

The Influence of Empowering Leadership Towards Employee Ambidexterity: Study Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Employee ambidexterity has been viewed as the crucial variable in measuring the employee's innovation and creativity. Therefore, the discussion of employee ambidexterity is essential in supporting the literature about employee creativity and innovation. However, the literature study's discussion about the factors that affect employee ambidexterity is still limited. Based on the existing studies, the creativity and innovation of employees at work is the crucial leadership factor. This research will specifically examine the effect of empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity based on a literature review that has never been discussed before. This research method uses a literature review by comprehensively comparing and reviewing these two variables from 28 Scopus journals. The results of this study found four dimensions of empowering leadership: the meaning of work, encouragement of employee participation, expression of beliefs, and work autonomy. In addition, this study also found two dimensions of employee ambidexterity: exploration and exploitation. In addition, these findings explain the characteristics, influences, and factors between the two variables and how empowering leadership can increase employee ambidexterity. This study suggests the company develop empowering leadership as the leadership style to improve employee ambidexterity.

Keywords: Creativity, Employee Ambidexterity, Empowering Leadership, Innovation, Leadership Style

INTRODUCTION

In winning the market competition, companies must have employees with a high level of innovation. Innovation is an important element for many companies to move forward in facing today's competition. According to Farmania, Elsyah, and Tuori (2021), innovation is the process of creating new solutions based on existing knowledge or insights on the product (output) and the process carried out. Furthermore, innovation refers to dualism, namely not only creating new solutions but also exploiting existing competencies, knowledge, and processes in different ways (Rosing & Zacher, 2016). Dualism in this innovation refers to the theory of ambidexterity.

Ambidexterity is a theory derived from innovation that puts forward two elements, namely exploration and exploitation. The theory of ambidexterity emphasized that people in the organization can be more innovative and creative by doing two options; first, they can explore new ideas, processes, or even solutions that have not existed before, or second they can exploit ideas, process, or methods from the existing that have never been implemented in the organization. This theory therefore explains that being creative does not mean create new things but implementing different ideas or methods from other sources can also be known as creative working.

The problem of creativity and innovation, especially in exploring the potential and capabilities or pre-existing resources in the concept of dualism ambidexterity (exploitation and exploration) can be influenced by the leadership process run by startup companies to all employees. According to DeSorbo (1994), leadership is a strategy to influence followers to act towards certain goals as well as for the company and employees.

Industrial conditions are very dynamic and are strongly influenced by the company's consumer desires and behavior. Of course, companies must have leadership that can direct employees to meet the needs of startup companies, namely employees who can walk quickly in seeing opportunities and market changes. Creativity and innovation are the two things that employees need to be able to create change and the uniqueness of the company quickly. Therefore, the leadership style chosen by the company leader greatly determines employee innovation and creativity, especially in creating new solutions (exploration) or exploiting old ideas to be formed into solutive ideas for startup companies (exploitation). In companies, many leadership styles can be used.

Some well-known leadership styles are transformative leadership, dictator leadership, empowering leadership, autocratic leadership, visionary leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and so on. The leadership style that is most likely to support creating creative employees who can innovate independently is empowering leadership. In many previous studies, empowering leadership to gain a positive effect on improving employee performance and creativity (Biemann, Kearney, & Marggraf, 2015; Chen, Sharma, Edinger, & Shapiro, 2011; Zhang & Bartol, 2011). Hence, this research focus on investigating the impact of empowering leadership toward employee ambidexterity based on a literature review.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empowering Leadership

Leadership is managing some activities in an organized group to achieve goals (Yukl, 2012). Therefore, leadership is an important aspect for companies to pay attention to. It needs to pay attention to the type of leadership style chosen in practicing leadership in an organization or company. Leadership style implies a form of embodiment of the behavior of a leader that affects leadership in an organization. Many leadership styles

exist in organizations, but the leadership style that has been studied has a positive outcome on improving employee performance, namely empowering leadership.

This leadership style is different from other existing approaches, such as directive, transactional, and transformational leadership Pearce, Sims, Cox, Ball, and Schnell (2003). According to Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke (2006), various leadership behaviors have been carried out and studied, but empowering leadership has more specific characteristics. According to Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp (2005), empowering leadership includes highlighting the importance of the meaning of a job, providing participation in decision-making, boosting confidence that performance will be success, and removing obstacles in the bureaucratic process.

Furthermore, Zhang and Bartol (2010) claimed that empowering leadership is the process to permit employees to feel valueable with their work, further providing employee to work with autonomy confidence in employee abilities, and removing barriers to decision-making to enhance their performance at work. In essence, employee empowerment involves improving motivation to work through giving delegation to manage their job responsibility and authority to all organizational levels including the lowest level where competent decisions can be made (Conger & Kannugo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Thus, empowering leadership is defined as "behavior that shares power with subordinates" (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010). Empowering leadership with its character that provides flexibility and power to work for employees can make it more likely to create a high innovation culture for employees. For this reason, this research will specifically discuss the effect of empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity in the context of innovation.

Employee Ambidexterity

Innovation theory discusses the ability of a person or group of people to create new ideas. However, innovation does not only mean different new things, but innovation can also mean the ability to implement something that already exists by improving the features that are in it. One of the innovative concepts that discuss this is ambidexterity (Good & Michel, 2013). Ambidexterity implies dualism, namely exploiting existing knowledge resources to make innovations or exploring new knowledge to get ideas or innovations (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006). The term ambidexterity is a term that describes the skills of individuals or employees in finding innovations and ideas based on the dualist view of innovation, namely exploration and exploitation.

Ambidexterity theory in previous research has been discussed at different levels. There is research on organizational ambidexterity, namely research on the ability of innovation dualism at the organizational or company level Peng (2019), ambidexterity or dualism of innovation at the team or group level, and individual ambidexterity or employee ambidexterity which discusses dualism of ambidexterity at the individual or employee level. In principle, ambidexterity emphasizes improving performance or performance by enabling companies or individuals to explore new knowledge, ideas, and solutions and or use existing resources and capacities that have not been handled or used optimally Bresciani, Ferraris, & Del Giudice (2018).

Therefore, ambidexterity can be seen as a theory that combines two combinations of activities, namely: exploration and exploitation Rosing & Zacher (2016). Therefore, the definition of employee ambidexterity is an arrangement of employee behavior that blends exploration and exploitation to create rapid and sustainable innovation in reaching company goals, either short-term or long-term goals (Zhang, Wei, & Constance, 2018). Therefore, ambidexterity can be defined as an individual's ability to use existing

resources while creating new or exploring new capabilities and exploiting existing competencies (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Gupta et al., 2006; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method by comparing and collecting literature studies that are relevant to the research variables. This study uses two variables: the empowering leadership variable as the independent variable and the employee ambidexterity variable as the dependent variable. This study uses concepts from previous journals about empowering leadership and summarizes them based on the author, and the definitions developed, as well as key findings from each previous research regarding the concepts of empowering leadership and employee ambidexterity.

Therefore, this research data is secondary data, namely data obtained through existing publication sources or data that are already available based on previous research on research variables. The data sources used are research journals on empowering leadership and employee ambidexterity. The research design is used to discuss the concept of previous research regarding each research variable and then look for the relationship between the independent variable (empowering leadership) and the dependent variable (employee ambidexterity) based on a literature review.

RESULTS

This study revealed the results of the study based on three steps. First, this study describes in detail the concept of empowering leadership based on definitions and key findings from the literature review. Second, this study does the same way by describing the concept of employee ambidexterity in detail, including definitions, key findings, main principles, and dimensions. Then, the last step is based on the results of reading from the previous literature, and this study describes the influence or relationship between empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity based on a literature review.

Empowering Leadership: Key Findings

Based on the results of the literature review, empowering leadership as a kind of leadership style in organizations has its characteristics in creating positive effects or impacts on the progress of employee performance. The definition of empowering leadership based on the results of a literature study is as follows:

Table 1. Definition of Empowering Leadership

Authors	Definition	Indicators
(Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2011; Morgeson, Delaney-klinger, & Hemingway, 2005)	Empowering leadership is the ability of a leader to give autonomy support to create intrinsic motivation which can then predict employee job performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job autonomy support for employees • Intrinsic motivation • Employee performance
Ahearne et al. (2005)	empowering leadership involves highlighting the importance of the meaning of a job, participating in the decision-making process, being more confident to perform at work, and removing obstacles in bureaucratic processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning of work • Participate in decision making • Employee self-reliance • Removing bureaucratic obstacles
Zhang & Bartol (2010)	Empowering leadership allows employees to feel meaningful about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling meaningful at work

	their work, provide autonomy and demonstrate confidence in employees' abilities, and remove barriers to decision-making to develop employee achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy of work • Remove barriers to decision-making
(Vecchio et al., 2010)	Empowering leadership is defined as behavior that shares strength with subordinates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power sharing behavior
Hakimi, Knippenberg, & Giessner (2010)	Empower leadership delegates power where leaders empower, and educate the employees to make them giving a full contribution and make quality decisions for the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee empowerment • Sharing information and knowledge • Full contributions by employees
(Arnold, Arad, Rhodes, & Drasgow, 2000)	Empowering leadership is the process of delegating decision-making power to employees, expressing confidence in their potentials to handle demanding situations, increasing their sense of meaning at work, and providing the resources needed to support employee performance in fulfilling their responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation of decision-making for employees • Expressing confidence • Increase sense-of meaning • Supporting employees to fulfill their responsibilities
(Aryee, Kim, Zhou, & Ryu, 2019)	Empowering leadership is providing a perspective for a leader to be able to provide direction in creating power that is distributed to all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions in the distribution of power
(Kleine, Rudolph, & Zacher, 2019)	Empowering leadership is leadership that relies on employee participation at work and increases the sense of meaning for employees in working in the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee participation in decision making • Sense of meaning at work
(Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011)	Empowering leadership is a process to boost employee's focus on work and enhance employee learning skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop employee learning skills

Table 1 above explains the definition of empowering leadership from various literature sources. Based on the explanation of the definitions above, it can be concluded that empowering leadership emphasizes self-development and employee capabilities at work, including how a leader can provide the resources for the employees to perform well and explore more ideas in the company.

For this reason, empowering leadership is an important factor that must be considered and carried out by companies in increasing employee capabilities. Research by (Srivastava et al., 2006) states that the interpersonal and leadership styles of employees greatly determine how employees can work and operate in the company. In addition, research by (Aryee et al., 2019) also found that empowering leadership produce a positive outcome on employees to gain abilities and then develops employee morale in the company.

The dimensions of empowering leadership based on the definitions in table 1 above are as follows:

Table 2. Dimensions of Empowering Leadership

No	Dimensions	Indicators
1	Increase the meaning of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My boss supports me to manage how my personal goals present benefits to the company. • My supervisor makes me realize the essence of my work to develop the success of the company's process • My supervisor guides me conceive how my work helps the company meet its goals.
2	Encouraging employee participation in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My boss and I make a lot of decisions. • My boss and I discuss some strategic decisions • My boss asks for my opinion on decisions that could have an impact on me
3	Expressing employee confidence to have high performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My supervisor believes I can handle the challenging work (e.g., requiring special skills, having limited deadlines, etc.). • My boss trusts my ability although I perform an inaccuracy performance. • My supervisor shows confidence in my ability to carry out difficult tasks.
4	Provide autonomy against bureaucratic constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My boss frees me to do the job on my own way. • My boss makes me work more efficiently by applying simple rules. • My supervisor allows me to create crucial determinations quickly to meet customer requirements.

Employee Ambidexterity

This concept is derived from innovation theory to describe the ability to be creative person. In general, people describe being creative means we need to explore different new things that never been discovered by others. However, the theory of employee ambidexterity tried to change this by understanding that innovation does not only mean different new things, but can also mean the ability to implement something that already exists by improving the features that are in it. One of the innovative concepts that discuss this is ambidexterity Good & Michel, (2013). The results of this research literature review regarding the theory of employee ambidexterity are described in the following table:

Table 3. Definitions of Employee Ambidexterity

Authors	Definition	Indicators
(Gupta et al., 2006)	Ambidexterity contains the meaning of dualism, namely exploiting existing knowledge resources to make innovations or exploring new knowledge to get ideas or innovations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation • Innovation • Exploration
	Ambidexterity is a term that describes the skills of individuals or employees in finding innovations and ideas based on the dualist view of innovation, namely exploration and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Idea • Exploration • Exploitation

(Bresciani et al., 2018)	Ambidexterity emphasizes improving performance or performance by enabling companies or individuals to explore new knowledge, ideas, and solutions and or use resources and capacities that already exist but have not been handled or used to the fullest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee performance • Exploration of knowledge and ideas • Use of existing resources and capacity
(Rosing & Zacher, 2016)	Employee ambidexterity is the ability of employees to combine two activities, namely exploration and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration • Exploitation
(Benner & Tushman, 2003)	Ambidexterity is defined as the individual's ability to utilize existing resources while creating new or exploring new capabilities and exploiting existing competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration • Exploitation
(O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013)	Ambidexterity refers to a company's ability to explore and exploit to compete in increasingly sophisticated markets and technologies where flexibility, autonomy, and experimentation are most needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration • Exploitation
(Caniëls & Veld, 2019)	Employee ambidexterity is described as the orientation of employee behavior in merging exploitation and exploration with work activities in the company based on a certain period of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration • Exploitation
(Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004)	Employee ambidexterity is the ability of employees who are supported by the work culture in the company to develop and sharing knowledge with employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee development • work culture • Sharing knowledge
(Caniëls, Neghina, & Schaetsaert, 2017)	Employee ambidexterity is the ability of employees to explore and exploit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration • Exploitation

Based on the explanation of employee ambidexterity above, it can be concluded that ambidexterity is an innovation concept that combines the dualism concept of exploration and exploitation. Exploitative activities refer to the activity that seeks to detail and exploit existing mental models, different norms and policies in companies, as well as technologies and ideas developed in different contexts and places, while exploration means activities aimed at changing existing models and radically affect the culture and routine activities in the company (Caniëls et al., 2017).

Therefore, based on the explanation of ambidexterity, it can be concluded that there are two dimensions of employee ambidexterity, namely exploration and exploitation:

1. Exploration: is an innovative behavior in seeking, discovering, creating, and experimenting on new things
2. Exploitation: is the behavior of innovation in selecting, implementing, improving, and combining existing resources and capacities

The Correlation Between Empowering Leadership and Employee Ambidexterity

Based on the explanation of the two variables, namely empowering leadership as an independent variable and employee ambidexterity as an independent variable, it can be said that empowering leadership is a factor developed in the company that affects overall employee performance. As research by (Srivastava et al., 2006) which claims that the

interpersonal and leadership styles of employees greatly determine how employees can work and operate in the company.

Furthermore, based on the explanation regarding employee ambidexterity, it is known that employees in exploring new ideas or using resources and capabilities as well as work models already require support and encouragement from the company. As research by (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004) which mentions that employee ambidexterity is the ability of employees who are supported by the work culture in the company in developing and sharing knowledge with employees.

For this reason, increasing the level of employee ambidexterity requires support from the company's internal work culture as research by (van Assen, 2020) who says that ambidexterity is an ability or activity that requires a high level of empowerment of employee or individual in realizing improvement and innovation. This study found that there were no previous studies that specifically discussed the affect of empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity. This is a novelty for this research as the first research to argue the influence of empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity.

Although there is no research that specifically discusses the relationship between the two variables, this research, as described previously, found a connection between the realization of empowering leadership activities and increasing ambidexterity for employees. The results of this research literature study regarding the influence of empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity are summarized in table 3 below:

Table 4. Correlations Between Empowering Leadership and Employee Ambidexterity

Authors	Description	Explanation
(van Assen, 2020)	Empowering leadership is a leadership style that can facilitate ambidexterity for employees by empowering employees to be able to decide ideas independently and manage their decisions and work time in exploring existing ideas and ideas or activities.	This study explains the empowering leadership style has an effect as a facilitator of ambidexterity
(Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004)	Empowerment in employees includes high levels of self-efficacy and fix obstacle in novel ways such as explorative learning	This study explains that the empowerment built by the company in internal activities can increase the exploration ability of employees where exploration is one element of ambidexterity.
(Zhang & Bartol, 2010)	Empowering leadership is the process of developing employees to be more creative in exploring and learning new things	This study explains that empowering leadership can make employees more creative and better able to explore and learn new things. This is the concept of employee ambidexterity
(Caniëls et al., 2017)	employee ambidexterity can be increased by the existence of two organizational cultures that support employee ambidexterity, namely the perceived culture of	This study explains that a company culture that empowers or empowers employees and shares company knowledge or capacity with employees can support increasing employee ambidexterity.

	empowerment, and the knowledg-sharing culture. These two factors are factors that support employee ambidexterity.	
(Yu, Gudergan, & Chen, 2020)	leadership at the employee department (unit-level) partially moderates employee motivation factors to innovate and increase employee ambidexterity.	This study explains that leadership is a factor that supports or moderates employees to have or increase employee ambidexterity
(Zhang et al., 2018)	In increasing employee ambidexterity or individual ambidexterity, a leadership behavior structure is needed that can encourage employees to experiment with different ideas, provide opportunities to think and act independently or independently, as well as support employees to challenge themselves to explore new things related to the work process. more innovative	This study explains increase the level of employee ambidexterity in a company, companies need to have leadership behaviors that can develop employees to act independently and explore new things to be able to have more innovative performance. This leadership style is the concept of empowering leadership
(Zacher & Rosing, 2015)	In supporting employees who have good exploratory behavior, an open leadership style is needed that allows and even supports employees to experiment and dare to take risks.	This study explains that to support exploratory behavior in employees, it requires support from a leadership style that develops employees. The leader behavior described in this study is closely related to the theory of empowering leadership
(Chang, 2016)	Leadership style has an important role in building and maintaining ambidexterity in the company	This study clearly states that companies need a constructive leadership style to create ambidexterity within the company. Building leadership style is closely related to the concept of empowering leadership
(Yang, Lee, & Cheng, 2017)	Employee ambidexterity is the process of acquiring existing resources and knowledge to innovate so that it requires the company's ability to provide support and direction for employee development to innovate.	This study explains that it takes support and internal capabilities of the company to provide a means of empowerment for employees to innovate so that empowering leadership is considered as a facilitator of ambidexterity development.
(Cho, Jung, & Linderman, 2017)	Empowerment and continuous improvement (CI) are related to each other concepts in order to build employee learning and innovation skills	This study explains that empowerment is a concept that is closely related to increasing employee innovation, including the process of exploring information

(Ahearne et al., 2005)	Empowering leadership is showing supports decision-making activities by providing autonomy and eliminating bureaucratic constraints for employees so that they are able to explore existing resources in the company.	This study explains that empowering leadership provides employees with a wide range of work to explore resources in the company. This concept is one of the dualism concepts in employee ambidexterity
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DISCUSSION

This study is the first qualitative research that describes in detail the affect of empowering leadership on employee ambidexterity. The results of this study were obtained using a literature review process in previous journals that discussed ambidexterity and the concept of leadership style, namely empowering leadership. This study explains that in creating or improving employee innovation capabilities based on two activities, namely exploration and exploitation, employees need support and direction from a leader in the company to allow and support employees to use existing resources in the company, have autonomy in their own work, and use ideas and capabilities in making decisions. This leadership style is closely related to empowering leadership.

Empowering leadership is a leadership style that has a positive impact on employees because this leadership style emphasizes the leader's ability to create meaning for employees and increase employee participation in being part of the company. Empowering leadership is leadership style that enable employee to be more creative and independent in finding new ideas, methods, or even solutions for their work problems. In this concept, leader tend to believe and give freedom for his employee to explore more ideas by providing well resources in the company. moreover, leader need to provide more information such as establish training regularly, discuss with employee weekly, and even brainstorm with employee from different department. This way will help to improve employee participation. Employee participation in question is the ability of employees to channel their capabilities and abilities to find solutions, ideas, and creativity in working in the company. The high level of employee participation in making creative idea can be known as the identity of employee ambidexterity which means that the organization has good quality of employee ambidexterity.

The result of this study is crucial for all organization to know because it emphasizes that empowering leadership has positive correlation with employee ambidexterity. It means that if leader can adopt the empowering leadership style inside the organization they can easily improve the level of employee ambidexterity. This study also explains that the creativity of employee directly influenced by leader. If the leader can motivate and support employee better to be more creative, then they can put all of their idea and effort to find something unique and innovative.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is ambidexterity is a dualist concept in innovation and creativity that emphasizes two activities, namely exploration and exploitation. Exploration means creating new ideas and solutions or models that did not exist before. At the same time, exploitation is providing innovation based on resources and capabilities as well as existing thinking models. This research is very important because the discussion about employee ambidexterity in scientific research is still very minimal. In addition, the discussion on the concept of ambidexterity can provide a new source of knowledge for organizations or employees in order to create innovation and competitiveness in today's industry.

This study describes that in creating creativity and innovation for employees who are able to combine exploration and exploitation activities in the work process in the company, internal support from the company's work culture is needed. A leader has a very crucial role in ensuring the employee's development process in order to achieve the company's big goals. For this reason, the process of choosing a leadership style is the main thing to pay attention to so that it is able to align with the company's strategy and goals.

This study found that in the process of creating and increasing employee creativity, a work situation and leadership are needed that are able to develop, support, facilitate, open, encourage, and provide power for employees to be able to grow within the company. The concept of this leadership style is closely related to empowering leadership. Empowering leadership is a leadership style that the process of developing employees to be more creative in exploring and learning new things. Therefore, this study concludes that empowering leadership has a positive impact on employee ambidexterity.

LIMITATION

This research is qualitative research with a literature review method. Therefore, there are some limitations on this research. First, this paper has limitation of data because it uses secondary data only from existing scientific journals. For future research we suggest to use quantitative research method to satisfy the result of this research. Second, although the concepts, phenomenon, and discussion have been described well on this research paper, we are not using field research method (e.g. interview method), and thus all of the data was coming from the literature review. Therefore, we suggest the next research to do interview or forum group discussion with employees to collect more data about these research variables. Third, there is limitation of source on this paper since this research explains about leadership and employee ambidexterity that requires real data from both parties. Therefore, we suggest next research to collect data from two sources; leader and employee within the organization to get more informations about explained variables.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

This research does not have any conflict of interest.

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