

Leader's Emotional Intelligence and Leader's Ambidexterity: Multilevel Model of Employee's Job Crafting

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Abstract

Drawing upon self-determination theory the current study investigated the relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence and leader's ambidexterity. It evaluated the cross-level effects of ambidextrous leadership on the follower's job crafting with the mediating role of psychological capital. The current study sample consists of 471 employees nested in 111 teams of advertising agencies. Data was collected through an online questionnaire. Multilevel structural equation modeling was used to test hypotheses through the M-Plus version 7. The findings of the study indicate that emotional intelligence has a direct and positive impact on a leader's ambidexterity at the team level. Moreover, the study found that ambidextrous leadership has a positive impact on followers' job crafting at the individual level, further, the relation is mediated by the psychological capital of employees. The current research helps to understand comprehension of ambidextrous theory by examining how emotional intelligence functions as an antecedent to ambidexterity in leadership and job crafting as an outcome. Furthermore, it contributes to methodology by assessing variables at both the leadership and individual levels.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Ambidextrous Leadership, Job Crafting, Self-determination Theory.

Introduction

Ambidextrous leadership is a fusion of transactional and transformational leadership styles. It goes beyond the conventional dichotomy of exploration and exploitation, investigating how a leader's adeptness at navigating these dual competencies influences the outcomes experienced by their followers (Mascareno et al., 2021). A leader's ambidextrous behavior enhances explorative and exploitative change (Mueller et al., 2020; Tang and Wei, 2021) that leads to favorable outcomes at the individual level such as innovative employee performance (Alghamdi, 2018) and innovative performance at the organizational level (Gerlach et al., 2020). There are limitations to our understanding of ambidextrous leadership. One of the limitations is the knowledge about antecedents of ambidextrous leadership; the other is what type of followers are more inclined to respond to ambidextrous leadership positively. Although Rosing et al. (2011) discussed the cognitive and contextual antecedents of ambidextrous leadership while developing the theory of ambidextrous leadership, limited studies (Poon and Mohamad, 2020) empirically tested emotional intelligence as one of the antecedents of AL in the context of Malaysian SMEs whereas Oluwafem, (2018), tested role of emotional intelligence along with personality trait

towards ambidextrous leadership from UK high-tech SMEs. However, the interaction between these variables in the context of Pakistani advertising firms hasn't been thoroughly examined. Empirical data from the current study will aid in the development of innovative methods tailored particularly to the challenges faced by Pakistani culture.

Hackman and Oldham (1976) emphasize that job meanings are powerful in driving employee motivation and devotion to the organization. Modern businesses are moving away from inflexible, hierarchical, and standardized employment structures. Instead, people are increasingly drawn to positions that enable them to actively add significance to their jobs (Rosso et al., 2010). Currently, workers demonstrate their ability to adapt and modify their responsibilities and work relationships by actively making changes (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Staw and Boettger (1990) discussed the significant influence of job crafting on the growth and well-being of organizations. Previous studies have mainly focused on investigating its positive influence on psychological well-being, work engagement, commitment, and performance (Tims et al., 2012; Berg et al., 2010; Ghitulescu, 2006). However, there is still a significant absence of studies on the factors that influence job crafting within a specific setting.

Leadership is multifaceted (Yammarino and Dansereau, 2008); thus, we cannot understand effective leadership without considering and integrating individual and social dynamics (Wang and Howell, 2012). Leadership happens in a social context generated by a range of individuals, groups, and organizational systems therefore the process and effects are different at different levels. Organizing leadership theories by processes that affect various outcomes at several levels within an organization may help managers focus on those theories that are most appropriate for their organizational systems, helping them address their company's fundamental issues (Wang and Howell, 2012; Dinh et al., 2014). Hence, investigating the leader's ambidexterity (level two) on the follower's outcome (level one) leads to multilevel analysis and offers a nuanced view of understanding the top-down effect (Renkema *et al.*, 2017).

Psychological capital is the positive psychological condition of employees' personal development, consisting of four psychological sources: self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope, (Karimi et al., 2023). They documented that enhanced psychological capital resources will lead to employee job creativity, and employee innovation, specifically the corporate sector in developing companies lacks those resources that affect employee job creativity. The existing studies proved the mediation effect of psychological capital with diverse leadership styles and job attitudes, e.g. transformational leadership and job attitude Shah et al., (2023), dark leaders, and employee job satisfaction (Elbers et al., 2023). The current student determined the mediation impact of psychological capital for Ambidextrous leadership style and job crafting.

Objectives of Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how a leader becomes ambidextrous as most of the research starts with the assumption that a leader behaves in an ambidextrous manner (Mueller et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in nurturing explorative and exploitative behaviors, which must be adopted by ambidextrous leaders (Gopinath et al., 2021; Poon & Mohamad, 2020). Leaders with notable emotional intelligence possess the ability to comprehend and effectively direct the emotions exhibited by their followers. Furthermore, they can enhance adaptability to effectively pursue information processing (Rosing et al., 2011). The current study aims to provide empirical evidence by taking emotional intelligence (Mueller et al., 2020) as an antecedent for ambidexterity in leadership. Discussing job crafting as the finding of ambidextrous behavior (both explorative and exploitative) will enhance the understanding of the job crafting concept (Hassanzadeh et al., 2023). Through self-determination theory, it will also help to discover the contextual factor that motivates employees to job crafting.

This research also holds relevance for advertising agencies having dynamic and creative landscapes with the characteristics of knowledge intensity and a professionalized workforce (Nwokoro and Akwaowo, 2022; Waheed *et al.*, 2021). Pakistan is home to a wide range of advertising companies that play a significant role in the lively and ever-changing marketing sector. These agencies have a crucial role in creating and spreading persuasive messages to various audiences. As Pakistani advertising companies negotiate a market distinguished by cultural subtleties and ever-changing customer tastes, they are renowned for their ingenuity, originality, and flexibility. Some of the hallmarks of these agencies are their flat hierarchical structure and more interactive environment. Therefore, ambidextrous leadership is a viable strategy that relies on proactive behaviors like individual innovation, taking ownership, preventing problems, and voicing challenging work to improve their performance. When intending to have a positive impact on advertising, it is important not to undervalue the relationship between advertising and culture (Nwokoro and Akwaowo, 2022). Hence, the result of the study will help top managers plan the selection of future leaders who can exhibit 'behavior according to the situation.

Further, the study offers additional perspectives regarding advertising agencies in Pakistan and uncovers the role of a leader's capability during environmental uncertainties with employee job crafting for advertising agency professionals. Slatten *et al.*, (2023), argued that the companies must determine the pre-conditions that support the organizational members for effective value creation. Advertising agencies in Pakistan are in the emerging stage and expanding at the international level (Waheed *et al.*, 2021), there is a need to explore the contribution of leadership capabilities for effective and efficient management of both internal and external resources. There is a scarcity of theoretical and empirical support available for leadership ambidexterity, specifically focusing on media agencies.

Theory and Hypotheses

The existing literature is limited to a resource-based approach for establishing an empirical relationship between ambidextrous leadership and workplace behavior. Liu *et al.*, (2019), documented another motivational approach for supporting the empirical relationship, named Self Determination Theory (SDT). (Deci and Ryan, 2000) SDT provides insight into human motivation, psychological needs, and personal development. According to Lumpkin & Achen., (2018), SDT embraces the centrality of three innate psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and its linkage with human motivation. The study applied SDT to explore the modified impact of the leaders' ambidextrous behavior and followers' psychological capital on employees' job crafting. (Rink & Ellemers, 2007), argued that employees' perception of an elevated degree of ambidextrous culture inside the organization, diverse skills, abilities, and individual knowledge will lead to higher creativity reflecting group norms and shared expectations with the fulfillment of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. (Liu *et al.*, 2019), applied SDT and proved the positive influence of ambidextrous organizational culture on the innovative work behavior of employees.

A higher level of ambidexterity in organizational culture facilitates the achievement of three pillars of innate psychological empowerment and promotion of transformational leadership that ultimately improves employee work behavior innovation. According to Bass & Bass., (1985) and Liu *et al.*, (2019), Ambidextrous leadership & organizational culture that fulfills the psychological needs of the employees enhances their intrinsic motivation and encourages them to willingly participate in workplace innovation.

Following STD, the present study highlights the motivational perspective of ambidextrous leadership, in line with (Kebede *et al.*, 2024) and (Groselj *et al.*, 2020) that applied SDT and proved the positive impact of ambidextrous leadership and psychological empowerment on employee workplace crafting. Shah *et al.*, (2023) applied SDT proving that if employees' psychological needs are fulfilled, they become creative and able to work with transformational leaders.

Emotional Intelligence and Ambidextrous Leadership

According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence (EI) is a kind of intelligence that pertains to the emotional dimensions of human existence. This encompasses the ability to recognize and regulate one's own and others' emotions, self-drive, restraint, and proficient management of social connections. Salovey & Mayer (1990), presented an emotional intelligence ability model that includes four different abilities: 'the ability to (a) perceive emotions, (b) use emotions to facilitate thoughts, (c) understand emotions, and (d) manage emotions in varying situations. Emotional intelligence helps leaders understand and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, which can positively impact their leadership style and effectiveness (Diaz, 2023).

Individuals can control their emotions via response-focused emotion regulation, which involves amplifying, reducing, extending, or limiting certain feelings. Research has shown that people with a high emotional intelligence (EI) score tend to have more success in life compared to those with a lower EI (Bar-On, 1997). These individuals possess enhanced abilities in self-awareness, interpersonal understanding, social interaction, and adaptability to changing circumstances (Bar-On and Parker, 2000).

Leaders with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to be communicative, and empathetic, and have good relationships with their followers (Awasthi *et al.*, 2022) by helping their subordinates improve their emotional intelligence and thus create a productive and constructive workplace environment. Therefore, Rosing *et al.* (2011) postulate that emotional intelligence could be an antecedent of ambidextrous leadership. Ambidextrous leadership consists of three components; Opening leadership behavior to foster exploration, closing leadership behavior to foster exploitation, and flexibility. adaptability to interplay between both as the situation demands (Rosing *et al.*, 2011) Leaders who implement strategies tailored to the particular requirements of an organization in a given setting align with the more comprehensive contextual approach to ambidexterity (Clercq *et al.*, 2014; Havermans *et al.*, 2015). This strategy emphasizes the adaptability of leaders in a variety of circumstances and extends to ambidextrous leadership (Jansen *et al.*, 2009; Luo *et al.*, 2016). According to Porter and McLaughlin (2006), "Leadership does not occur in a vacuum; it takes place within an organizational context (p. 559). Ambidextrous leadership, as viewed through the lens of contextual leadership (Oc, 2018; Osborn and Marion, 2009), is an integral component of the organizational setting. Through this integration, leaders' selection of whether to adopt opening or closing behaviors is determined by the particular challenges and alternatives posed by the organizational environment.

We propose that when persons have a high degree of emotional intelligence and their basic psychological requirements are fulfilled, as defined by SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000), they are more likely to display ambidextrous behavior. A high degree of autonomy gives one the freedom to explore new avenues and take chances, but it also recognizes the need to enhance current procedures and maintain stability (exploitation). Similarly, a competent person is fully confident in his capacity to effectively handle both exploration and exploitation responsibilities. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent people prefer to form cooperative networks and relationships, which allows them to seek out new ideas and resources while also relying on present networks for support and guidance, resulting in a sense of relatedness (Lumpkin and Achen, 2018). Thus, emotional intelligence encourages autonomy, competence, and relatedness, allowing people to engage in ambidextrous behavior, and effectively balance exploration and exploitation in their personal and professional lives.

Therefore, leaders with high emotional intelligence are more likely to exhibit ambidextrous leadership, balancing exploration, and exploitation activities to drive innovation and performance. This hypothesis is based on the idea that emotional intelligence enables leaders to effectively manage and motivate their teams, creating an environment conducive to both creativity and productivity (Rosing and Zacher, 2023).

Hypothesis 1: Leaders' Emotional intelligence is positively related to ambidextrous leadership.

Ambidextrous Leadership and Job Crafting

Tims *et al.*, (2012) describe job crafting as the adjustments employees make to strike a balance between the demands and resources of their jobs and their unique needs, talents, and qualities. According to Tims *et al.* (2012), there are four components to this self-initiated work behavior: (a) enhancing structural job resources; (b) enhancing social job resources; (c) increasing complex job demands; and (e) decreasing hindering job demands. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) proposed that job crafting entails three sorts of changes: physical, relational, and cognitive. Physical changes mean modifications in terms of procedures, content, or nature of one's work task. Cognitive changes contain the perception and interpretation of tasks by an employee. Relational changes refer to actions an employee performs to improve his/her interactions with others in the organization daily. These adjustments help to meet an individual's basic psychological needs (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Ambidextrous leadership significantly influences job-creating behaviors by meeting the fundamental psychological needs outlined in the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000). Leaders' open behavior creates an environment in which employees may freely express themselves, empowers them, and gives resources such as equipment, funding, and opportunities. This empowerment offers the freedom to choose what and how to work for oneself (autonomy), which is a necessary condition for job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) and a factor in the motivation of autonomous workers (Deci and Ryan, 2000). When employees do not believe they have the ability or autonomy to alter their employment, they are less likely to change specific parts of their work. An ambitious leader, following employee autonomy (Moss *et al.*, 2015), empowers employees to create job content and relationship boundaries (Hetland *et al.*, 2018).

Leaders who are adept at ambidexterity also create opportunities for their employees to develop new skills and improve existing ones (exploitation), thereby enhancing their sense of competence (Gjerde & Ladegård, 2018) which is another component of STD. This support not only aids in personal skill development but also motivates employees to proactively adjust their job roles for better performance and growth. Moreover, ambidextrous leadership strengthens team dynamics by promoting collaborative exploration and exploitation of knowledge, satisfying the need for relatedness among employees (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Through these efforts, leaders cultivate a sense of friendship and mutual support, further encouraging job crafting as a means to contribute to team goals and establish stronger relationships within the workplace. Collectively, the fulfillment of these needs enables ambidextrous leaders to create a workplace culture that encourages and sustains job crafting, resulting in a workforce that is both engaged and adaptable to the complexities of modern organizational life (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Ambidextrous leadership has a positive cross-level effect on followers' Job crafting.

Mediating Role of Follower's Psychological Capital

The behaviors exhibited by leaders in complex situations, such as innovation, can be perceived as conflicting, unpredictable, and inconsistent, which in turn leads to uncertainty and negative emotions among their followers (Ishaq *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, the effectiveness of ambidextrous leadership hinges greatly upon whether followers possess adequate physical and organizational resources to navigate these intricate and contradictory behaviors (Sheng and Zhou, 2021; Xu *et al.*, 2022). While displaying ambidextrous conduct, leaders concurrently interplay oppositional (opening & closing), inconsistent, and complicated behavior, which is likely to induce unease and doubt among their followers. Therefore, the ability of followers to understand and deal with complicated and conflicting conduct is a necessary condition for the success of ambidextrous leadership. The followers with positive psychosocial resources, namely psychological capital are better equipped to handle the leader's simultaneous fluctuation between openness and closure. As a result, they are capable of averting

uncertainty, effectively managing ongoing pressures, and ultimately achieving higher levels of productivity when collaborating with ambidextrous leaders.

Psychological capital refers to a positive state of an individual with a collection of four psychological resources that enable individuals to put additional effort with confidence and accomplish goals (efficacy), ability to generate alternate solutions to overcome challenges (hope), and maintain a positive outlook with good expectations during hardship (optimism) and successfully cope with challenges through emotional, mental and behavioral flexibility (resilience) (Luthans et al., 2006; Walumbwa et al., 2010). Parray et al., (2023) proved a positive mediation effect of psychological capital on the link between leadership and job attitude in a healthcare setting in India.

Self-determination theory helps us to understand this mechanism, psychological capital resources are aligned and consistent with the core psychological needs of STD. according to SDT individuals are motivated to pursue activities that satisfy their innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Satisfaction of these psychological needs increases the psychological resources of an individual. These resources synergize the individual to cope with the complex and conflicting situations created through the interplay of opening and closing behavior. As outlined by SDT, ambidextrous leadership influences psychological capital by fostering a work environment that supports employees' intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being. Employees with increased levels of psychological capital are more likely to engage in work-creating behaviors because they feel competent, optimistic, and resilient in constructing their work roles to meet their needs and goals.

Thus, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

Hypothesis 3: The follower's psychological capital mediates the positive cross-level association between ambidextrous leadership and followers' Job crafting.

Conceptual Model

The following figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the study.

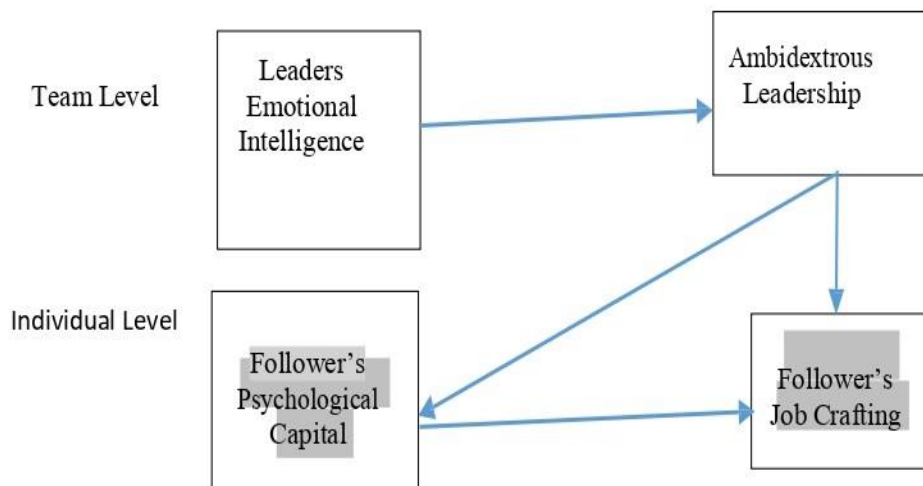


Figure No1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Research Methodology

Research Context

Advertising agencies in Pakistan have a significant influence on customer perceptions and market trends in the ever-changing business environment (Ali and Yousaf, 2021). This industry faces challenges at the national and international levels and demands more proactive work behavior from employees to stay ahead of changing trends and consumer preferences, specifically in the recent digitalization era. To maintain a competitive edge, agencies must consistently enhance their services and devise distinctive strategies to distinguish themselves and retain clients (Waheed *et al.*, 2021). This continuous transformation of the competitive environment compelled the sector to develop new approaches to compensate for the uncertainties, fluctuations, and shortcomings in the external environment of developing markets, leaders try to gear up internal resources. This provides an ideal context for empirical examination of ambidextrous leadership and job-creating.

Sampling and Data Collection

126 advertising agencies listed with the Pakistan Broadcasting Association (BPA) in the year 2022, a leading representative body of Pakistan's advertising agencies, provided the data. Participants had the freedom to opt not to participate while ensuring the protection of their privacy. We prepared two separate questionnaires to obtain data from both supervisors and subordinates, resulting in multi-source data. We appended the questionnaires with a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study, provided instructions, and offered a briefing on each variable to help respondents understand.

The team head/creative head, art director, and head of the design department, who were 'leaders' in this study, filled out Questionnaire (I), which consisted of an emotional intelligence scale and demographics. Employees were required to complete a questionnaire (II), in which they responded questions about the leader's ambidextrous behavior the employee's job crafting, and demographics. Leaders did not have access to employees' responses, and employees were assigned secret codes to maintain anonymity. Next, we compared the supervisor's response to that of the associated employee using the previously allocated code. All ethical considerations were considered while gathering the data. We obtained respondents' consent before they filled out the questionnaire. The leaders and supervisors preserved anonymity and confidentiality in their replies.

A Total of 156 questionnaires (Form I) were received back from the team leaders/creative head, art director, and head design department, whereas 510 questionnaires (Form II) were received back from the team members/employees. After scrutiny, 111 leaders' surveys and 471 employees' surveys were useful with a percentage of 71% and 92 % respectively with an average cluster of 4.24 (the ratio is 4:1). Supervisors were 81% male and 57% were between 36 and 40 years of age. The subordinates were 79% male, and 43 percent were 30 to 35 years of age. Gender for supervisor & subordinate was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Age for supervisor & subordinate was 1 = Less than 30, 2 = 30-35, 3 = 36-40, 4 = 41-45, 5 = 46-50, 6= 51-54, 7 = 55 and above. Qualification of Supervisor & qualification was coded 1 = Intermediate, 2 = Bachelors, 3 = Masters, 4=M.Phil/MS, 5= Doctorate. Supervisor & Subordinate experience with the current organization and subordinate experience with the current supervisor was coded as 1 =Less than 1 year, 2 = 1-2 years, 3 = 2-4 years, 4 = 4-6 years 5= more than 7 years.

Measurements

To ensure validity, all the measurements are adopted from existing literature with a Likert scale ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). Larder's emotional intelligence was measured through a self-reported scale developed by Wong and Law (2002). Example items are: "I really

understand what I feel” and “I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally” ($\alpha= 0.90$) Employees were invited to assess their supervisor's ambidextrous leadership through Zacher and Rosing, (2015) 14-item scale, based on Rosing *et al.*, (2011) ambidextrous leadership theory. The scale comprises seven opening leadership behaviors and seven closing leadership behaviors sample items are “My supervisor encourages experimentation with different ideas”, and “My supervisor takes corrective action” respectively ($\alpha= 0.94$) Employee job crafting was measured by a self-reported 21-item scale developed by Tims *et al.*, (2012). Example questions are “I try to develop myself professionally”, and “I ask others for feedback on my job performance” ($\alpha =0.92$). Employee Psychological capital was measured through a self-reported 12-item scale (short form) by Luthans *et al.*, (2007) “I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job”) ($\alpha =0.90$). All participants were similarly inquired about their demographic details, specifically, their gender, age, level of education, experience, and experience with their current supervisor. All measurement scales displayed acceptable alpha reliability.

Analysis and Results

Data Analysis

The study applied a two-step approach, i-e confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling to empirically review the relationships for the proposed models through Mplus 7.0 software. Initially, CFA was run to test the validity and measurement quality of the above-mentioned instruments. Primarily data analysis is done with the help of multilevel path analysis (Kaplan, 2000).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of variables are presented in table 1, which clearly shows that the data is normally distributed. Skewness is the spread of the data whereas kurtosis shows the peak of data. acceptable range for kurtosis is between +7 and -7 as skewness is between -2 and +2. (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Max	Means	Std. deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Stats	Stats	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics	Statistics
Leader’s Emotional Intelligence (LEI)	1.20	4.83	3.01	1.05	.880	2.173
Ambidextrous Leadership (AL)	1.16	4.38	2.94	1.02	.448	1.568
Followers’ Job Crafting	1.01	4.73	2.95	1.04	.621	1.289
Followers’ Psychological Capital	1.56	4.65	2.93	1.01	.711	2.011

Reliability Statistics

Reliability analysis was applied to analyze the internal consistency and reliability, values granter that 0.70 of alpha value shows acceptable reliability. Values of CR, (Composite Reliability) and AVE (average variance extracted) also show convergent and discriminant validity of the study (Table 2).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4
Leaders's Emotional Intelligence (LEI)	0.90	0.912	0.821				
Ambidextrous Leadership (AL)	0.94	0.943	0.864	-0.78			
Followers' Job Crafting (FJC)	0.92	0.939	0.768	0.47**	-0.76		
Follower's Psychological Capital (FPC)	0.90	0.908	0.761	0.43**	0.48**	-0.84	
				0.35	0.48	0.46	0.49**

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and reliability analysis are conducted to evaluate the appropriateness of the instruments used in our research. The analysis of factor loadings for each variable showed that the item loadings were above 0.53, suggesting that the convergent validity was adequate. (Hair et al., 2010).

The measurement and structural models fit were examined through CFI (comparative fit index), Tucker–Lewis fit index (TLI), root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) indices, and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). The full model had bet fit: $\chi^2 (1) = 2.63, p=.02, CFI=0.90, TLI=.90, RMSEA=0.05, SRMR (between) = 0.001$ and $SRMR (within) = 0.060$. Results showed that the three-factor model is the best fit. Alternative Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) models were run to validate the measurement structure.

Table 3: Measurement Model fit indices of Tested and potential alternative models

Fit Indices		Absolute		Incremental		
MODELS		Normed X2 (X2 /df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
One Factor Model (LEI+AB+EJC+FPC)	Model	21.29	.433	.374	.208	.160
Two Factor Model (AB+EJC+FPC)	Model	(LEI, 11.98)	.698	.661	.153	.181
Two Factor Model (LEI+AB, EJC+FPC)		18.21	.522	.469	.191	.221
Four Factor Model		2.975	.949	0.939	.065	.041

Note: CFI (comparative fit index), Tucker–Lewis fit index (TLI), root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) indices and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) Number of teams 111, number of individuals=417, $p < .01$

Multilevel Analysis

The investigation used an average cluster size of 4:1, which indicates the number of workers working under the same team lead. The calculated ICCs (Intra-class Correlation Coefficients) for the mediator, ambidextrous leadership, and the outcome variable, job crafting, were 0.71 and 0.73, respectively. The presence of these absolute ICCs emphasizes the need to use a multilayer strategy, as suggested by Peugh (2010).

Table 4: Intraclass Correlation Coefficients

Ambidextrous Leadership	0.71
Followers' Job Crafting	0.73

Hypothesis Test

Following Preacher et al.'s (2011) framework, a multilevel analysis was performed using Mplus (8.0). Our model follows the 2-2-1 structure outlined in the framework. At level 2, we examined the mediator, which refers to the ambidextrous behaviors of leaders. At level 1, we analyzed job crafting. In the Mplus code, variables such as a leader's emotional intelligence and ambidextrous leadership were described with only between-variance, while employees' outcomes were determined with only within-variance. This approach, recommended by Preacher et al. (2011) for testing 2-2-1 models, was adopted before testing our hypotheses.

Table 5 presents the statistical findings of the Multilevel path analysis. The statistics show the significant positive impact of emotional intelligence on leadership ambidexterity with significant p-values, which is less than 0.01. The value of the beta-coefficient ($\beta = 0.36$) indicates 36% strength of the relationship between the variables. Hence H1 is supported.

The statistics proved the significant positive cross-level effect of ambidextrous leadership on followers' job crafting, with a significant p-value i-e less than 0.01. Hence H2 supported. The results are in line with existing studies, such as Miaomiao *et al.* (2023); Pasikhani *et al.*, (2023); Ma *et al.*, (2019); Dinh and Qian, (2019).

Table No 5: Hypothesis Testing

Construct		B	P(sig)
LEI	→ AL	0.36	0.001
AL	→ FJC	0.40	0.004
FPC	→ FJC	0.37	0.001
Indirect effect (95% confidence interval)		LLCI	ULCI
AL	→ FPC → FJC	0.651	0.763

Conclusion and Discussion

The present study examined how ambidextrous leadership is affected by a leader's emotional intelligence. In addition, the study assesses how ambidextrous leadership affects followers' work crafting on a cross-level. The study applied a multi-level approach and analyzed the data collected from 126 listed advertising agencies with BPA for the year 2022 by using Structure Equation Modeling. The findings

of the study support and build on earlier studies of ambidextrous leadership, job crafting, and emotional intelligence. Within the dynamic environment of an advertising agency, a creative team leader must adeptly regulate their emotions by carefully selecting their interactions, cultivating the creative workspace, focusing on particular aspects of the work environment, and adapting their perception of the overall creative environment. The empirical analysis proved the significant positive influence of EI on ambidextrous leadership, supported H1. The results also proved significant positive cross-level effect of ambidextrous leadership on the follower's job, and significant p-values supported H2. Additionally, the study proved the positive cross-level mediation effect of follower's psychological capital on the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and followers' Job crafting, supported H3.

According to a recent study, emotional intelligence serves as a guide while acquiring ambidextrous conduct. EI helps leaders shape explorative and exploitative activities according to situational needs. The study findings are similar to those, Poon and Mohamad (2020) that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the development of explorative, like risk-taking, experimentation and discovery and exploitative behaviors of leaders for example implementation, execution, and efficiency etc. An ambidextrous leadership style fosters self-motivation by giving people the chance to try new things and get better at what they do. In this way, the focus has been shifted from the individual antecedents such as job demands and job resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) and task complexity and task discretion (Ghitulescu, 2006) to internal contextual factors i.e. leadership. Research findings indicate that a leader's ambidexterity at the team level is positively impacted by emotional intelligence. The study findings are in line with the findings of Ma *et al.*, (2019) regarding team-level ambidextrous leadership enhancing individual-level job crafting. The mediating influence of psychological capital is also analyzed at the individual level, supported by literature from Karimi *et al.*, (2023) and Shah *et al.*, (2023) for the positive mediating influence of employee psychological capital.

For workers, the intersection of transformational and transactional mindsets leads to conflict and erratic circumstances. (Gong *et al.*, 2021). Open communication, experimentation, and open participation are encouraged by inclusive and transformative leadership philosophies; this boosts their confidence in innovative thinking and behavior (Javed *et al.*, 2021). Past research is evident that closing behavior, such as a transactional style, motivates employees to craft jobs to meet deadlines and carry out the plans created during the innovation process. (Haider *et al.*, 2023; Xu and Niu, 2022; Luu *et al.*, 2019). In conclusion, this study's insights into ambidextrous leadership, emotional intelligence, and follower outcomes are not only theoretically noteworthy but also have useful ramifications for advertising agency executives. By embracing ambidextrous leadership and recognizing the role of emotional intelligence, advertising firms have the opportunity to lead the way in innovation and creativity in an ever-evolving industry.

Theoretical Implications

The current work makes a substantial contribution to the large body of research on ambidextrous leadership. Existing studies on ambidextrous leadership have primarily focused on sectors such as hospitality, software development, architectural design, manufacturing, SMEs (i.e., Zacher and Rosing, 2015; Keller and Weibler, 2015; Ma *et al.*, 2019). Our research addresses the demand for additional investigation across various sectors (Tang and Wei, 2022). Significantly, this study represents the first empirical investigation of ambidextrous leadership within the advertising industry.

The concept of ambidextrous leadership involves the adept integration and transition between actions of exploitation, focused on maximizing existing resources and exploratory actions aimed at uncovering new opportunities (Rosing *et al.*, 2011). Studies have presented proof of the dynamic interplay between these two types of leadership characteristics (Zacher and Rosing, 2015; Luu *et al.*, 2019; Gerlach *et al.*, 2020). This study looks at the overall effects of ambidextrous leadership rather than concentrating on just

one aspect of job crafting. This is in line with recent research that treated ambidextrous leadership as a type of integrative leadership (Luo *et al.*, 2019).

This study provides theoretical support for the ambidextrous leadership theory by empirically confirming its 'how' component. With the help of self-determination theory, this provides a better understanding of ambidexterity and how ambidextrous leaders handle the conflicts and paradoxes that arise (Oluwafemi, 2018).

Compared to earlier studies, the way that job crafting is being approached now is unique, which has predominantly focused on outcomes for example psychological well-being, commitment, work engagement, and performance (Ghitulescu, 2006; Tims *et al.*, 2012). Our addition to the body of knowledge around job crafting is to reorient attention towards ambidextrous leadership as a source of autonomous motivation for job crafting within an organization. Past research emphasized individual-level factors such as task characteristics, task direction, and person-job misfit (Tims and Bakker, 2010; Ghitulescu, 2006) as antecedents, whereas in the present research model, the internal environmental aspect of ambidextrous leadership necessitates a matching modification in employment resources and needs for crafting (Luu *et al.*, 2019).

Practical Implications

In real real-world multiplex business environment, firms may take advantage of ambidextrous leadership theory to select leaders with high emotional intelligence, which makes an ambidextrous leader a successful leader. Because switching between closing and opening behavior increases role overload for leaders, followers need to switch accordingly, which leads to stress (Wang *et al.*, 2020), a leader with strong emotional intelligence can truly share the joys and concerns of their team members and to understand and empathize with them. Ambidextrous leadership helps to expand the boundaries of job crafting in a way that opening behavior encourages employees to new task aspects and new relationships. Simultaneously, closing behavior helps set guidelines for job redesign to maintain work compatibility, prevent overlapping, and align with organizational tactics (Hassanzadeh *et al.*, 2023).

The development of ambidextrous leadership is made possible by performance metrics and targeted leadership training. This method works for existing managers and succession-planned successors. To facilitate their integration and transition, the training teaches opening and closing leadership behaviors and strategies. Managers know how to get workers to share and try new ideas. Further, the training emphasizes the necessity of creating an error-tolerant atmosphere during initiative testing, which may spur additional innovation. In the era of digitization and dispersed media landscapes, advertising agencies need to take additional measures to make their message stand out, and this requires using new creative approaches for competitive advantage.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

The current study employed a quantitative method to collect data through a questionnaire however, behavior flexibility relates to the situation, and forecasting skills may also be empirically tested as an antecedent of an ambidextrous leader. Qualitative research may help to understand this phenomenon as well as the behavioral and cognitive complexity of integrative thinking (Gerlach, 2019). These findings, obtained from advertising agencies, can potentially be replicated in other service sectors that necessitate ambidextrous leadership for day-to-day operations, such as the stock exchange, as well as in industries focused on enhancing the innovation process, like the software industry and IT sector.

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