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Cultural values and voice as determinants of customers' marketing research cooperation: A fuzzy set perspective

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Abstract

Firms and their managers have long been concerned with encouraging customers to take on an active role in their marketing research activities. The critical question for these firms is how to foster collaboration with customers in marketing research to enhance the firm's marketing effectiveness and simultaneously benefit the customers. This study focuses on the role that individuals' cultural values and customer voice potentially play in shaping how customers perceive marketing research cooperation with the firm. We analyzed data from a sample of 270 customers of apparel store brands in an African country. Utilizing fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis, our research reveals that the combinations of antecedent conditions that enhance marketing research cooperation significantly differ from those that impede it. Theoretically and managerially, our study expands the understanding of how marketing research cooperation is contingent upon the combination of customers' cultural values and their voice.

KEYWORDS
cultural values, fsQCA, marketing research cooperation, personal cultural orientation, retail, voice

1 | INTRODUCTION

Marketing research cooperation is a collective term that refers to various customer input activities that firms request, such as suggesting improvements to products, services, and processes, providing feedback on new products, and sharing insights about unfulfilled needs (Lacey & Morgan, 2009). This is crucial for the co-creation of value. Insights derived from this process can help organizations develop more customized products and services to meet customer needs, thereby enhancing the firm's economic value and simultaneously improving customer welfare. Indeed, it has been long recognized in the marketing literature that customers' willingness to participate in organizations marketing research activities is crucial to the long-term success of these organizations (Lacey, 2012). Moreover, from the customer's perspective, engaging in a firm's marketing research initiatives has the potential to increase economic value by minimizing instances of service failure and delivering higher-quality services. This, in turn, can lead to greater customer satisfaction (for related commentary, see Chan et al., 2010).

Despite this, our understanding of how marketing research cooperation with the firm can be nurtured and developed has been limited to date, thereby neglecting the value such knowledge may bring to theory-building and managerial practice. An important exception in the literature is the work of Lacey (2012), wherein customer voice—is described as

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"the general level of comfort that a customer experiences in the complaining process to the service provider when problems arise" (see p. 137 in Lacey, 2012)—was found to be critically related to customers' intentions to partake in a range of marketing research initiatives of the firm. Another notable study by Lacey and Morgan (2009) found that commitment significantly predicts consumer attitudes toward marketing research support (akin to marketing research cooperation).

To our knowledge, research exploring factors beyond commitment and customer voice in examining consumers' willingness to engage in marketing research initiatives has been notably scarce in the literature. Consequently, there is a limited understanding of the antecedent conditions that lead to this phenomenon. Furthermore, it is unclear whether and how antecedent factors, including customer voice, impact marketing research collaboration with the firm. Although it is acknowledged that "customer-firm relationships are influenced by the cultural context" (Pick & Eisend, 2016, p. 55), there appears to be a lack of research specifically investigating the relationship between individual-level cultural values—such as masculinity, power distance, gender equality, independence, and social inequality orientations—and customers' willingness to cooperate with firms in marketing research initiatives. To our knowledge, this specific interplay remains unexplored, highlighting a significant gap in the existing literature. This study, therefore, argues that overlooking the role of cultural values in customers' marketing research cooperation with the firm impedes knowledge production in the field, especially given the known salience of culture in human behavior (see also Gbadamosi, 2013; Kwarteng et al., 2023; Liu & Segev, 2017; Mattison Thompson & Brouthers, 2021; Sharma, 2010; van Tonder et al., 2020). We believe that a comprehensive grasp of the antecedent conditions that govern customer-firm cooperation in marketing research across all environments and contexts is lacking if one fails to acknowledge the influence of individuals' cultural values. This is because the literature has established that marketing and social phenomena, including the research topic being examined here, cannot be completely detached from an individual's cultural beliefs and values (Kalemci et al., 2019; Mattison Thompson & Brouthers, 2021; Sharma et al., 2022; van Tonder et al., 2020). Hence, understanding the nuanced influence of individuals' cultural values on fostering or hindering customer-firm marketing research collaboration becomes paramount. Consequently, this study aims to address the identified research gaps.

This exploratory study synthesizes the personal cultural orientations framework (Sharma, 2010) with existing literature on customer voice (Lacey, 2012; Mahdiraji et al., 2022; Ran & Zhou, 2019; Saxena et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021). It aims to investigate how the identified factors—cultural orientations and customer voice—affect customers' willingness to cooperate in marketing research with firms. This research applies an asymmetrical approach, as described by Fiss (2011), Pappas and Woodside (2021), and Ragin (2009), to explore the complex dynamics of this cooperation. Noteworthily, this study is a departure from prior studies on customer marketing research cooperation (Lacey, 2012; Lacey & Morgan, 2009) that exclusively relied on a symmetrical approach (or: linear models more broadly) on the analyses of the antecedents of customers' marketing research cooperation with the firm. A primary limitation of a symmetrical approach, compared to an asymmetrical approach, is that it cannot detect complex relationships, such as interdependencies, concerning the outcome variable (in this case marketing research cooperation with the firm). Following calls for novel methodological approaches to explore social and organizational phenomena (Diwanji, 2022; Fiss, 2011; Pappas & Woodside, 2021), this study uses an asymmetrical approach to examine the antecedent conditions characterizing marketing research cooperation with the firm. Empirical insights from an asymmetrical approach are important because variables influencing an outcome cannot be treated in isolation, and the presence or absence of an antecedent condition may not always yield the same outcome (see also Chaouali et al., 2022; Misangyi et al., 2017; Osakwe, 2022; Peng et al., 2022). Using an asymmetrical approach through fsQCA, in conjunction with our examination of the literature on relationship marketing and culture (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2018; Sahin et al., 2023; Sharma, 2010), we explore the cultural and voice profiles associated with high and low marketing research cooperation with the firm.

Notably, by drawing on the literature that is at the intersection of individual cultural values, customer voice, and marketing research cooperation (or, more broadly, customer-firm relationships), this research represents an important addition to these streams of literature and, indeed, to relationship marketing research. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to unveil the equifinal causes of both low and high marketing research cooperation with the firm based on the personal cultural orientations framework and the customer voice literature. It is important to acknowledge that throughout this study, individual cultural values and personal cultural orientations are used interchangeably as they both convey the same meaning. Regarding managerial relevance, the study offers strategic guidelines for managers of firms and marketing practitioners to understand the antecedent conditions leading to marketing research cooperation. Through marketing research cooperation, firms and consumers can co-create value that will enhance the firm's success in the marketplace. Therefore, the onus rests with the managers of firms to create a consumer-friendly environment where feedback can be made for the firm's action. Consequently, our study is an original contribution to the literature and managerially desirable. In summary, this work makes a major contribution to knowledge and managerial practice by unveiling the cultural and voice profiles associated with high (or low) marketing research cooperation with the firm, employing an asymmetrical approach. Literature-wise, the current explorative work is the first to integrate the two separate research strands of individual cultural values and customer voice in the examination of marketing research cooperation with the firm, thereby implicating future investigation of customer-firm marketing research cooperation.

2 | LITERATURE BACKGROUND

2.1 | Customer voice

One of the earliest research projects on voice behavior is attributed to Hirschman's (1970) theory on exit, voice, and loyalty and then

subsequently introduced into mainstream organizational studies (cf., Bies & Shapiro, 1988), but introduced more recently into consumer research (Beatty et al., 2012; Chelminski & Coulter, 2007; Harrison-Walker, 2019; Lacey, 2012; Saxena et al., 2022). As previously stated, customer voice (which we also label as voice perception), unlike negative word of mouth and complaint behaviors generally, is more constructive as it allows the firm to take sufficient steps in addressing service- and/or operational-related issues that the firm is faced with. While referring to earlier research, Bove et al. (2009, p. 699) describe customer voice as "customers directing complaints to service providers when problems occur, to allow them to correct the problems, retain their reputation, and/or maintain relationships." These authors identified this concept as a crucial element of customer citizenship behaviors.

Consistent with the research of Bove et al. (2009), Beatty et al. (2012), and Lacey (2012), the present study views customer voice as a form of verbal expression directed toward the organization, primarily stemming from dissatisfaction with the organization and with the intent to improve service delivery and overall customer experience (see also Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). Accordingly, customer voice is considered as a positive behavior toward the (retail) firm (see also Bove & Robertson, 2005; Lacey, 2012; Ran & Zhou, 2019) especially as it provides suggestions for improvement that the firm should take and ultimately leading to effective service delivery that has consequences for the firm's success (Assaf et al., 2015; Lam & Mayer, 2014; Mahdiraji et al., 2022; Saxena et al., 2022). Moreover, extant research notes that "both customers and employees should be encouraged to report rather than suppress concerns, so that problems may be effectively addressed and solved in a timely and appropriate manner" (Bove & Robertson, 2005, p. 91). Given that not all customers may feel comfortable voicing their complaints or suggestions to the firm, it is important, therefore, to understand the implication this may have on the firm, especially in supporting desirable customer-firm outcomes such as consumers' intentions to collaborate with the firm and in the form of marketing research cooperation. Although initial evidence suggests that customer voice has a positive impact on marketing research cooperation with firms (Lacey, 2012), Lacey's research only offered a partial view of the circumstances under which customer voice is associated with marketing research cooperation. Given the limited evidence regarding whether customer voice alone is a necessary or sufficient condition for high or low levels of marketing research cooperation, this study aims to address this gap. More so, recent research reveals "customer voice has not received sufficient attention in marketing research" (Yang et al., 2021, p. 827) and therefore adds to the importance of researching this issue, especially in connection with desirable customer-firm outcomes like marketing research cooperation. By identifying the role that customer voice potentially plays in customer-firm marketing research cooperation, we gain more knowledge about the complex phenomenon of marketing research cooperation. Following primarily the insights shared by previous studies on equifinality logic (e.g., Fiss, 2011; Misangyi et al., 2017; Osakwe, 2022), it is explicitly assumed in this study that there exist alternative causal explanations for customer-firm marketing research cooperation beyond the proposed antecedent condition of customer voice (see Lacey, 2012).

2.2 | Personal cultural orientations

The study of customer behavior is a complex phenomenon, as it is widely acknowledged that customers' attitudes and behaviors are significantly influenced by cultural norms, values, and belief systems, even for individuals within national borders. Hence, the cultural values pertaining to the context of a group of individuals cannot be underestimated or treated in isolation when it comes to marketing/social phenomena. Culture can be understood as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others" (Ayeh et al., 2016, p. 144). Hofstede (1991, p. 4) further refers to it as "the training or refining of one's mind from social environments in which one grew up." Collectively, culture embodies a set of intrinsic and extrinsic features, including shared knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, and worldviews that shape individuals and their societies (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002; Ergun & Kitapci, 2018; Hofstede, 2001; Roccas & Sagiv, 2010; Sharma, 2010).

Sharma (2010) particularly notes that cultural knowledge forms the foundation for a person's social reality. While prior research primarily focuses on national cultural differences, utilizing Hofstede's cultural framework as a reference point (Chepurna & Criado, 2021; Mattison Thompson & Brouthers, 2021; Osakwe et al., 2020), this conventional approach in the literature overlooks the notion that culture can also manifest at the individual level. It is important to recognize that individuals, regardless of the country they are born in or reside in, may choose to model their beliefs, values, and behaviors differently from others in their society. Addressing this point of view, Sharma (2010), while referring to previous work, stated that "Hofstede's nation-level cultural dimensions are conceptually and empirically quite different from individual cultural values as conceptualized and measured by others because all the citizens of a country may not share similar cultural characteristics" (p. 787). This author went further to conceive a personal cultural dimension framework (for details, see Sharma, 2010). Drawing upon the above framework, the present study primarily focuses on highlighting on the importance of independence, power distance, gender equality, masculinity, and social inequality orientations in the development of marketing research cooperation with the firm. The use of five individual cultural values in this exploratory work instead of the 10 outlined in Sharma (2010) is also consistent with research deploying Sharma's cultural dimension framework, such as those of Isaacson et al. (2018) and Liu and Segev (2017) that only deployed two in their investigation as well as those of Sharma et al. (2016) that utilized four in their investigation of the individual-level cultural determinants of intercultural service encounters.

Furthermore, the aforementioned cultural values serve as a starting point in the literature for comprehending the role of cultural values in marketing research cooperation development, or the lack thereof. At the same time, restricting the research scope to the

aforementioned five cultural values/orientations was due to the fact that some of the identified values in Sharma's study, such as interdependence, can be considered the polar opposite of independence orientation in this context. Therefore, it is suggested that Sharma's (2010)) cultural orientation framework provides a crucial pathway to understanding how the development of marketing research cooperation may be partially contingent on individuals' cultural values. Additionally, building on prior studies that have proposed distinct cultural recipes for explaining complex phenomena such as team performance (Sahin et al., 2023), deviant behaviors (Kalemci et al., 2019), technology usage (Picoto & Pinto, 2021), and customers' tipping behaviors (Ferguson et al., 2018), this study extends this line of inquiry to the underexplored topic of customer-firm marketing research cooperation. In summary, comprehending the role and interrelatedness of individual cultural values is crucial for understanding customer cooperation in marketing research, a complex phenomenon that is embedded in culture.

Independence orientation: Independence orientation, which bears a strong semblance to individualism in Hofstede's famous cultural work, emphasizes personal goals over group goals, and it is based on the virtues of self-reliance and personal identity (Sharma, 2010). The opposite of independence is interdependence, wherein the emphasis is on (maintaining) group values and harmony over individual goals and/or aspirations. On the one hand, it has been long recognized that individuals living in countries where there is a high prevalence of individualism culture, which is analogous to the cultural dimension of independence, tend to place greater priority on functional and most probably transactional, rather than relational, aspects on business relationships (cf., e.g., Blocker & Flint, 2007). This suggests that the cultural value of independence may hinder customer-firm marketing research collaboration, as individuals with a strong orientation toward independence may show reduced commitment in this context. On the other hand, recent research in the restaurant setting that adopts an asymmetrical approach has found that individualism (or independence, in this case) is associated with customers' tipping behavior (Ferguson et al., 2018). Similarly, it has been found at the individual level that collectivism is a necessary condition for high team performance in the context of global virtual teams and that the presence of collectivism value, along with other cultural values, is sufficient to explain the desirable outcome of team performance (Sahin et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, the study aims, among others, to comprehend how consumers, categorized as high or low in independence orientation, respond to marketing research cooperation with the firm under varying conditions.

Masculinity orientation: Based on the works of Hofstede (1991); see also De Mooij and Hofstede, (2002), in masculine societies, money and material possessions, which are understood to be driven by ambition, aggression, and competition, take center stage in these societies and may be detrimental to the nurturing of cordial relationships with others. Corroborating Hofstede's research, Sharma (2010) notes that masculinity reflects the degree to which a person is seen as assertive, ambitious, self-confident, and aggressive in his/her goal pursuits. At a macro-level, there is evidence to suggest that in societies characterized by masculinity, individuals are less cooperative in nature (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). Therefore, individuals with high masculinity orientation may be less likely to participate in marketing research initiatives of the firm. More so, prior international marketing research has shown that national markets can differ significantly in customer outcomes, such as content clicking and sharing behavior, and that these differences may be partially explained by the prevailing masculinity culture (Mattison Thompson & Brouthers, 2021). Conversely, evidence suggests that individuals from masculine cultural contexts may be more likely to engage in co-creation activities with firms (Chepurna & Criado, 2021). Meanwhile, empirical research rooted in asymmetrical thinking has found that the cultural value of masculinity is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the realization of outcomes such as team performance involving cooperation, commitment, and collaboration (Sahin et al., 2023). Given the above, consumers with low or high masculinity orientation may respond differently, but also in a more complex manner, to firms' calls to participate in marketing research. In sum, individual masculinity orientation is expected to have a nuanced impact on customer participation in marketing research initiatives.

Power distance orientation: In general, power distance orientation reflects the "extent to which the less powerful members of a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2001; p. 98), especially in cases of institutional hierarchies such as authority figures and even discrimination based on chronological age. In the literature, it is often argued that individuals in cultures characterized by a high-power distance orientation are always under strong social pressure to meet the expectations of others (Hofstede, 2001; Sharma, 2010). Moreover, according to some scholars, "where power-distance is low, there are likely to be more participative interactions as a certain latitude for disagreement will exist between those perceived to have power and those who are less powerful" (Swanson et al., 2011, p. 222). In the organizational context, research has also found that power distance orientation among employees in Taiwan had less desirable outcomes for the organization (Hsiung & Tsai, 2017). Although it remains unclear as to the extent to which the cultural value of power distance as reconceptualized in Sharma (2010) will have an impact on willingness (or a lack thereof) to engage in marketing research cooperation with the firm, which can be attributed to a lack of empirical studies in this area. Nonetheless, based on insights from previous studies in domains such as team performance (Sahin et al., 2023), it is proposed that power distance orientation would play an important but less straightforward role in determining customers' predisposition toward co-creation activities like marketing research cooperation with the firm. Such a proposition is further reinforced in the study on tipping behaviors (Ferguson et al., 2018), wherein power distance orientation—in combination with cultural values such as individualism and masculinity—emerges as one of the most prominent antecedent conditions characterizing tipping behaviors. Therefore, it is expected that power distance orientation would be relevant for explaining customer-firm marketing research cooperation, but it may not be sufficient on its own.

Gender equality orientation: In this study, gender equality orientation refers to the individual perception that there is no significant

difference between the masculine and feminine genders in society, particularly concerning social roles (Isaacson et al., 2018; Sharma, 2010). According to Isaacson et al. (2018) and Sharma (2010), this concept is distinct from the masculinity versus femininity construct previously proposed by Hofstede, which emphasizes heroism and achievement in masculine-oriented cultures (Hofstede, 2001). Although Isaacson et al. (2018), in their work in South Africa, theorized that consumers with a high gender equality orientation would be more loyal to a specific brand than those with low gender equality orientation, the study nevertheless could not provide sufficient evidence to support their theorization. Despite limited research on the role of gender equality orientation in customer-firm relationships, understanding its specific role in customer-firm marketing research collaboration is theoretically and managerially insightful. A recent study utilizing configurational modeling, akin to the present work, revealed that gender egalitarianism interacts with cultural values such as collectivism, long-term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance to predict high team performance, regardless of masculinity and power distance orientation (Sahin et al., 2023). Moreover, the study found that the cultural value of gender equality is neither necessary nor sufficient for high or low team performance. Consequently, we anticipate that while gender equality orientation may not independently impact outcomes such as customer cooperation in marketing research, it could have a causal influence when combined with other cultural values.

Social inequality orientation: Social inequality orientation is defined as "the degree of inequality among people in a society which the individual accepts as normal" (Sharma, 2010, p. 790). Social inequality is distinct from the related construct of power distance orientation—which reflects the degree to which people relate to authority (Sharma, 2010). In simpler terms, social inequality orientation measures how much people acknowledge differences between societal groups, particularly concerning social status. It also considers how factors like income, wealth, and education can create divisions among these groups (see also Lareau, 2015). Similarly, unlike power distance orientation, wherein the emphasis is on hierarchy, social inequality orientation embodies a high level of tolerance for nonegalitarian principles in the society (see also Schwartz, 1994). Unfortunately, to date, there has been very little demonstration in the empirical literature as to the role that the cultural value of social inequality might play in consumers' behaviors and even as it may relate to relationship marketing. Meanwhile, prior research regarding the impact of social inequality orientation in relation to service encounters notes the following:

> … *[high-oriented social inequality individuals] not only perceive the status differences between the service provider and themselves but also perceive the service provider as more powerful compared to themselves because of the resources possessed by providers, such as language, knowledge and skills* (Tam et al., 2016, p. 648).

Against this backdrop, it is anticipated, therefore, that social inequality orientation might interfere with how certain individuals might respond to a firm's request for marketing research support. Specifically, customers with different social inequality leanings may respond differently to requests for marketing research cooperation. In sum, social inequality orientation alone is unlikely to explain customer-firm marketing research cooperation, but it is expected to play a causal role in combination with other cultural values (see also Kalemci et al., 2019; Sahin et al., 2023).

2.3 | Marketing research cooperation

In this study, marketing research cooperation describes the "customer's desire to assist the [service] firm with customer input that can be used for improving the [service] firm's marketing performance by participating in new service development testing, evaluating advertising campaigns, giving opinions on service quality, and sharing insight about unfulfilled customer needs" (Lacey, 2012, p. 138). Therefore, over the years, cooperation between firms and customers has been noted as a key outcome of strong marketing relationships (Dugar & Chamola, 2021; Lussier & Hall, 2018; Moreira & Silva, 2014; Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012; Wang & He, 2022). The customer's voice significantly predicts their willingness to participate in the firm's marketing research activities (Lacey, 2012). When customers perceive that the firm values their feedback, including constructive suggestions and complaints, they are more inclined to contribute to the firm's marketing research endeavors. As there is initial evidence regarding the positive impact of customer voice on marketing research cooperation (see Lacey, 2012), our duty, therefore, in this work is to go beyond the initial revelation in the literature by specifically focusing on how customer voice and the identified individuals' cultural values potentially comingle to causally predict (low/high) marketing research cooperation. Accordingly, this study tests the following configurational model as captured in Figure 1.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Study context

To empirically explore the research issue, we utilized customers' data drawn from South Africa, focusing on the apparel retail segment. We note that the present study has been undertaken in South Africa partly due to its rich cultural diversity, which these authors believe provides a rich setting to examine the role of individual cultural values and customer voice in developing and/or nurturing marketing research cooperation. Moreover, the apparel market, that is, the retail segment where the data for this study has been collected in South Africa represents a very competitive, dynamic, and mature market (InvestSA, n.d.), and it is further known to share similar consumer outlook with even western markets like Australia and to some extent, the UK (Edited, 2020). We have also focused on the apparel retail segment in the country due to a paucity of consumer research within this retail segment, despite the economic attractiveness of the segment

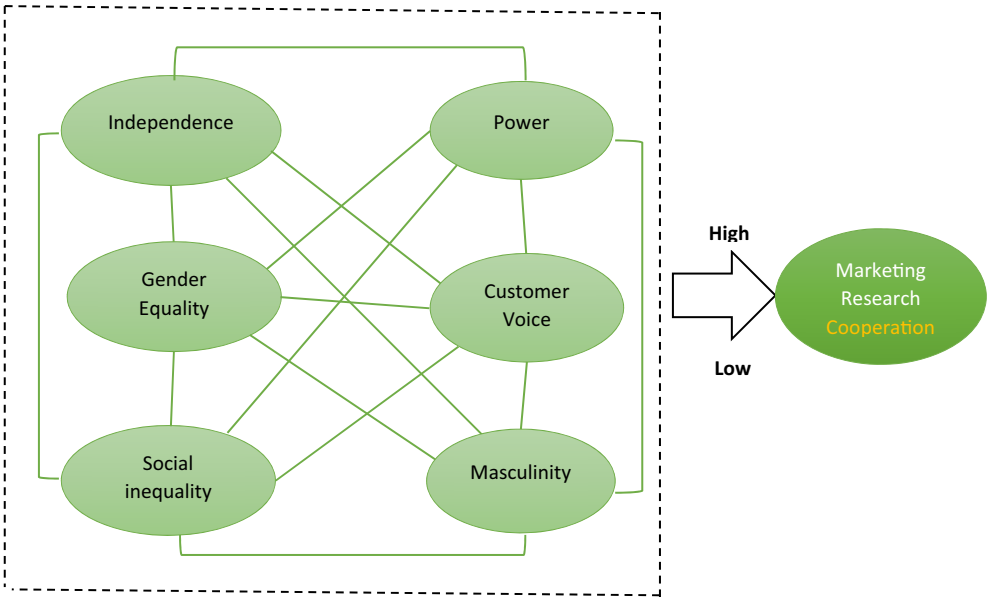

FIGURE 1 A configurational model of (low/high) marketing research cooperation based on customer voice and individuals' cultural values. The solid lines represent the configurational relevance relationship, and the single-headed arrow represents the configurational influence on marketing research cooperation.

combined with its substantial contribution to the South African economy and in the form of job creation, government revenue, and consumer welfare (see also Rootman & Krüger, 2017; The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition [the ditc], 2022). The fact that the South African apparel industry grew in market revenue of US $5.82bn in 2023 further amplifies the value of focusing the study on customers within this market segment (Statista Consumer Market Insights, 2023). Indeed, all these have informed the decision to conduct the present study in the selected context. Moreover, we argue that the issue of marketing research cooperation is also very pertinent for players in this industry to understand so that they can create better economic value for themselves while at the same time building strong relationships with their existing customers. Lastly, this research does not make any unjustified assertions regarding the universality of the findings obtained from the customers of apparel stores in South Africa. Specifically, the study aims to provide preliminary insights into the intricate relationship between cultural values and customer voice in marketing research collaborations between firms and their clients, rather than making claims that extend beyond the scope of the current research.

3.2 | Data collection

Based on the reasons highlighted above, the target population for this study was customers of popular apparel store brands such as Mr Price, Pep Stores, Identity, Jet, and Truworths in South Africa. We further acknowledge that it was impractical for us to focus on target population elsewhere due to budget constraints. Besides, by focusing on existing customers of apparel store brands, our research could assist players in the apparel industry to better understand how their customers' cultural values and voice potentially engender co-creation activities like marketing research cooperation with the firm. In all, the attractiveness of the apparel market segment derived from its customers, coupled with data showing it to be one of the best performing in the larger South African retail sector (prior to the pandemic) (cf., Koigi, 2018), makes it even more pressing to undertake this study in the indicated target population. Importantly, in this study, we relied on a purposive sampling approach using a store/mall-intercept approach. This approach has been used in previous research undertakings to gather consumer samples in multiple settings across the world (Diallo, 2015; Djelassi et al., 2018; Ham et al., 2021; Ofori et al., 2022; Osakwe, 2019; Sharma et al., 2022; van de Sanden et al., 2022). Data collection was facilitated by a hired third party with experience in data collection in the research locale. The data for this study were collected in 2019 at various shopping malls in Johannesburg using self-administered questionnaires. The data collector visited multiple shopping malls at different days and times of the week during the data collection process. Importantly, respondents were approached to take part in the study after leaving the stores, but no financial incentives were provided to those who indicated an interest in the study. Scholars in the fsQCA literature advocate for a minimum sample size of approximately 30 when examining an outcome variable with seven antecedent or causal conditions (Fainshmidt et al., 2020; Marx, 2006). In this study, we collected 270 complete responses, which we deemed adequate for conducting empirical analyses (see also Kraus et al., 2018; Pappas & Woodside, 2021). Additionally, our sample size surpasses the benchmark of 200 suggested by Kline (2005) in the broader methodology literature. Thus, our sample size is sufficient for the intended analyses. Finally, details of the sample characteristics are provided in Table 1.

3.3 | Instrument development

In line with well-established guidelines in the psychometrics literature, the research instrument was designed based on previously validated measurement scales, but some of the scales had to be modified to suit

TABLE 1 Sample characteristics ($n = 270$).

Variables	Items	Frequency
Gender		
	Female	166
	Male	104
Age		
	18–24 years	92
	25–35 years	111
	36–57 years	62
	Missing	5
Education		
	Primary	1
	Secondary	134
	Diploma	108
	Bachelor	22
	Postgraduate	2
	Missing	3
Marital status		
	Single	169
	Married	44
	Cohabitation	45
	Divorced	3
	Widowed	9
Work status		
	Self-employed	13
	Part-time employee	29
	Fulltime employee	116
	Fulltime student	72
	Currently unemployed	33
	Housewife/husband	7
Average monthly income		
	Below 5000 Rand	169
	5000–10,000 Rand	80
	10,001–15,000 Rand	15
	Missing	6
Duration with the retail apparel store		
	<= 1 year	1
	2–5 years	177
	6–9 years	86
	> = 10 years	6
Purchase frequency with the retail apparel store		
	Weekly	10
	Monthly	109
	At least once every 3 months	110
	Every 6 months	41

the authors' investigation. All five cultural values used in this study were measured following the work of Sharma (2010), while the measurement items for customer voice and marketing research cooperation were from Lacey (2012). Details regarding the constructs and corresponding measurement items are presented in Appendix A.

4 | DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 | Common method bias

The authors, following the advice of Podsakoff et al. (2003), took adequate procedural steps during the study design phase, including the avoidance of double-barrelled questions, assuring research participants of their anonymity, and they were also informed that there were no right or wrong responses to the questions. We informed the respondents that participation was voluntary and further informed them that their responses would only be used for scientific analysis. The study utilized different scale anchors, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). While these procedural efforts are the most effective strategy for controlling common method bias (CMB) (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we also performed an additional step by checking for the presence of CMB through unrotated principal component analysis, commonly known as the Harman one-factor test. The results of this test showed that the first and highest factor merely accounted for a 19.7% variance in the data. The implication, therefore, is that there is no significant cause for concern about CMB. The authors also employed a full-collinearity approach to test for evidence of CMB (Kock, 2015; Ogunmokun et al., 2022). The results generally supported the absence of CMB, as all variance inflation factors were found to be below the cut-off value of 5. In summary, the potential for CMB to influence the research findings is improbable.

4.2 | Research instrument reliability and validity

Following convention in the fsQCA literature (Chaouali et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2019; Olya et al., 2022; Osakwe, 2022; Pappas et al., 2019; Pappas & Woodside, 2021), these authors tested for the study's measurement variables' reliability and validity using metrics such as Cronbach alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). As revealed in Table 2, all Cronbach alphas and CR values were well above the 0.6 cutoff values required for exploratory research such as this. Similarly, AVE values for all the measurement variables were above the threshold of 0.5. In conclusion, our study met all the necessary conditions for measurement items' reliability. At the same time, the measurement variables had an acceptable level of convergent validity.

Next, we assessed how well the measurement variables could be sufficiently differentiated from one another by study respondents. Results from this assessment and using two statistical approaches (Fornell and Lacker criterion [Fornell & Larcker, 1981] and Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio by Henseler et al., 2015) confirmed that the measurement variables are sufficiently distinguishable. The results of the discriminant validity based on the above two approaches appear in Table 3. In addition, results from cross-tabulation analyses

TABLE 2 Construct reliability and validity.

	λ (item loadings)	Alpha	CR	AVE
Gender equality (GEQ)		0.736	0.821	0.538
GEQ1	0.711			
GEQ2	0.642			
GEQ3	0.708			
GEQ4	0.855			
Masculinity (MASC)		0.725	0.833	0.627
MASC1	0.686			
MASC2	-			
MASC3	0.764			
MASC4	0.909			
Social inequality (SINEQ)		0.916	0.938	0.790
SINEQ1	0.891			
SINEQ2	0.908			
SINEQ3	0.832			
SINEQ4	0.922			
Independence (INDEP)		0.970	0.973	0.900
INDEP1	0.981			
INDEP2	0.960			
INDEP3	0.943			
INDEP4	0.908			
Power distance (POWER)		0.857	0.868	0.630
POWER1	0.922			
POWER2	0.885			
POWER3	0.779			
POWER4	0.528			
Customer voice (VOICE)		0.946	0.965	0.903
VOICE1	0.920			
VOICE2	0.971			
VOICE3	0.959			
Marketing Research Cooperation (RESCOOP)		0.961	0.972	0.895
RESCOOP1	0.932			
RESCOOP2	0.947			
RESCOOP3	0.969			
RESCOOP4	0.936			

Note: "-" = item dropped due to poor loading.

revealed the incidence of contrarian cases, indicating an asymmetric association between research cooperation and its proposed indicators (details in Table 4). Consequently, we can proceed with our asymmetric analysis by adopting fsQCA. fsQCA "is best understood as an exploratory/interpretive technique, grounded in set theory" (Ragin, 2008, p. 190).

4.3 | Equifinality analysis

fsQCA was employed to identify the configurations of factors (GEQ, MASC, SINEQ, INDEP, POWER, and VOICE) that yield RESCOOP. First, using the fsQCA software (v.3.0) for asymmetric analysis, calibration was done to transform the data into fuzzy-set membership values ranging from 0 to 1. Following the procedure outlined by Ragin (2000), the study's 5-point Likert scale is calibrated such that the maximum value represents full membership, the minimum value indicates full non-membership, and the mean value serves as the crossover point (see Table 5).

After calibration, a necessary condition analysis is conducted. A necessary condition analysis helps to identify and understand the fundamental conditions that are necessary for the occurrence of a specific outcome (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). According to Ragin (2009), a necessary condition can be described as the outcome's superset,

TABLE 3 Discriminant validity.

Fornell and Larcker criterion (FLC)							
	GEQ	INDEP	MASC	POWER	RESCOOP	SINEQ	VOICE
GEQ	*0.733*						
INDEP	0.076	*0.949*					
MASC	0.2	0.177	*0.792*				
POWER	−0.041	−0.046	−0.083	*0.794*			
RESCOOP	0.106	0.011	−0.15	−0.013	*0.946*		
SINEQ	0.05	0.054	−0.066	−0.132	0.021	*0.889*	
VOICE	0.146	0.054	0.071	−0.162	0.49	0.062	*0.950*
Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio							
INDEP	0.103						
MASC	0.306	0.203					
POWER	0.116	0.072	0.091				
RESCOOP	0.128	0.020	0.174	0.066			
SINEQ	0.064	0.070	0.083	0.146	0.030		
VOICE	0.153	0.040	0.076	0.115	0.512	0.060	

Note: The square roots of AVEs are presented in italics along the diagonals of the upper table (FLC).

whereas sufficient conditions (often realized through sufficient combinations of factors) form subsets of the outcome. A necessary condition with a consistency of 0.90 is "always necessary," while with a consistency of 0.80, the causal factor is "almost always necessary" (Ragin, 2000). The results revealed that none of the causal factors is "always necessary," while only customer voice is "almost always necessary." This suggests none of the causal factors in this study are critical and indispensable conditions for the outcome, such that absence of them would mean the outcome will not occur in any case. However, it is demonstrated that customer voice is highly important and that in most instances where marketing research cooperation is observed, customer voice is present. Demonstrating that customer voice can almost always lead to improved marketing research cooperation while acknowledging the possibility of outliers or unique cases that may not fit the primary pattern (see Table 6).

The subsequent phase includes the truth table analysis, which presents diverse configurations of cases and shows all the possible combinations of causal conditions. Given that we have six antecedent variables/conditions, it is expected, therefore, that we could have 64 logical combinations among them (i.e., a truth table of 2^k possible combinations, where k is the number of antecedent conditions). The study's data set contains a large sample size (>150 samples); thus, the minimum frequency threshold is set at four cases (Ragin, 2008). Next, configurations with consistency below the 0.90 threshold were eliminated before running the Quine–McCluskey algorithm. Of the three solutions that returned (complex, parsimonious, and intermediate solution), the parsimonious solution was chosen for result interpretation as it contains simplified assumptions and is most appropriate for causal inferences (Baumgartner & Thiem, 2020).

The results of the parsimonious solution for high marketing research cooperation are presented in Table 7 (see Table 8 also for results on low marketing research cooperation). Following Pappas et al. (2019), black circles (●) are used to indicate the presence of a causal factor, and crossed-out circles (⊗) indicate the negation or absence of a causal condition, whereas blank cells indicate irrelevant conditions. Moreover, as depicted in Tables 7 and 8, the overall solution consistency was 0.7656 and 0.7264, indicating the extent to which the causal combination guarantees the outcome (for RESCOOP and ~RESCOOP respectively). Likewise, the overall solution yields a high coverage of 0.9397 and 0.9129, suggesting that about 94% and 91% of the cases with high and low levels of RESCOOP contain these recipes of causal conditions. The solutions that yield high and low levels of RESCOOP have different combinations and thus support the notion that factors that are essential to high RESCOOP differ substantially from those leading to low RESCOOP.

Additionally, the study's predictive validity is assessed by splitting the sample into two subsamples. Causal models are then computed using the first subsample, ensuring coverage (>0.2) and consistency (>0.8). Subsequently, these models are tested using data from the second subsample. The fuzzy XY plots for the three causal models are then generated, illustrating the asymmetric relationships between the models and the outcome (marketing research cooperation). Figure 2 displays the XY plots, depicting three causal models consistently predicting high research cooperation. Thus, the study's configurational model demonstrates predictive capability across distinct datasets for exploring the outcome.

5 | DISCUSSION

This study examines the equifinal causes of customers' both low and high marketing research cooperation based on personal cultural orientations framework (Sharma, 2010) and customer voice (Lacey, 2012; Mahdiraji et al., 2022; Saxena et al., 2022).

TABLE 4 Contrarian case analysis results.

	Marketing research cooperation					
GEQ $phi^2 = .26$ $p<.05$		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	1	14	3	0	**22**	**1**
		35%	7.5%	0%	**55%**	**2.5%**
	2	22	4	0	**56**	**2**
		26.1%	4.8%	0%	**66.7%**	**2.4%**
	3	0	0	0	0	0
		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	4	**27**	**11**	0	65	6
		24.8%	**10.1%**	0%	59%	5.5%
	5	**10**	**4**	0	16	7
		27%	**10.8%**	0%	43.2%	18.9%

	Marketing research cooperation					
INDEP $phi^2 = .24$ $p<.05$		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	1	1	0	0	**0**	**0**
		100%	0%	0%	**0%**	**0%**
	2	30	12	0	**89**	**4**
		22.2%	8.9%	0%	**65.9%**	**3%**
	3	5	3	0	16	1
		20%	12%	0%	64%	4%
	4	**37**	**7**	0	54	11
		33.9%	**6.4%**	0%	49.5%	10.1%
	5	**11**	**3**	0	0	0
		78.6%	**21.4%**	0%	0%	0%

	Marketing research cooperation					
MASC $phi^2 = .19$ $p<.001$		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	1	7	3	0	**22**	**2**
		20%	8.8%	0%	**64.7%**	**5.9%**
	2	26	5	0	**66**	**5**
		25.5%	4.9%	0%	**64.7%**	**4.9%**
	3	0	0	0	0	0
		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	4	**23**	**8**	0	53	5
		25.8%	**9%**	0%	59.6%	5.6%
	5	**17**	**6**	0	18	4
		37.8%	**13.3%**	0%	40%	8.89%

	Marketing research cooperation					
POWER $phi^2 = .31$ $p<.01$		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	1	18	4	0	**24**	**5**
		35.3%	7.8%	0.0%	**47.1%**	**9.8%**
	2	21	5	0	**26**	**2**
		38.9%	9.3%	0.0%	**48.1%**	**3.7%**
	3	12	6	0	33	3
		22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	61.1%	5.6%
	4	**6**	**6**	0	46	1
		10.2%	**10.2%**	0.0%	78.0%	1.7%
	5	**16**	**1**	0	30	5
		30.8%	**1.9%**	0.0%	57.7%	9.6%

	Marketing research cooperation					
SINEQ $phi^2 = .25$ *p<.001*		1	2	3	4	5
	1	18	2	0	**30**	**6**
		32.1%	3.6%	0%	**53.6%**	**10.7%**
	2	6	5	0	**15**	**0**
		23%	19.2%	0%	**57.7%**	**0%**
	3	24	11	0	64	6
		22.6%	10.5%	0%	60.9%	5.7%
	4	**19**	**3**	0	34	1
		33.3%	**5.3%**	0%	60%	1.8%
	5	**6**	**1**	0	16	3
		23.1%	**3.4%**	0%	61.5%	11.5%

	Marketing research cooperation					
Voice $phi^2 = .50$ *p<.001*		*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	1	36	11	4	**11**	**9**
		50.7%	15.5%	5.6%	**15.5%**	**12.7%**
	2	4	1	4	**11**	**1**
		19%	4.8%	19%	**52.3%**	**4.8%**
	3	26	9	125	0	1
		16.1%	5.6%	77.6%	0.0%	0.6%
	4	**15**	**6**	0	0	0
		71.4%	**28.6%**	0%	0%	0%
	5	**7**	**1**	19	0	15
		16.7	**2.4**	45.2	0.0	35.7

Note: In bold are contrarian cases.

First, the analysis demonstrated that customers with low independence orientation are highly likely to exhibit high levels of cooperation in marketing research, irrespective of their perception of voice, masculinity, power distance, gender equality, and social inequality orientations. This tendency can be attributed to the cultivation of interdependence within low independence orientations, as discussed by Sharma (2010), wherein collective problem-solving takes precedence over self-reliance. Such a cultural inclination toward collaboration encourages customers to readily exchange resources, expertise, and data, thereby facilitating and encouraging cooperation.

The study also found that customers' voice and power distance orientation play a significant role in firm marketing research cooperation. This implies that individuals with a high-power distance orientation and who perceive they have a voice are more likely than others to show interest in firm marketing research cooperation. Therefore, the submission of Terawatanavong and Quazi (2006) that there is more cooperation between the firm and customers when there is a high level of power distance orientation is partly consistent with our research findings. The study's findings also corroborate Lacey's (2012) research regarding the significant role that customer voice plays in

TABLE 5 Calibrations and descriptive statistics.

Variable	Mean (cross-over)	Std. dev.	Minimum (fully-out)	Maximum (fully-in)	Cases
GEQ	3.8361	0.5309	2	5	270
MASC	3.9519	0.4273	2.75	5	270
SINEQ	3.1611	0.8381	1	4.75	270
INDEP	4.4407	0.4992	2	5	270
POWER	2.9509	0.7589	1	5	270
RESCOOP	3.6898	0.6390	2	5	270
VOICE	3.9135	0.6177	1.6667	5	270

TABLE 6 Necessary conditions [outcome = Marketing Research Cooperation (RESCOOP)].

Factor	Consistency	Coverage
~VOICE	0.613293	0.718666
VOICE	0.842923	0.829824
~POWER	0.696575	0.746605
POWER	0.745173	0.795977
~INDEP	0.576671	0.819641
INDEP	0.778472	0.667876
~SINEQ	0.685290	0.762870
SINEQ	0.736589	0.758699
~MASC	0.736035	0.789837
MASC	0.705920	0.753158
~GEQ	0.695468	0.783253
GEQ	0.767394	0.782065

Note: "~" indicates the absence of the condition.

increasing the likelihood of customers' participation in a variety of firms marketing research initiatives.

Similarly, regarding the influence of power distance orientation on customers' cooperation in marketing research, the study indicates that customers with low social inequality but high power distance orientations are more likely to demonstrate high levels of cooperation, irrespective of gender inequality, masculinity, independence orientations, and voice perception. Furthermore, customers with low masculinity but high power distance orientations exhibit a stronger tendency toward cooperation in marketing research, regardless of other cultural orientations and voice perceptions. While these findings contribute new insights to the literature, they align partially with the observations made by Picoto and Pinto (2021) in a different context, where culture was found to influence individuals' propensity to use mobile banking, with power distance orientation emerging as a significant cultural factor.

Interestingly, customers with low gender equality but high power distance orientations are more inclined to demonstrate high levels of cooperation in marketing research, regardless of their social inequality, masculinity, independence orientations, and voice perception. These findings underscore the importance of customers' voice and power distance orientation as significant factors contributing to heightened levels of cooperation in marketing research with the firm. These unique findings distinguish the present study from prior research.

There are three scenarios for low customer-firm marketing research cooperation with reference to a high masculinity orientation. The first indicates that customers with high masculinity but low independence orientations are inclined to exhibit low marketing research cooperation with the firm, regardless of their gender equality, social inequality, power distance orientations, and voice perception. Second, customers with high masculinity, social inequality, and power distance orientation are more likely to exhibit low marketing research cooperation regardless of their voice perception, gender equality, and independence orientations. Third, customers with a high masculinity but low gender equality orientation are more likely than others to participate less in a firm's marketing research initiatives, irrespective of their independence, social inequality, power distance orientations, and voice perception.

Moreover, the analysis unveiled that customers with a low power distance orientation exhibit less interest in engaging in the firm's marketing research activities, regardless of their voice perception, masculinity, independence, gender equality, and social inequality orientations. This inclination may arise from their decreased propensity to comply with established protocols and standards, which are vital for maintaining the consistency and trustworthiness of data in marketing research. Consequently, it is conceivable that individuals with a low power distance orientation do not view these protocols as indispensable or obligatory for their marketing research cooperation.

The combination of low social inequality and gender equality orientations can result in reduced cooperation in marketing research, especially when paired with a high independence orientation. Similarly, it was found that customers with high masculinity, social inequality, and power distance orientations are less likely to participate in various marketing research initiatives by the firm, regardless of their perception of their voice, gender equality, and independence orientations. Moreover, the findings suggest that customers with both low gender equality and social inequality orientations, but high independence orientations, are less inclined to engage in firms' marketing research activities, irrespective of their perception of their voice, masculinity, and power distance orientations.

Overall, this study emphasizes that the level of cooperation in marketing research, whether low or high, is intricately associated

TABLE 7 Causal conditions of high marketing research cooperation.

High marketing research cooperation										
Solutions	**GEQ**	**MASC**	**SINEQ**	**INDEP**	**POWER**	**VOICE**	**Raw coverage**	**Unique coverage**	**Consistency**	**Description**
1				⊗			0.576671	0.0305986	0.819641	Customers who have low independent orientation are very likely to demonstrate high marketing research cooperation it does not matter their GEQ, MASC, SINEQ, POWER, and voice perception
2						●	0.842923	0.118172	0.829824	Customers who have high voice perception are very likely to demonstrate high marketing research cooperation it does not matter their GEQ, MASC, SINEQ, POWER, or INDEP
3			⊗		●		0.588924	0.00546896	0.857215	Customers who have low SINEQ, but high POWER are very likely to demonstrate high marketing research cooperation it does not matter their GEQ, MASC, INDEP, and voice perception
4		⊗			●		0.61537	0.00519222	0.869	Customers who have low MASC, but high POWER are very likely to demonstrate high marketing research cooperation it does not matter their GEQ, SINEQ, INDEP, and voice perception
5	⊗				●		0.596748	0.00311536	0.862949	Customers who have low GEQ, but high POWER are very likely to demonstrate high marketing research cooperation it does not matter their SINEQ, MASC, INDEP, and voice perception
Overall solution coverage: 0.939704.										
Overall solution consistency: 0.765552.										

with nuanced combinations of customers' cultural orientations and perceived voice. These combinations leading to either high or low marketing research cooperation are distinctly different, highlighting the concept of causal asymmetry, as outlined in the fsQCA research stream (for further details, refer to Fiss, 2011; Ragin, 2008).

5.1 | Theoretical contributions

Beyond heeding previous calls in in consumer research to explore the influence of cultural values on customer outcomes in developing regions like Africa (Gbadamosi, 2013), this study offers two primary contributions to consumer research and the marketing literature.

TABLE 8 Causal conditions of low marketing research cooperation.

Low marketing research cooperation									
1					⊗	0.801116	0.0755873	0.815934	Customers who have low voice perception are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation, regardless of their GEQ, MASC, SINEQ, POWER, or INDEP
2		●		⊗		0.469374	0.0034249	0.803629	Customers who have high MASC, but low INDEP are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation, regardless of their GEQ, SINEQ, POWER, and voice perception
3		●	●		●	0.555874	0.0047790	0.856005	Customers who have high MASC, SINEQ, and POWER are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation regardless of their GEQ, INDEP, and voice perception.
4					⊗	0.62493	0.0183991	0.837981	Customers who have high low POWER are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation it does not matter their GEQ, INDEP, MASC, SINEQ, and voice perception
5	⊗				⊗	0.65918	0.0117881	0.84363	Customers who have high low POWER and GEQ are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation it does not matter their INDEP, MASC, SINEQ, and voice perception
6	⊗	●				0.641975	0.0007169	0.839061	Customers who have low GEQ, but high MASC are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation it does not matter their INDEP, SINEQ, POWER, and voice perception
7	⊗		⊗	●		0.599761	0.0003983	0.879674	Customers who have high low GEQ and low SINEQ, but high INDEP are very likely to demonstrate low marketing research cooperation it does not matter their MASC, POWER, and voice perception
Overall solution coverage: 0.912864.									
Overall solution consistency: 0.726347.									

Our first main contribution comes from the integration of two different strands of the literature namely personal cultural orientations and customer voice literatures, in the analysis of marketing research cooperation with the firm. The theoretical interest of this study is to evaluate the contribution of the personal cultural orientations framework and customer voice on the development of customer-firm marketing research cooperation. With this, we were able to identify how the notion of cultural values at the individual level and customer voice shapes the likelihood of customers' tendency to collaborate with firms in their array of marketing research initiatives. This research has, therefore, succeeded in moving the under-theorized but important notion of marketing research cooperation beyond those of Lacey and colleagues (Lacey, 2012; Lacey & Morgan, 2009), who only identified customer voice as an antecedent factor to marketing research cooperation with the firm.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that existing studies on personal cultural orientations/values have predominantly concentrated on areas such as the service climate within the business-to-business (B2B) setting (Fung et al., 2017), intercultural service encounters (Tam et al., 2016), counterfeit purchase behavior (Sharma et al., 2022), and technology usage (Kwarteng et al., 2023; Ray & Sahney, 2022), while neglecting their impact on customer-firm marketing research cooperation. Therefore, our study represents a significant expansion of the personal cultural orientation literature into the relatively unexplored domain of customer-firm marketing research cooperation, especially within the context of an emerging market where individuals' cultural values continue to wield considerable influence over consumer behaviors.

The second main contribution of this research lies in its pioneering application of an asymmetrical approach via fsQCA to identify the diverse antecedent conditions contributing to either high or low levels of marketing research cooperation. Specifically, our empirical findings reveal the existence of five distinct causal paths leading to high cooperation and seven to low cooperation, offering a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the interplay between individual cultural values and customer voice in shaping marketing research cooperation at varying levels.

Accordingly, this study contributes to scholars' understanding of marketing research cooperation as a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by individuals' cultural beliefs and perceptions of voice. Our findings align with Lacey's (2012) assertion that customer voice significantly enhances marketing research cooperation, as evidenced by Solution 2 in Table 7 (for the opposite, see Solution 1 in Table 8). However, we also reveal that while customer voice is sufficient for fostering high levels of cooperation, it is not always necessary. Furthermore, our research echoes Magnusson et al.'s (2014) observation regarding the detrimental effects of high masculinity and

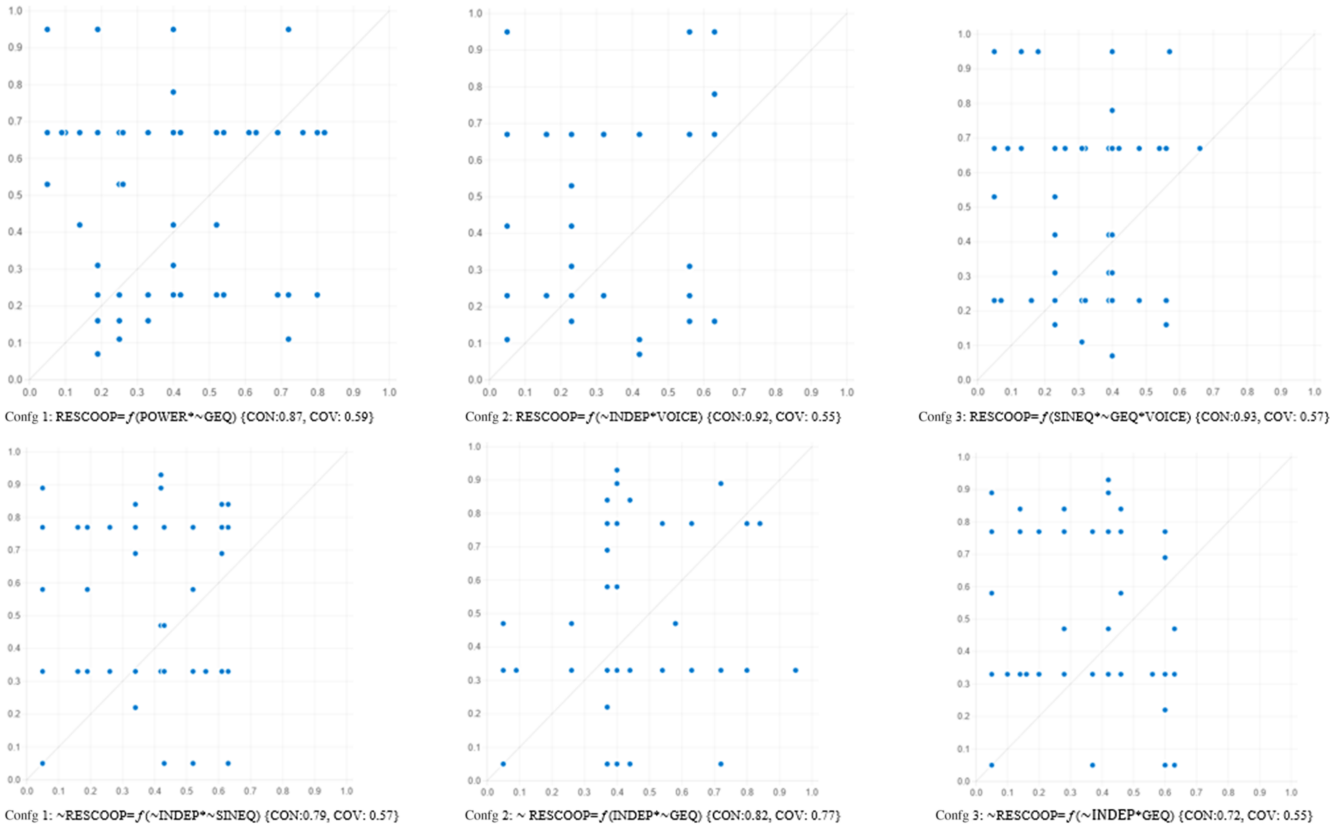

FIGURE 2 Predictive validity.

independence orientations on marketing research cooperation. Although Magnusson et al. focused on sales collaboration in the international marketing context using Hofstede's national cultural model, our study extends this understanding by employing the framework of personal cultural orientations (Sharma, 2010). Moreover, our findings underscore the intricate interplay of cultural values in influencing human behavior, consistent with prior research on tipping, deviant behavior, and team performance (Ferguson et al., 2018; Kalemci et al., 2019; Sahin et al., 2023). This highlights the complexity of cultural factors in shaping customer-firm relationships and suggests new avenues for research in this domain.

It is also important to emphasize that the current research aligns with calls in the literature urging scholars to adopt a configurational perspective when examining phenomena such as marketing research cooperation (cf., Misangyi et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2022; Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). In essence, this study transcends the limitations of a linear model, offering insights into the intricate interplay of cultural values and voice perceptions in shaping customer-firm marketing research collaboration. In summary, this article illuminates the complexity of customer-firm marketing research collaboration by uncovering the multifaceted cultural values and voice profiles that influence this outcome. Moreover, it contributes to the empirical research on the relatively underexplored topic of marketing research cooperation with firms, thereby expanding and enriching our understanding of this phenomenon.

5.2 | Managerial implications

The study's findings provide valuable insights for managerial action in terms of considering the implication of individuals' cultural values that are more dominant within a country on marketing research cooperation. Specifically, our exploratory research indicates that managers should be mindful of prevailing cultural values such as power distance, independence, gender equality, masculinity, and social inequality orientations in their respective societies. This awareness is essential for fostering and enhancing marketing research cooperation with customers, which positively impacts firm performance.

Marketing research cooperation is pivotal for firms in developing products and services that meet the needs of their target markets. By collaborating with consumers, firms can co-create value, leading to increased satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, improved financial performance. Therefore, it is imperative for managers to cultivate a customer-friendly environment conducive to feedback and action. They must recognize how individual cultural values and customer voice interact to shape marketing research cooperation and implement strategies to encourage customer participation in research initiatives, thus influencing customer citizenship behaviors effectively.

In nations and customer segments where power distance orientation and customer voice are prominent, managers should leverage these dynamics to facilitate customer contribution to new product development and service operations. Additionally, managers should

actively seek customer feedback, address customer concerns, and foster practices that amplify customer voice, as it serves as a catalyst for marketing research cooperation. Ultimately, promoting customer voice is instrumental in fostering marketing research cooperation, as highlighted by our study. Overall, managers must understand the cultural dynamics within their society to make informed marketing decisions that promote customer citizenship behaviors, including marketing research cooperation.

5.3 | Limitations and further research

This research investigates the influence of customers' cultural values and voice on their participation levels in the firm's marketing research initiatives, thereby shaping marketing research cooperation. Theoretical and managerial implications of our study contribute to understanding how marketing research cooperation is contingent upon the combination of individuals' cultural values and customer voice. Despite these contributions, the study has certain limitations that warrant further investigation. It focused solely on an emerging market in Africa; future research should compare these findings with those from developed economies to identify similarities and differences. Additionally, since this study relied solely on survey data, future research could employ mixed methods approaches.

It is important to note that the sample data were obtained exclusively from consumers of apparel retail store brands through cross-sectional surveys. Thus, the authors encourage studies that utilize diverse samples across various markets and industry sectors. Furthermore, the study did not account for customers who had previously participated in marketing research projects; future research could address this limitation. To enhance the current understanding of individuals' cultural values in marketing research cooperation, alongside customer voice, we encourage future research to incorporate additional cultural variables, such as those outlined by Schwartz (1994), which were not included in this study. Additionally, we advocate for the adoption of a hybrid approach, such as combining multiple regression analysis with fsQCA.

6 | CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our study underscores the importance of understanding the nuanced relationship between customers' cultural orientation and voice perception in shaping their engagement in the firm's marketing research activities. By employing fsQCA, we have identified distinct configurations of conditions that either facilitate or impede such cooperation. These findings provide actionable insights for businesses aiming to optimize their marketing research cooperation strategies. Our analysis underscores the recurrent influence of power distance orientation and voice perception, in conjunction with various cultural orientations, on high levels of marketing research cooperation. Conversely, we observe the consistent impact of masculinity, and to some extent, independence orientation, alongside other cultural orientations, on low levels of marketing research cooperation.

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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APPENDIX A

A.1 | CONSTRUCT MEASURES

Independence (INDEP) (Sharma, 2010)—(five-point scale anchored in strongly disagree-strongly agree).

I would rather depend on myself than others.

My personal identity, independent of others, is important to me.

I rely on myself most of the time, rarely on others.

In general, I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

Power distance (POWER) (Sharma, 2010)—(five-point scale anchored in strongly disagree-strongly agree).

I easily conform to the wishes of someone in a higher position than mine.

It is difficult for me to refuse a request if someone senior asks me.

I find it hard to disagree with authority figures.

People in higher positions have more power than those in lower positions.

Masculinity (MASC) (Sharma, 2010)—(five-point scale anchored in strongly disagree-strongly agree).

Women are generally more caring than men.

Men are generally physically stronger than women. (dropped during final analysis).

Men are generally more ambitious than women.

Women are generally more modest than men.

Gender Equality (GENEQ) (Sharma, 2010)—(five-point scale anchored in strongly disagree-strongly agree).

It is ok for men to be emotional sometimes.

Men can be as caring as women.

Women can be as ambitious as men.

Men and women can be equally aggressive.

Social Inequality (SINEQ) (Sharma, 2010)—(five-point scale anchored in strongly disagree-strongly agree).

A person's social status reflects his or her place in the society.

It is important for everyone to know their rightful place in the society.

It is difficult to interact with people from different social status than mine.

Unequal treatment for different people is an acceptable way of life for me.

Customer voice (VOICE) (Lacey, 2012)—(five-point scale anchored in strongly disagree-strongly agree).

I am comfortable talking to the staff of this shop about my complaint.

I am not afraid to discuss my complaint with the front desk officers and/or managers.

I discuss my complaint with the staff and/or the managers of the retail shop.

Marketing research cooperation (MKTRC) (Lacey, 2012)—(five-point scale anchored in not at all willing to cooperate-very willing to cooperate).

Provide feedback about this retailer's service offerings.

Participate in new service and/or product development testing.

Provide feedback about retailer's advertising.

Discuss my views about the retailer's quality of service.