta et al. (2006) have attempted to show that individual organisations may effectively focus solely on exploration or exploitation for fostering long-term survival while delegating the task of achieving a balance between the two to organisations that operate within a broader social system and as such are interdependent with many other organisations, under three specific conditions: (1) The two organisations A and B, where A focuses on exploration and B on exploitation, control mutually complementary resources; (2) The domain in which organisation A operates is highly dynamic, whereas the domain in which organisation B operates is highly stable; and (3) The degree of mutual co-specialisation in the two sets of resources of the two

organisations tends to be relatively low. To that end, they have clearly justified that in the semiconductor industry it is feasible without balance for organisations whose strategies focus solely on either exploration or exploitation.

In the tourism industry, towards understating tourism, Leiper (1979, 1990) has highlighted the necessity to adopt a systems approach. This systems approach in tourism has been also advocated by several tourism scholars (e.g., Coles, Hall, & Duval, 2006; Fyall, Garrod, & Wang, 2012; Garrod, Fyall, Leask, & Reid, 2012; King, 1987; Richards, 2002; Tribe, 1997). In this perspective, tourism needs to be studied as a complex social-ecological system (Fyall et al., 2012; Schianetz & Kavanagh, 2008). Therefore, tourism organisations or destinations operate within a broader social system and are interrelated with various stakeholders (Fyall et al., 2012; Garrod et al., 2012; Moscardo, Konovalov, Murphy, McGehee, & Schurmann, 2017; Page et al., 2017; Schianetz & Kavanagh, 2008) that may work with or against one another (Fyall et al., 2012). In addition, according to Dolnicar, Knezevic Cvelbar, and Grün (2018: 1), “tourism is one of the most polluting industries”. It is considered as a Janus-faced industry (the positive impacts of the industry are also accompanied by negative ones) instead of referring to its ambidextrous nature (Sanchez & Adams, 2008). Seraphin and Yallop (2019) have recognised that the tourism industry is ambidextrous by nature. In light of these arguments, to achieve a long-term sustainable objective, for the tourism industry OA seems as an evident way that allows us to handle a destination or an organisation (private or public) at macro and micro levels (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019).



**Fig. 3.** OA – sustainability.  
Source: The authors

#### 4.2. Leadership and HRM

Ma et al. (2019) have provided evidence that ambidextrous leadership style is positively related to employees' work crafting in the hospitality sector. This could be achieved by (1) providing more work autonomy and social support to staff, (2) rewarding and valuing employees' service performance, (3) encouraging career development, (4) enhancing harmonious passion, and (5) motivating staff to perceive the significance of their work. OA could therefore be assimilated with a staff management tool (Úbeda-García, Claver-Cortés, Marco-Lajara, & Zaragoza-Sáez, 2016). Indeed, Úbeda-García et al. (2016) have clearly demonstrated the role that HRM, through the implementation of high performance work systems (HPWSs), can play in ambidextrous (exploitative and exploratory) learning. Concretely, an effective HPWSs can have a positive influence on OA, which, in turn, significantly enhances organisational performance. Thus, OA appears as a mediator in the relationship between HPWSs and organisational performance.

Applied to staff, AM can contribute to reduce lateness, to retain staff, and be seen as an incentive to deliver a higher level of service (Bouzari & Karatepe, 2017) (see Fig. 4). These results are in accordance with those of previous HRM-related studies. In their research on green HRM applied to the hotel industry, drawing on Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) theory, Pham, Tučková, and Chiappetta Jabbour (2019) have demonstrated the direct and positive effects of the three green HRM practices (training, performance management, and employee involvement) on organisational citizenship behaviour towards the environment. As for O’Donohue and Torugsa (2016), green HRM practices may stimulate employee environmental commitment. In addition, green HRM practices can boost the organisation environmental performance (Alt & Spitzack, 2016). For example, from a balance between exploitation and exploration perspective, organisations that focus on employee involvement generate opportunities for employees to put on their knowledge and abilities in environmental activities (Dubois & Dubois, 2012), yield green initiatives at work (Pinzone, Guerci, Lettieri, & Redman, 2016), and provide innovative solutions for reducing waste and improving the efficiency of resource usage (Florida & Davison, 2001). Furthermore, Mom, Fourné, and Jansen (2015) have indicated that managers’ ambidexterity contributes to individual performance in more uncertain and interdependent work contexts such as tourism.



**Fig. 4.** OA – motivational tool and staff performance.  
Source: The authors

### *4.3. Innovation and performance*

Cheng et al. (2016) and Tang (2014) provide evidence that hotels market performance can be improved with an AM approach, in other words by developing simultaneously the type and range of services on offer (exploration), while improving the quality of current services (exploitation). The combination of both continually contributes to create value for customers and subsequently market performance, as customers' willingness to return will be enhanced (Cheng et al., 2016; Tsai, 2017; Wang et al., 2018). Based on the ASISE (ambidextrous service innovation and service effectiveness) model, which describes the art-oriented services innovation process, Wang et al. (2018) have successfully established eight steps for developing art-oriented services: scanning, linking, designing, performing, assessing, feedback, improving, and adjusting. As for Úbeda-García et al. (2018), HPWSs can shape exploitative innovation and exploratory innovation through the construction of an ambidextrous organisational culture that encourages organisational diversity and shared vision. Therefore, ambidextrous organisational culture acts as a mediating variable between HPWSs and OA.

Moreover, in line with Úbeda-García et al. (2016), Úbeda-García et al. (2018: 3609) have added the fact that “high-performance work systems facilitate the development of organisational ambidexterity” that, in turn, has a positive impact on organisation performance. In the same vein, Seraphin and Yallop (2019) have shown how to use effectively resources for the management of resorts Mini Clubs in Haiti. According to them, AM approach may be

used to improve performance without any cost. AM could be implemented by practitioners using a two-step strategy. In a first step, AM contributes to a better balance between exploitation and exploration. In a second step, it helps to work on a greater customisation of the Mini-Clubs' offer (see Fig. 5 for other outcomes of OA approach). In the strategic management field, prior studies have also indicated that OA is a key driver of firm performance (e.g., Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Jansen et al., 2012; Jansen, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2006; Junni, Sarala, Taras, & Tarba, 2013). Benner and Tushman (2015: 503) have suggested that “the ability to both explore and exploit is positively associated with organization's outcomes”.



**Fig. 5.** OA – value creation, market performance, and customer loyalty.  
Source: The authors

#### 4.4. Research agenda

Several opportunities for future research could follow this study. First, based on the tourism industry' breakdown proposed by Cooper and Hall (2011), the scope of research could be expanded to food and drink, transport, events, and attractions because few prior studies using the ambidexterity concept have all concentrated on the accommodation. Second, future

research could be more theoretically based as existing empirical research has proven not to be generalisable. Third, given the differences in relation to both demand and supply sides among various types of destinations, a very limited number of papers considering a destination as a unit of analysis, and the dynamic nature of the ambidexterity concept (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008; Vahlne & Jonsson, 2017), future studies on more specific destinations (e.g., urban destination, rural destination, cultural destination, coastal destination, sport tourism destination, wine tourism destination, etc.) need to be investigated in order to be able to propose strategic and operational initiatives, ensuring the sustainability. Indeed, environmental uncertainty, organisational structure, organisational culture, and leadership are the elements that shape strategic context in which strategies are implemented (Okumus, 2003). Following this conceptualisation, the strategic context might logically vary from one type of destination to another. Fourth, as findings of published empirical studies on the topic cannot be generalised, in order to be generalisable and to cover other geographical zones than Europe and Asia, empirical studies from a cross-cultural validation perspective should be conducted. Fifth, in the HRM field applied to the tourism and hospitality industry, there is a necessity to obtain a broader understanding of the OA's antecedents and factors moderating the OA-organisational performance link, further research on these issues may be of great contribution to the literature. Last but not least, from an operational point of view, as there is no study on how to involve efficiently visitors in an AM design, researches seeking to show an effective contribution of visitors to the destination or organisation sustainable development seem to be necessary. As research outputs in OA applied to tourism and related sectors are still very limited, a gap remained for academics to fill and makes a name for themselves.

The purpose of developing a research agenda is to place a topic of research within broad social, economic and environmental discourses (Getz, 2012). In order to develop a research agenda in OA (see Tab. 6), this study is using the pro-format table developed by Getz (2012) when designing the research agenda for event studies. The table has three entries, namely themes, key research questions, and possible research methods (Getz, 2012). For this study, the themes (destination management and sustainability, leadership and HRM, innovation and performance) are taken from the first three sub-sections of the current section 4. As for the research questions and possible research methods, they are inspired by the literature covered in this study and by Visser's (2015) model that suggests that changes and sustainability occurred with transformational leadership, enterprise reform, technology innovation, corporate transparency, stakeholders' engagement, social responsibility, integrated value and future-fitness. As for the presentation/layout of the questions and research methods, they are inspired by the way Getz (2012) worded his questions and the methods he used. Obviously, we have adapted everything to suit the needs of this particular study.

**Table 6**

Research agenda for OA in tourism.

Themes	Key research questions	Possible research methods
Destination management and sustainability	In the case of enclaves (resorts and/or destinations), what could be the impacts of OA ambidexterity on the experience of visitors and life of locals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phenomenology (in depth interviews of locals and/or visitors)</li> <li>- Direct and participant observation</li> <li>- Focus group</li> <li>- General consumer and market surveys</li> <li>- Longitudinal studies</li> <li>- Delphi panels</li> </ul>
	Examine the impacts of OA from a revenue management point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hermeneutics (businesses/DMOs/DMCs reporting)</li> <li>- Financial audits and ROI studies</li> <li>- Delphi panels</li> <li>- Focus group</li> </ul>
	Has corporate transparency occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Has any changes been noticed in term of CSR?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> </ul>
	Are local communities more engaged in the tourism industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder consultations</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Whole population studies (over time)</li> <li>- Ethnographic approach</li> <li>- Direct and participant observation</li> </ul>
Leadership and HRM	Has transformational leadership occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Has enterprise reform occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Has corporate transparency occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Has any changes been noticed in term of CSR?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Are staff more engaged with the current affairs of the company?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder consultations</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Whole population studies (over time)</li> <li>- Ethnographic approach</li> <li>- Direct and participant observation</li> </ul>
Innovation and performance	Has enterprise reform occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longitudinal studies</li> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Has technology innovation occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Business survey</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Policy reviews</li> </ul>
	Are research staff more innovative and productive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder consultations</li> <li>- Environmental audit</li> <li>- Trend analysis</li> <li>- Whole population studies (over time)</li> <li>- Ethnographic approach</li> <li>- Direct and participant observation</li> <li>- Supply demand assessment</li> <li>- Focus group</li> <li>- Interviews</li> </ul>

As part of his research agenda for event studies, Getz (2012) also developed some future propositions (FPs), as he argued that futurist thoughts are important in research. On that basis, this study is also going to develop some FPs that can be formulated as follows:

FP1: Empirical academic research in the field of OA applied to tourism will continue to grow at the same pace until practitioners realise the importance of this management approach.

FP2: OA will become the norm in tourism management practices and will be embedded in tourism management programmes.

FP3: OA is going to play, in the tourism industry, a significant role in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) via the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) and transformational leadership.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

OA is a legitimate management approach that should systematically be used in tourism and related industry. Indeed, this approach when used, even if quite scarcely, was not often named “OA”. Now this study is putting a name on an approach that was so far ineffable. The other contribution of this paper lays on its contribution to the extent OA has been used and could be used, alongside with a rather exhaustive presentation of the features and benefits of the approach.

The results that arise from this review show that AM approach can be used to discuss various management-related themes in the tourism industry like destination management, innovation, HRM, performance, etc. In line with prior studies (e.g., Mihalache & Mihalache, 2016; Seraphin & Yallop, 2019; Úbeda-García et al., 2016), this review has clearly advocated the statement that ambidexterity is, in tourism research, a rather new concept and as such scarcely used by researchers. Moreover, this review has shown multiple ways that the ambidexterity concept is relevant to understanding the dynamics of performance optimisation through a better utilisation of material and human resources at different scales of analysis. It has clearly indicated various outcomes (e.g., sustainability, motivational tool, staff performance, value creation, market performance, and customer loyalty) that implementing an AM may generate in the tourism industry, either at the level of a destination or at the level of an organisation. AM is a source of performance improvement either with lower cost or without cost.

At the level of a destination, one should bring various stakeholders within a destination (institutional, tourism providers, locals, and visitors) back together. Each stakeholder should take part in any tourism development project. Admittedly, in the context where many destinations have been victim of tourismphobia and anti-tourism movements, ambidexterity appears as a way of resolving tensions. It has been observed that to date the involvement of locals and tourism providers in destinations management remains quite weak and that most destinations mainly focus on exploitation. AM that includes not only exploitation but also exploration through (1) integrating locals and tourism providers' thoughts into tourism development projects and (2) considering visitors' feedbacks, leads to a holistic innovation (Seraphin, Sheeran, et al., 2018), enabling the destination sustainable development. A strategy based on the combination of internal (local) and external (outside) relations can enable

ambidextrous knowledge strategies and better innovation performance (Martínez-Pérez et al., 2016). Indeed, involving various stakeholders in a common objective contributes to maximising the benefits of strategic planning (Guiver & Stanford, 2014). The pivotal role local residents play in the destinations' development and management has been largely advocated by previous researches (e.g., Garrod et al., 2012; Vo Thanh, Tran, & Dang, 2018). With the steady increase of mobile and digital technologies McCabe, Sharples, and Foster (2012) have also recommended that to answer the visitors' needs tourism providers in destinations need to collaborate in service provision in order to offer integrated technology-enhanced tourism services. For this purpose, from an exploration perspective they have promised that multi-stakeholder scenario-based design (SBD) constitutes a powerful instrument to collect innovative ideas for destination service development and to put an end to difficulties in relation to collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders. As for Fyall et al. (2012), in order to create new opportunities (exploration) and as such remain competitive, they have added the need for a more sophisticated and multi-dimensional destination collaboration approach that consists of three forms: "organic", "mediated intra-destination", and "mediated intra- and inter-destination". They have suggested that destinations need to perform well in all these three forms to maximise their advantage (please see Fyall et al., 2012 for more details). In the same line, to balance between exploitation and exploration Mihalic (2016: 461) has advanced, based on the notions of responsible and sustainable ("*responsustable*") tourism, the triple-A (Awareness, Agenda, and Action) model that provides insights to "move from market-value-led and environmentally laissez-faire tourism towards more environmental- and social-value-driven responsible tourism." Although the topic on tourism destination collaboration has been widely discussed in previous researches, little is known about the real role of visitors and on how to precisely capitalise on visitors.

Thus, from a practical viewpoint destination marketers and managers should work more on measures to ensure an effective contribution of visitors to the destination sustainable development.

In the context of specific destinations as Haitian enclaves, in the same line of thoughts, Seraphin, Smith, et al. (2018) have highlighted that OA could be a good management approach to flatten out the problem of segregation and separation between tourists and local populations. According to them, Haiti needs to adopt more exploitative-exploratory postures, which allows tourists to have more interaction with locals, a wider knowledge of destination, and a genuine experience of Haiti. Indeed, when tourists are educated about a specific destination, they may be more likely to develop some attachment with the destination and subsequently go beyond the limitations that they could have with that destination. Practically, in order to heighten the sustainability, Seraphin, Smith, et al. (2018) have presented an overview that seeks to reconcile exploitative and explorative innovation within an enclave. Exploitative innovation consists in (1) using locals as businesses within the enclave, (2) making pricing competitive with other destinations, and (3) tapping into destination unique selling propositions (USPs). Exploratory innovation concerns (1) using locals as users within the enclave, (2) developing further USPs (e.g., access for tourist beyond the enclave) and ensuring high quality delivery, (3) reducing potential risk, increasing stakeholder involvement and investment (e.g., diaspora communities), and (4) establishing partnerships with other destinations. It might be possible to apply the OA to similar destinations (e.g., other destinations in the Caribbean) and sea-based enclaves (i.e., cruise ships) (Seraphin, Smith, et al., 2018).

Within an organisation, this review has demonstrated that OA can be beneficial in several management aspects (e.g., HRM, innovation, value creation, customer loyalty). For instance, in terms of HRM, in line with AMO theory, Úbeda-García et al. (2018, 2016) have advocated the use of high-performance work systems (HPWSs) because it facilitates the development of OA, which has a positive impact on firm performance. Indeed, if these three dimensions (AMO) are synergistically combined, employees will have not only the adequate abilities but also the necessary motivations and opportunities to become involved in strategically appropriate behaviours, which can drive to a sustained competitive advantage (Gardner, Wright, & Moynihan, 2011). In this regard, ambidexterity could be fulfilled through allocating human resources to both exploitation and exploration (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Úbeda-García et al., 2018, 2016). Thus, it would be relevant for tourism organisations to apply HPWSs to their management. Moreover, in international high-end hotels characterised by a diversity in relation to both employees and customers, and a high employees turnover rate (Line & Runyan, 2012; Yao, Qiu, & Wei, 2019), AM seems an excellent approach, since this helps to encourage innovative and strategic initiatives from both employees and customers and as such to retain them. For hotels which would create new art-oriented services and enhance the effectiveness of current artistic services, they can use the ASISE model developed by (Wang et al., 2018).

AM can, sometimes, help improve performance without any cost, thanks to the adjustment of how to use resources (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019). For example, for the management of resorts Mini Clubs, Seraphin and Yallop (2019) have shown the need to redesign their services to enhance not only children's experiences but also to contribute to their competitive advantage. In this perspective, these authors have suggested a two-step strategic approach, which should

be implemented by leisure organisations: an increased complexity strategy and an increased divergence strategy. In a first step, the increasing complexity strategy may consist in adding complementary management and operational layers to the currently exploitative management of Mini Clubs in order to better balance between exploitation and exploration. The increased divergence strategy is the second step, which aims to reach a greater customisation of the Mini-Clubs' offer (by exploring new opportunities and trends). Henceforth, to understand how an ambidextrous management approach could be successfully applied to Mini Clubs, practitioners could inspire the strategic framework proposed by Seraphin and Yallop (2019) (please see Seraphin & Yallop, 2019 for more details). Due to its operational flexibility, this strategic framework may be also implemented by managers of other types of leisure organisations than only resorts Mini Clubs.

In sum, AM seems a promising management concept for tourism destinations and organisations. Exploration-oriented organisations may suffer the costs of experimentation with, sometimes, limited benefits. On the other hand, exploitation-oriented organisations do not move forward and remain in a “status quo” regarding performance (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019). Thus, AM approach calls for a balance between exploration of new opportunities, with a gaze on the future, and exploitation of existing resources and competencies, with a gaze on the present (Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013; Filippini et al., 2012; Gupta et al., 2006; Jansen et al., 2006; Mihalache & Mihalache, 2016). AM could be one of the best solutions for answering the contemporary issues such as pollution and climate change, and for ensuring the sustainability of the tourism industry. Given that tourism activities often cause a negative impact on the environment as a result of using significant amounts of natural resources (Dolnicar et al., 2018; Sanchez & Adams, 2008; Scanlon, 2007; Singjai, Winata, & Kummer,

2018) and that there is an increase in environmental legislation and pressure from consumers (Chan & Hawkins, 2012; Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010), a proactive strategy based on AM approach seems more necessary than ever. Moreover, in a context where the climate change is alarming, which often generates negative influences on tourism development (Dogru, Marchio, Bulut, & Suess, 2019; Gössling, Scott, Hall, Ceron, & Dubois, 2012), OA appears to be an incontestable approach to reconcile exploitation and exploration within a destination or an organisation, ensuring its sustainable development. Finally, because tourism organisations or destinations are interdependent with many other stakeholders and the overtourism, anti-tourism, and tourismphobia are developing (Cohen & Hopkins, 2019; Jacobsen, Iversen, & Hem, 2019; Seraphin, Gowreesunkar, et al., 2018; Seraphin, Sheeran, et al., 2018), it would be very important for tourism organisations and destinations regardless of their sizes to adopt the OA for reaching long-term survival.

The only limitation of this study rests on the literature search strategy, meaning that the literature search was only focused on the three sections: title, abstract, and keywords. That said, researches that have considered the ambidexterity concept but did not mention this in any of these three sections may have been omitted. Indeed, this limitation is in line with (1) the Seraphin and Yallop 's (2019) statement highlighting that some studies apply the ambidexterity concept without explicitly referring to its name and (2) the reflection of Petticrew and Roberts (2006) indicating that a systematic review comes with its own limitations because of its retrospective and selective nature. Thus, apart from several opportunities for future research raised in the sub-section "*Research agenda*", further research is also encouraged to consider the exhaustivity of published papers on ambidexterity concept by including papers that did not mention the terms "ambidexterity" and/or "ambidextrous" in

the three sections title, abstract, and keywords, but in other sections. Furthermore, it is recommended that papers that did not employ exactly the name of the concept (i.e., ambidexterity, AM, AO, OA) but applied this concept (e.g., papers using the terms other than “ambidexterity” and “ambidextrous”, such as exploitation, exploration, etc., but applying in reality the ambidexterity concept), need to be taken into account in future research.

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