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Digital Platform Strategy – A Critical Review

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While the transformative effect of digital platforms is broadly recognized (Boudreau, 2010), the research on the strategic implications of digital platforms has evolved in largely separate streams focusing on either the platform architecture (Tiwana, 2015), network externalities (Parker & Van Alstyne, 2005), or tactical decisions (Eisenmann et al., 2006). There has been relatively little integration of research across these streams (De Reuver et al., 2018; Gawer, 2014). To address the relative lack of integration of digital platform research in relation to firm strategy, we undertake a critical review of digital platform-related literature published in the leading Information Systems (IS) journals: *Management Information Systems Quarterly (MISQ)* and *Information Systems Research (ISR)*. These journals emphasize theoretical contribution in the selection of manuscripts for publication (Leidner, 2020) and they reflect the core theoretical discourses in Information Systems. Therefore, these journals constitute an appropriate frame for the review.

We use the business strategy framework developed by Hambrick and Fredrickson (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2005) as a structuring theoretical lens for our review. The framework posits that business strategy must holistically address five key elements: markets, partnerships, differentiators, staging, and profit logic. Drawing on this framework we seek to address the following research questions. RQ1: What is known about firm-level digital platform strategy? RQ2: Where are gaps and opportunities to expand the current research?

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