

Integration of Employee Willingness and Team Learning: The Relationship Between Ambidextrous Leadership and Employee Creativity

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Employee creativity is a crucial capability required by organizations to maintain competitiveness and adaptability in an increasingly dynamic environment. However, the mechanisms explaining how ambidextrous leadership fosters employee creativity require further study, particularly in community-based financial institutions. This study aims to analyze the role of employee willingness and team learning as mediating variables in the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity at Village Credit Institutions (LPD) in Bali.

Design/methodology/approach – This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data were collected from 248 LPDs (Lembaga Perusahaan Daerah Daerah Daerah (LPD) in Bali, involving leaders as respondents, using a purposive sampling procedure. The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0.

Finding/Result - The results showed that ambidextrous leadership significantly increased employee willingness and team learning. Furthermore, employee willingness and team learning were shown to enhance employee creativity and act as mediators in the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity. These findings indicate that employee creativity is not formed directly through leadership practices but rather develops through employees' willingness to contribute and through collective learning processes within the team

Originality/Value – This research contributes to the growing literature on ambidextrous leadership by demonstrating that employee willingness and team learning are important mechanisms linking leadership practices to employee creativity. Practically, the findings suggest that LPD managers should strengthen employee participation and a culture of team learning to enhance organizational creativity and adaptability.

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1. Introduction

The digital era has impacted various business sectors, including financial institutions (Kelty et al., 2021). The Village Credit Institution (LPD) is one of the developing village financial institutions in Bali and the only independent financial institution without government intervention. LPD management is carried out by community-based traditional villages (Desa Pekraman), with a specific function: controlling the economy and finances of traditional villages (Sintaasih et al., 2019). Furthermore, LPDs have been proven to contribute to improving the welfare of village communities and are a national asset in terms of cultural preservation. However, upon closer examination, not all LPDs are managed well. According to data from the Village Credit Institution Empowerment Agency, in 2025, there were 737 unhealthy LPDs out of 1,439 in Bali Province. One of the causes of LPD health problems is internal factors, such as the lack of human resource capacity to analyze the external environment. Efforts are needed to address this issue by enhancing employee creativity (Aristana et al., 2025; Carmeli & Paulus, 2015). Through employee creativity, LPDs can develop their service products (Sintaasih et al., 2019).

To enhance employee creativity, leadership is needed that can encourage and explore the potential of LPD managers. Previous studies have discussed the relationship between leadership and creativity (Yoshida et al., 2014). However, Riana et al. (2020) found different results, where leadership did not significantly enhance creativity. Consistent with the findings of research Aristana et al. (2022), leader support does not determine employee behavior. This is due to the assumption that creativity arises from within employees and is based on initiative. Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate how leadership can enhance creativity, particularly employee creativity.

This study starts from the view that the effectiveness of ambidextrous leadership is not solely determined by its ability to directly generate employee creativity, but by its ability to build psychological and social mechanisms that enable creativity to flourish. Zhang et al. (2022) findings explain that the challenge of leadership lies in understanding cognitive ambivalence, which manifests as psychological tension and uncertainty. Cognitive ambivalence specifically refers to employees' simultaneous experience of holding contradictory and diverse perspectives, emphasizing the coexistence of opposing attitudes and feelings (Wang et al., 2024). Leadership is a primary source of organizational social cues, and leaders play a key role in shaping employees' cognitive interpretations and meaning-making processes (Saeed et al., 2024). Changing leadership styles creates a different atmosphere, which can signal that tasks are inconsistent and contradictory to previous work practices (Zhang et al., 2022). This leads to confusion about leadership intentions, behavioral expectations, and personal actions, which can ultimately hinder creative behavior.

From this perspective, ambidextrous leadership is seen as a mechanism that creates space for participation through a balance between leadership behaviors that encourage exploration and behaviors that maintain organizational coordination (Mayer et al., 2023; Rosing & Zacher, 2023). This environment subsequently increases employee willingness as a form of individual psychological readiness to actively contribute, share ideas, and take initiatives in completing work. This psychological readiness then encourages the development of team learning

through the process of knowledge exchange, joint reflection, providing feedback, and collective learning that enriches individual perspectives in solving various work problems (German & Stenberg, 2025). Thus, creativity is understood as the result of a series of psychological and social processes facilitated by leadership, rather than as a direct consequence of leader behavior (Gemeda & Lee, 2020; Khan et al., 2020).

This perspective becomes increasingly relevant in the context of Village Credit Institutions (LPDs) in Bali, which have distinct institutional characteristics from conventional financial organizations. As community-based financial institutions operating under customary village governance and underpinned by social trust, communal accountability, and shared values, leadership effectiveness in LPDs is determined not only by the leader's ability to direct work but also by their ability to build collective willingness to participate and create a shared learning environment (Sintaasih et al., 2019). Therefore, this study extends the literature on ambidextrous leadership by demonstrating that the relationship between leadership and creativity is more appropriately understood as an indirect leadership process, where creativity emerges through the formation of employee willingness and team learning as a bridging mechanism between leadership's influence on employee creativity.

This condition is relevant to Social Exchange Theory (SET), which states that all forms of human relationships within an organization are based on expectations and reality (Blau, 1964). Blau further stated that individuals can contribute if they obtain what they expect from their environment. Hansen et al. (2013) even describe SET as a causal relationship between the organization and employees in accordance with prevailing norms. Further explanation: SET is important in encouraging creativity because it aligns with the principles of social exchange theory presented by (Gouldner, 1960; Levinson, 2009). SET implies that if employees are treated well by the organization, they can voluntarily explore their creativity (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Employee creativity will be created if a leader is able to motivate their employees (J. Zhang et al., 2019). Good leadership, in addition to shaping employee creativity, will also create employee willingness (Tran, 2023) and good team learning (Yin et al., 2020). Based on SET, it is very possible that when an exchange does not meet expectations, the exchange may stop when all are not benefited (Walumbwa et al., 2005).

The next section of this study presents a literature review, including the formulation of research hypotheses. The third section outlines the research methodology and discussion. The final section contains conclusions and suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1. Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory provides a theoretical foundation for explaining how the relationship between leaders and employees develops through the principle of reciprocity, where individuals are motivated to make greater contributions to the organization when they receive support, trust, appreciation, and opportunities for growth from their leaders (Blau, 1964). However, most previous studies still use SET to explain the direct relationship between leadership and employee behavior, including creativity, thus failing to explain the underlying mechanisms by which leadership behavior can generate individual creativity (Gouldner, 1960; Levinson, 2009). Departing from these limitations, this study expands the application of SET

by proposing that the effectiveness of ambidextrous leadership does not directly generate creativity, but rather first builds employee willingness as a form of individual psychological readiness to contribute, which then develops into team learning through a process of knowledge exchange, shared reflection, and collective learning before finally generating individual creativity (Tran, 2023). Thus, creativity is positioned as the ultimate consequence of the social exchange process that develops from the relationship between leaders and employees to the exchange of knowledge between employees. This perspective also fills the gap in previous research that still shows inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and creativity and has not integrated the role of employee willingness and team learning in a single conceptual mechanism (Hensel & Visser, 2018; Hu et al., 2017; Nielsen & Daniels, 2012; Vandavasi et al., 2020). Furthermore, this study places the Village Credit Institution (LPD) in Bali as an institutional context that enriches theory development because, as a community-based organization supported by traditional village governance, social trust, and communal accountability, leadership effectiveness is more likely to be realized through the formation of individual willingness to contribute and collective learning processes rather than through the direct influence of leaders on creativity (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Therefore, this study not only offers the integration of several constructs in one model, but also extends the explanatory power of Social Exchange Theory by showing that the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and creativity is more appropriately understood as an indirect leadership process mediated by psychological and social mechanisms in organizations (Yin et al., 2020).

2.2. Employee Creativity

Employee creativity has become a crucial topic in organizational behavior studies due to its role in driving innovation and improving organizational performance. Numerous studies define creativity as cognitive and behavioral processes that enable individuals to generate novel ideas, thoughts, or approaches to work (Hughes et al., 2018; Minh-Duc & Huu-Lam, 2019; X. Zhang, 2010). Recent literature suggests that creativity is viewed not only as the ability to generate ideas but also as behavior that transcends established work practices and patterns within an organizational system (Liu et al., 2020). Creativity is oriented towards the creation, development, and implementation of new, relevant ideas to support work processes, strategies, and organizational coordination mechanisms (Khessina et al., 2018; Tse et al., 2018). Therefore, employee creativity is reflected in an individual's ability to recognize opportunities, identify problems, seek and process relevant information, evaluate various alternatives, and formulate effective solutions to work challenges (Cheung & Wong, 2011; Matsuo, 2022). Furthermore, creativity is also associated with the ability to produce something new and valuable for the organization, whether in the form of ideas, work methods, or approaches that have not been previously implemented (Suifan et al., 2018). In line with this view, (Da Costa et al., 2015) emphasized that creativity reflects the level of novelty manifested through the development or implementation of processes and products in a way that differs from previously existing practices.

2.3. Ambidextrous Leadership

Ambidextrous leadership is a leader's ability to manage two distinct but complementary orientations: exploration and exploitation. The ability to combine these two orientations is becoming increasingly important in a dynamic and uncertain business environment, where

organizations are required to innovate without compromising operational effectiveness (Hansen et al., 2013; Tran, 2023). In practice, ambidextrous leadership plays a role in aligning exploratory and exploitative activities so that organizations can respond adaptively to environmental changes while maintaining sustainable performance. This role is not only related to strategic decision-making but also encompasses the management of knowledge, work routines, and organizational processes that support the achievement of long-term goals (Hadi, 2026). In an increasingly complex competitive context, the ability to maintain a balance between exploration and exploitation is crucial for organizational sustainability (Nguyen-Van et al., 2025). This is particularly relevant for organizations undergoing business model transformation, as the change process requires the ability to generate new innovations while simultaneously increasing the efficiency of existing systems (Hadi, 2026). Therefore, ambidextrous leadership can be viewed as a leadership approach capable of creating a work environment that supports continuous renewal, encourages the emergence of innovative ideas, and ensures optimal utilization of organizational resources.

2.4. Employee Willingness

Employee willingness describes the level of employee readiness and willingness to actively engage in work activities, collaborate with colleagues, and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals (Stergiou & Farmaki, 2021). This concept not only reflects an individual's willingness to carry out assigned tasks but also demonstrates the drive to voluntarily participate in various activities that can enhance organizational effectiveness (Paluch et al., 2022). Members' willingness to share roles, responsibilities, and resources is a crucial factor in improving the quality of collaboration, team effectiveness, and the team's ability to generate creativity (Ahn & Chen, 2022). Organizational behavior studies show that employee willingness is influenced by various factors originating from both the individual and the work environment (Aristana et al., 2024). Factors such as leadership quality, reward systems, social relationships between employees, levels of job satisfaction, and alignment between individual and organizational goals play a role in shaping employees' willingness to make greater contributions to the organization. Furthermore, (Meyer et al., 2021) identified willingness as a crucial aspect of work commitment, encouraging individuals to maintain their involvement and dedication to the organization.

2.5. Team Learning

Team learning is a collective process involving the collaborative creation, exchange, integration, and renewal of knowledge to generate change, adaptation, and innovation at the individual, team, and organizational levels (Bode et al., 2023; Tian & Gai, 2024). This process is understood as a dynamic phenomenon that develops throughout the team's life cycle and includes knowledge sharing, building shared understanding, constructive conflict management, and reflection on work experiences to enhance learning effectiveness (Hou et al., 2024). Team learning also involves seeking information and feedback from the external environment (boundary crossing) as well as internal learning through discussion, experimentation, idea development, and collaborative evaluation of work results (Messmann, 2023). For this process to be effective, teams require reflexivity to plan, monitor, and evaluate learning activities based on mutually agreed-upon goals (Jusoh et al., 2011; Lwande et al., 2021). However, the effectiveness of team learning is influenced by the team's ability to balance internal and external learning, as too little or too much reflection can hinder the learning process and team performance (Baldassarre et al., 2017; Bode et al., 2023). Therefore, team learning can be seen as an important mechanism that allows team members to develop shared

knowledge, increase adaptability, and generate innovative solutions to address changing organizational challenges.

2.6. Hypothesis Development

2.6.1. The Effect of Ambidextrous Leadership on Employee Creativity

Ambidextrous leadership describes a leader's ability to balance exploration- and exploitation-oriented behaviors according to the demands of a dynamic organizational environment (Rosing et al., 2011). Exploratory behaviors enable employees to explore new opportunities, experiment, and develop innovative ideas, while exploitative behaviors help ensure that these ideas can be effectively implemented through the purposeful management of resources and work processes. The combination of these two behaviors creates the balance between flexibility and control necessary to support continuous innovation. Creativity thrives when individuals receive environmental support that encourages the exploration of ideas while providing structures that support their implementation. Ambidextrous leadership can create a work environment that fosters the exchange of knowledge, experimentation, and learning that feed the emergence of creative ideas. Previous research has shown that leadership behaviors that support a balance of exploration and exploitation contribute to increased individual and organizational creativity (Hughes et al., 2023; Messmann, 2023; Rosing & Zacher, 2023). Based on this empirical evidence, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on employee creativity.

2.6.2. The Influence of Ambidextrous Leadership on Team Learning

Team learning is a collective process involving knowledge sharing, reflection, experimentation, and building shared understanding to improve the team's ability to complete tasks and navigate change (Knevelsrud et al., 2025; Rijal, 2016). The effectiveness of this process is strongly influenced by the work environment and leadership behaviors that facilitate open communication and collaboration among team members. Ambidextrous leadership enables leaders to encourage team members to explore new knowledge while leveraging existing experience and knowledge. Through exploratory behavior, leaders encourage learning, experimentation, and the search for new solutions, while through exploitative behavior, leaders ensure that acquired knowledge is integrated into teamwork practices. Thus, ambidextrous leadership creates conditions that support continuous collective learning (Bode et al., 2023; Hou et al., 2024; Rosing & Zacher, 2023). Based on this empirical data, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on team learning.

2.6.3. The Effect of Ambidextrous Leadership on Employee Willingness

Employee willingness reflects employees' willingness to actively engage, collaborate, and contribute to achieving organizational goals (Haider et al., 2023; L. Wang et al., 2022). This level of willingness is influenced by employees' perceptions of organizational support, interpersonal relationships, and the quality of leadership they receive. Ambidextrous leadership provides team members with opportunities to participate in decision-making, share responsibilities, and contribute to problem-solving. This environment increases self-confidence, engagement, and a sense of ownership in the work they do (Aristana et al., 2024). Previous research has shown that when team members are given the space to contribute and receive support from their leaders, they tend to demonstrate a higher level of willingness to engage in team and organizational activities (Ajmal et al., 2025; Cheng, 2024; Nguyen-Van et al., 2025). Based on this empirical evidence, the third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: Ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on employee willingness.

2.6.4. The Influence of Employee Willingness on Employee Creativity

Employee creativity requires active individual involvement in identifying problems, exploring alternative solutions, and developing new ideas that are valuable to the organization. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, individuals with high willpower and internal motivation tend to be more proactive in seeking opportunities for improvement and generating innovation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Employees with high willingness not only carry out their formal duties but are also willing to make additional contributions through sharing knowledge, conveying ideas, and engaging in collaborative activities (Gong et al., 2012). These behaviors increase the likelihood of generating creative ideas that can support the achievement of organizational goals. Empirical findings indicate that an individual's willingness to actively participate and contribute is positively related to creativity and innovation in an organization (González-González & García-Almeida, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2021; Matsuo, 2022). Based on this empirical evidence, the fourth hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H4: Employee willingness has a positive effect on employee creativity.

2.6.5. The Effect of Team Learning on Employee Creativity

Team learning enables team members to acquire new knowledge, integrate diverse perspectives, and develop a shared understanding of the problems they face. Through discussion, reflection, experimentation, and joint evaluation, team members can enrich their insights, which form the basis for generating creative ideas (Mehmood et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2022). The collective knowledge formed through team learning provides members with the opportunity to develop more innovative solutions than working individually. Previous research has shown that team learning positively contributes to creativity because it allows for the integration of diverse knowledge and experiences in the problem-solving process (Ajmal et al., 2025; Qian & Kee, 2023). Based on this empirical evidence, the sixth hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H5: Team learning has a positive effect on employee creativity.

2.6.6. The Mediating Role of Employee Willingness

The influence of leadership on creativity is not always direct but can occur through psychological mechanisms that encourage individual engagement in work. One such mechanism is employee willingness. Ambidextrous leadership creates an environment that encourages participation, empowerment, and engagement of team members, thereby increasing employees' willingness to contribute (Lin, 2025). When employees are highly willing to engage in organizational activities, they are more likely to actively share ideas, seek solutions, and support innovation processes. Thus, employee willingness serves as a pathway that explains how ambidextrous leadership translates into employee creative behavior (Engida et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2025). Based on this empirical evidence, the fifth hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H6: Employee willingness mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity.

2.6.7. The Mediating Role of Team Learning

Ambidextrous leadership plays a role in creating a work environment that supports the exploration of ideas, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among team members (Y. Wang et al., 2022). These conditions encourage effective team learning processes through shared reflection, experimentation, and collective solution-finding (Kaur Bagga et al., 2023). Through team learning, members' acquired knowledge can be integrated into a shared understanding that supports the development of new ideas. Therefore, team learning serves as a mechanism

explaining how ambidextrous leadership can enhance employee creativity. Previous research also indicates that team learning is an important mediator in the relationship between leadership and team innovation (Han et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023). Based on this empirical evidence, the seventh hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H7: Team learning mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity.

3. Methodology

3.1. Population and Sample

This research was conducted at Village Credit Institutions (LPD) in Bali. Currently, there are 1,439 LPDs, and based on reports from the LPD Empowerment Institution, 737 units were declared unhealthy. This study involved 702 LPDs categorized as healthy. The use of LPDs in the healthy category as the unit of analysis. This selection was made purposively because the primary objective of the study was not to compare the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy LPDs, but rather to explain the mechanisms linking ambidextrous leadership, employee willingness, team learning, and employee creativity. Healthy LPDs are seen as a more representative organizational context for observing how leadership practices, employee participation, and collective learning processes occur effectively. Therefore, this study adopts a best practice approach to identify organizational mechanisms that support creativity. However, the research findings are not intended to imply that all LPDs have the same characteristics, but rather to provide a conceptual and empirical basis that can be used as a reference in designing strategies to strengthen leadership and organizational learning in LPDs that still face various business health issues.

The sample size was determined using the formula (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), resulting in a total of 248 randomly selected LPD units. The respondents were LPD leaders. This study used LPD leaders as key informants because they are responsible for managing operational activities, coordinating employees, facilitating organizational learning processes, and evaluating employee performance and contributions to achieving organizational goals. With this position, leaders are considered to have a comprehensive understanding of ambidextrous leadership practices, employee willingness, team learning processes, and employee creative behavior. However, using a single group of respondents as a source of information for all constructs has the potential to create common method bias, especially since perceptions of leadership originate from individuals who also carry out that role. Therefore, to address CMB, the collected data were analyzed using the Harman's Single Factor Test approach. This approach has a requirement for Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (% of Variance < 50%). Based on the analysis, the % of Variance value was 43%, meaning the collected data were free from CMB (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, the CMB in this study was assessed as having full collinearity VIF, which is shown in Table 3, where all indicator VIF values are below 3 (Hair et al., 2019). However, the use of a single data source is still recognized as one of the limitations of this study, so the results need to be interpreted carefully. Furthermore, LPDs must submit reports to the LPLPD to ensure their health. Therefore, strong reporting skills are required. Information related to respondent demographics can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Characteristics	N	Percent
Gender		
Male	207	83.47
Female	41	16.53
Age (in years)		
≤ 20	5	2.02
21 - 30	15	6.05
31 - 40	75	30.24
41 - 50	59	23.79
> 50	94	37.90
Education		
High School	180	72.58
Diploma	24	9.68
Bachelor's Degree	44	17.74
Length of Management (in years)		
1-5	5	2.02
6-10	93	37.50
>15	150	60.48

Sources: author calculation

Research data collection was conducted using a questionnaire provided in the form of Google Forms and manual questionnaires distributed during visits to LPDs involved in this study. This study was conducted from August to November 2025 with data collection carried out in stages. The first stage, data was collected from 35 respondents to be tested using IBM SPSS 21. The instrument test provisions used validity and reliability tests. The instrument is declared valid if it has a calculated r value greater than 0.3 (calculated $r > 0.3$) and reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.6 ($CA > 0.6$). After the data is declared to meet the instrument test criteria, data collection continues by distributing questionnaires according to the targeted number and then analyzed using Smart PLS 3.2.9.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Result

4.1.1 Descriptive Analysis

The analysis began by examining the data to ensure it was normally distributed. The criteria for testing normality were kurtosis (ranging from -7 to 7) and skewness (ranging from -2 to 2) (Hair et al., 2019). The results of the normality test are shown in Table 2. The analysis showed that all indicators used were found to have good normality, meeting the threshold values for kurtosis and skewness.

Table 2. Descriptive Normality Statistics

Construct	Indicator	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
Ambidextro us	X1.1	4.528	2	5	0.546	1.472	-0.862
	X1.2	4.637	4	5	0.481	-1.684	-0.574
Leadership (X1)	X1.3	4.524	3	5	0.515	-1.510	-0.275
	X1.4	4.512	3	5	0.546	-0.890	-0.497

	X1.5	4.492	3	5	0.531	-1.222	-0.292
	X1.6	4.492	3	5	0.516	-1.565	-0.145
Employee	Y1.1	4.31	3	5	0.528	-0.691	0.144
Willingness	Y1.2	4.298	2	5	0.553	1.952	-0.444
(Y1)	Y1.3	4.371	3	5	0.491	-1.553	0.435
	Y1.4	4.306	2	5	0.605	1.164	-0.597
	Y1.5	4.323	3	5	0.554	-0.665	-0.049
	Y1.6	4.464	3	5	0.515	-1.580	-0.032
Team	Y2.1	4.214	3	5	0.515	-0.030	0.252
Learning	Y2.2	4.298	3	5	0.483	-0.886	0.559
(Y2)	Y2.3	4.165	3	5	0.540	0.082	0.105
	Y2.4	4.492	3	5	0.516	-1.565	-0.145
	Y2.5	4.286	3	5	0.486	-0.718	0.521
	Y2.6	4.403	3	5	0.522	-1.247	0.053
Employee	Y3.1	4.25	3	5	0.469	-0.366	0.679
Creativity	Y3.2	4.202	3	5	0.500	0.132	0.342
(Y3)	Y3.3	4.327	3	5	0.494	-1.076	0.438
	Y3.4	4.294	3	5	0.514	-0.637	0.264
	Y3.5	4.282	3	5	0.476	-0.751	0.631

Sources: Author Calculation

4.1.2 Outer Model Measurement

The first stage in PLS-based structural equation model analysis is measuring the data quality of each construct used. This measurement has criteria that must be met to proceed with the previous analysis. The criteria are: first, convergent validity, with an outer loading (OL) value greater than 0.6 ($OL > 0.6$). Second, discriminant validity is examined by looking at the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value with the provision that it is less than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2019). Third, composite reliability of the construct is determined by ensuring the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha values are considered reliable if the values are greater than 0.7 (CR and $CA > 0.7$). Fourth, multicollinearity is analyzed by examining the VIF value, and it is considered free of multicollinearity if the value is less than 5 ($VIF < 5$). The results of the outer model measurement analysis can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Construct Validity and Reliability

Variable	Code	Item	Outer Loading	VIF	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Ambidextrous Leadership (X1)	X1.1	Provide space for employees to try new methods	0.683	1.697	0.863	0.866	0.898	0.595
	X1.2	Encourage open discussions as a learning process	0.725	1.856				
	X1.3	Facilitate exploration of technology use	0.811	2.281				
	X1.4	Set operational targets without error	0.810	2.477				
	X1.5	Enforce clear work rules	0.823	2.585				
	X1.6	Consistently evaluate performance	0.768	1.873				
Sources: (Rosing et al., 2011; K. Zhang et al., 2025)								
	Y1.1	Employees take initiative in carrying out their work.	0.842	2.689	0.903	0.903	0.925	0.673

Employee Willingness (Y1)	Y1.2	Employees have flexibility in their work.	0.836	2.481				
	Y1.3	Employees are highly dedicated to their work.	0.813	2.260				
	Y1.4	Employees have strong advocacy skills.	0.810	2.315				
	Y1.5	Employees are enthusiastic about their work.	0.815	2.137				
	Y1.6	Employees can demonstrate good self-identification.	0.807	2.069				
Sources: (Getha-Taylor & Haddock-Bigwarfe, 2014; Lin, 2025)								
Team Learning (Y2)	Y2.1	The work team is able to utilize company facilities and support.	0.755	1.859	0.841	0.849	0.884	0.560
	Y2.2	The work team exchanges information while working.	0.797	1.952				
	Y2.3	The work team collaborates to complete work.	0.721	1.879				
	Y2.4	The work team communicates effectively while working.	0.624	1.426				
	Y2.5	The work team has trust in its work.	0.815	1.998				
	Y2.6	The work team conducts joint evaluations of work completion.	0.763	1.654				
Sources: (Bode et al., 2023; Qian & Kee, 2023)								
Employee Creativity (Y3)	Y3.1	Suggesting new ways to achieve goals	0.810	2.013	0.835	0.841	0.883	0.603
	Y3.2	Generating new ideas	0.801	1.873				
	Y3.3	Searching for technologies, processes, techniques, and products	0.781	1.831				
	Y3.4	Suggesting new ways to improve quality	0.716	1.812				
	Y3.5	Sourcing creative ideas	0.769	2.002				
Sources: (Aristana et al., 2025; Riana et al., 2020)								

Sources: Author Calculation

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

Variabel	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)			
	EW	AL	EC	AL
Employee Willingness				
Ambidextrous Leadership	0.720			
Employee Creativity	0.846	0.647		
Team Learning	0.798	0.669	0.869	

Sources: Author Calculation

The analysis results show that all OL values are greater than 0.6, indicating a good correlation between the indicators and the research constructs. Discriminant validity is based on the results of the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test, which is less than 0.9 (Table 4), indicating that the construct-forming indicators have no correlation. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability show values greater than 0.6. Thus, all constructs are free from random error and can proceed to the next testing stage (Hair et al., 2019).

4.1.3 Inner Model Measurement

The structural model was evaluated through testing the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, and direct and indirect effects between variables. The analysis showed an R^2 value for the Employee Willingness variable of 0.409, indicating that Ambidextrous Leadership explains 40.9% of the variation in Employee Willingness. Furthermore, the R^2 value for Team Learning of 0.332 indicates that 33.2% of the variation in Team Learning can be explained by Ambidextrous Leadership. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for Employee Creativity of 0.674 indicates that the combination of Ambidextrous Leadership, Employee Willingness, and Team Learning explains 67.4% of the variation in employee creativity (Hair et al., 2019). These values indicate that the research model has quite strong predictive power in explaining employee creativity (See Table 5).

Table 5. Research Model Feasibility

Variabel	R^2	R^2 Adjusted
Employee Willingness	0.409	0.407
Employee Creativity	0.674	0.670
Team Learning	0.332	0.329
Average	0.472	0.469

Sources: Author Calculation

Effect size testing was conducted to evaluate the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous construct in the structural model (see Table 5). Based on the analysis results, Ambidextrous Leadership has a significant influence on Employee Willingness with an f^2 value of 0.693. This finding indicates that the presence of ambidextrous leadership provides a substantial contribution in increasing employee willingness to participate, collaborate, and contribute to the organization. In other words, changes in Ambidextrous Leadership will have a significant impact on the level of Employee Willingness.

Table 6. Effect Size

Variables	Employee Willingness	Ambidextrous leadership	Employee Creativity	Team Learning
Employee Willingness			0.169	
Ambidextrous leadership	0.693		0.002	0.497
Employee Creativity				
Team Learning			0.372	

Sources: Author Calculation

Ambidextrous Leadership also showed a significant influence on Team Learning with an f^2 value of 0.497. These results indicate that a leader's ability to balance exploratory and exploitative behavior plays a significant role in encouraging collective learning, knowledge exchange, and competency development within the team. For the Employee Creativity variable, Team Learning had the greatest influence with an f^2 value of 0.372, which is considered high. These findings indicate that the team learning process is a dominant factor in enhancing employee creativity. Through knowledge sharing, reflection, discussion, and joint experimentation, team members gain new insights that encourage the emergence of creative ideas and innovative solutions. Furthermore, Employee Willingness had a moderate

influence on Employee Creativity with an f^2 value of 0.169. These results indicate that employee willingness to be actively involved in work and contribute to organizational activities contributes significantly to increasing employee creativity. Conversely, Ambidextrous Leadership only showed a very small influence on Employee Creativity with an f^2 value of 0.002. This value is well below the minimum threshold of 0.02, indicating that the direct contribution of ambidextrous leadership to employee creativity is relatively insignificant. This finding indicates that the influence of ambidextrous leadership on creativity is channeled more through indirect mechanisms, particularly through increased employee willingness and team learning. Calculations were also performed on the quadratic predictive relevance (Q^2) to predict the research framework. According to Stone (1974), the predictive value is stronger if the value is closer to 1. The calculation results show a Q^2 value of 0.847. Thus, it can be concluded that the research framework has excellent observational capabilities.

Table 7. Relationship between variables

Relationship	β	Mean	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values
Direct Effects					
Ambidextrous leadership-> Employee Creativity	0.038	0.04	0.05	0.762	0.223
Ambidextrous leadership-> Team Learning	0.576	0.583	0.042	13.701	0.000
Ambidextrous leadership-> Employee Willingness	0.64	0.643	0.034	18.69	0.000
Employee Willingness -> Employee Creativity	0.359	0.359	0.059	6.134	0.000
Team Learning -> Employee Creativity	0.502	0.505	0.054	9.315	0.000
Indirect Effects					
Ambidextrous leadership-> Employee Willingness -> Employee Creativity	0.23	0.23	0.038	6.049	0.000
Ambidextrous leadership-> Team Learning -> Employee Creativity	0.289	0.294	0.036	7.992	0.000

Sources: Author Calculation

The results of the direct effect test show that Ambidextrous Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Willingness ($\beta = 0.640$; $t = 18.690$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that the higher the leader's ability to balance exploratory and exploitative behavior, the higher the employee's willingness to engage and contribute to organizational activities. In addition, Ambidextrous Leadership also has a positive and significant effect on Team Learning ($\beta = 0.576$; $t = 13.701$; $p < 0.001$), which indicates that flexible leadership is able to create an environment that supports collective learning processes and knowledge exchange between team members. Employee Willingness is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Employee Creativity ($\beta = 0.359$; $t = 6.134$; $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that employees who have a high willingness to participate, collaborate, and contribute tend to produce more creative ideas in carrying out their work. Similarly, Team Learning had a positive and significant effect on Employee Creativity ($\beta = 0.502$; $t = 9.315$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that a learning process involving knowledge sharing, reflection, and collaborative discussion can improve employees' ability to generate innovative solutions and ideas. Contrary to previous results, the direct effect of Ambidextrous Leadership on Employee Creativity was

not significant ($\beta = 0.038$; $t = 0.762$; $p = 0.223$). This result suggests that ambidextrous leadership does not directly increase employee creativity but rather requires a specific mechanism to mediate the relationship.

Testing for the mediation effect showed that Employee Willingness significantly mediated the relationship between Ambidextrous Leadership and Employee Creativity ($\beta = 0.230$; $t = 6.049$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Team Learning was also shown to significantly mediate the relationship between Ambidextrous Leadership and Employee Creativity ($\beta = 0.289$; $t = 7.992$; $p < 0.001$). Since the direct effect of Ambidextrous Leadership on Employee Creativity was insignificant, while both mediation paths were significant, Employee Willingness and Team Learning can be categorized as full mediators. This finding indicates that the influence of ambidextrous leadership on employee creativity is fully channeled through increasing employee willingness to contribute and strengthening the learning process within the team.

4.2. Discussion

This research provides a deeper understanding of how ambidextrous leadership influences employee creativity through behavioral and learning mechanisms that develop within teams. The most important finding of this study is not that ambidextrous leadership is related to employee creativity, but rather that the relationship is not direct. These results suggest that leadership effectiveness in the context of LPDs is not simply understood as a leader's ability to generate creativity through direction or decision-making. Rather, creativity develops through a more complex process, in which leadership first establishes psychological and social conditions that enable employees to participate, learn together, and develop creative solutions. Thus, this research shifts the understanding of ambidextrous leadership effectiveness from the perspective of direct influence to the perspective of indirect leadership effectiveness, namely the leader's ability to create an environment that allows creativity to flourish.

This characteristic becomes even more relevant in the context of LPDs, community-based financial institutions operating under traditional village governance and strong social ties. In such an environment, creativity does not emerge solely from leadership instructions but develops through interactions between employees, the exchange of experiences, and collective reflection in resolving various community service issues. Therefore, leadership effectiveness is more appropriately understood as the ability to build participatory processes rather than directly directing creativity. These findings expand the existing literature on ambidextrous leadership, which has focused primarily on a leader's ability to balance exploration and exploitation to achieve organizational innovation (Rosing & Zacher, 2023). The results indicate that this balance does not automatically generate creativity at the individual level. Instead, leaders must first create an environment that encourages team member engagement and a collective learning process, allowing creative ideas to develop sustainably (Hughes et al., 2018). These findings indicate that the relationship between leadership and creativity is indirect and requires intermediary mechanisms that enable individual knowledge, experience, and motivation to be transformed into creative behavior (Dirani et al., 2020).

In the context of Village Credit Institutions (LPD), employee creativity is determined not only by individual abilities but also by organizational characteristics based on values of togetherness and social responsibility. Managing public funds, providing customer service, and resolving various operational issues require intensive coordination between employees.

Therefore, Employee Willingness is a factor that encourages the active participation of each individual, while Team Learning enables operational experience to be processed into collective knowledge that supports the emergence of service innovation and decision-making. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of Ambidextrous Leadership in LPDs depends more on its ability to build organizational learning capacity than simply directing individual behavior. Therefore, ambidextrous leadership requires employee willingness as an initial psychological response to the practice of ambidextrous leadership. When leaders provide space for exploration while maintaining organizational coordination, employees tend to feel trusted, valued, and have the opportunity to contribute. This situation increases individual readiness to actively engage in work. However, research findings indicate that this psychological readiness is insufficient to generate creativity without a collaborative learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research findings indicate that team learning contributes more than employee willingness in explaining employee creativity (Aristana et al., 2025) and (Zenk et al., 2021). This difference indicates that individual willingness to contribute is a necessary prerequisite, but not sufficient, to produce creative behavior (Lucas & Mai, 2022; Yang & Yang, 2020). Creativity only develops when this willingness is transformed into a collective learning process through knowledge exchange, discussion, reflection, and collaborative problem-solving. Thus, employee willingness serves as a mechanism that prepares individuals to participate, while team learning becomes a mechanism that transforms this participation into collective knowledge that gives birth to creativity (Kelly et al., 2023; Renzl, 2008).

From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, these results suggest that employees' initial response to leadership behavior is not creativity, but rather a willingness to reciprocate the support received through increased work participation (Arici & Gok, 2023). This social exchange process then develops at the group level through team learning activities, as team members share knowledge, provide feedback, and build shared understanding (Hadi, 2026; K. Zhang et al., 2025). Creativity ultimately emerges as the end result of this series of social exchange processes, rather than as a direct response to leader behavior (Y. Wang et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2025). Therefore, this study extends the literature on ambidextrous leadership by demonstrating that leadership effectiveness is not primarily determined by its ability to directly generate creativity, but by its ability to build individual psychological readiness and collective learning capacity that enable creativity to flourish (Engida et al., 2022; Lin, 2025). In the context of community-based organizations such as LPDs, leadership plays a more facilitative role in social processes than as a direct driver of creativity. These findings reinforce the view that creativity in organizations supported by social capital and collective relationships is shaped more through participation, shared learning, and knowledge exchange than through top-down leadership direction.

Theoretically, this study extends the literature on ambidextrous leadership by shifting the understanding of leadership effectiveness from a direct influence perspective to an indirect leadership effectiveness perspective. Unlike most previous studies that position ambidextrous leadership as a direct determinant of creativity, this study shows that creativity does not develop automatically through leadership behavior, but rather through a gradual social exchange process. In this process, employee willingness acts as a psychological mechanism

that builds individual readiness to participate and contribute, while team learning functions as a social mechanism that transforms this participation into collective learning through knowledge exchange, shared reflection, and collaborative problem-solving (Lin, 2025; Qian & Kee, 2023; Zhu et al., 2022). The finding that team learning plays a stronger role than employee willingness suggests that creativity in community-based organizations depends more on the team's ability to manage shared knowledge than on individual motivation alone. Thus, this study not only explains how leadership is related to creativity but also explains why this relationship occurs through complementary psychological and social mechanisms (Ahn & Chen, 2022; Rizq & Parveen, 2025; Tian & Gai, 2024; Van Hoang et al., 2025). Furthermore, using the context of LPDs in Bali, this study extends the application of Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating that in organizations built on social trust, communal accountability, and traditional village-based governance, creativity is more accurately understood as the result of a social exchange process that evolves from leader-employee relationships to collective learning among employees.

Practically, the findings of this study indicate that increasing employee creativity is not solely achieved through developing leaders' capacity to balance exploratory and exploitative behaviors. Leaders need to act as facilitators, fostering a participatory work environment that encourages employees to actively contribute and engage in collaborative learning (Hadi, 2026; K. Zhang et al., 2025). For LPDs, these efforts can be realized through increasing employee participation in decision-making, organizing knowledge-sharing forums, conducting regular team reflections, learning from operational experiences, and strengthening a work culture that supports collaboration and experimentation. By strengthening employee willingness and, in particular, team learning, organizations not only increase opportunities for individual creativity but also build a more adaptive collective capacity to address environmental changes and maintain sustainable organizational performance.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study aims to explain the mechanisms linking ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity through employee willingness and team learning at LPDs in Bali. The findings suggest that the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee creativity is best understood as an indirect one. Leadership practices that balance exploratory and exploitative behaviors are associated with increased employee willingness, a form of individual psychological readiness to participate, and team learning, a collective learning process that enables knowledge exchange, shared reflection, and collaborative problem-solving. Both mechanisms explain how creativity develops in organizations, so that creativity is not solely influenced by leadership behavior, but by the psychological and social processes built within the work environment. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the literature on ambidextrous leadership and Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating that leadership effectiveness lies not primarily in its ability to directly generate creativity, but rather in its ability to build conditions that enable creativity to flourish. Within the framework of Social Exchange Theory, leadership behavior is understood as a form of social investment that first encourages individual readiness to contribute, then develops into collective learning through

interactions between employees before finally being related to the emergence of creativity. The finding that team learning plays a stronger role than employee willingness suggests that creativity in community-based organizations depends more on the team's ability to manage and integrate shared knowledge than on individual motivation alone. From a practical perspective, the research findings suggest that LPD management should not focus solely on developing leadership capacity but also on strengthening work systems that encourage active employee participation and collective learning. LPD leaders should act as facilitators, creating spaces for knowledge exchange, collective reflection, open communication, and employee involvement in decision-making. This approach is expected to strengthen the organization's ability to generate creative solutions while supporting the sustainability of services to indigenous village communities. Therefore, this research confirms that in community-based organizations such as LPDs, the effectiveness of ambidextrous leadership is more appropriately understood as the ability to build psychological and social mechanisms that enable creativity to flourish, rather than as a direct driver of employee creativity.

6. Research Limitations and Future Research

This study provides insight into the mechanisms linking ambidextrous leadership, employee willingness, team learning, and employee creativity LPDs. However, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, this study used a cross-sectional design, so the relationships between variables were only observed during a single observation period. Therefore, the findings are more appropriately interpreted as relationships consistent with the theoretical framework rather than as evidence of causality. Future research could consider using a longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of changes in leadership behavior, the development of team learning processes, and the formation of employee creativity over time. Second, all research constructs were measured using the perceptions of LPD leaders as key informants. Although leaders have a comprehensive understanding of leadership practices, employee engagement, and organizational learning processes, using a single data source still has the potential to introduce common method bias. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a multi-source approach, for example by combining the perceptions of leaders, employees, and organizational performance indicators, so that the mechanisms of relationships between variables can be tested more objectively.

Third, this study was specifically conducted on LPDs in the healthy category. The purpose of this context selection was to identify organizational mechanisms that support the development of creativity through a best practice approach. However, the research findings do not directly describe the condition of LPDs facing organizational health issues. Future research could compare healthy and unhealthy LPDs to gain a deeper understanding of how the effectiveness of ambidextrous leadership develops in different organizational settings. Fourth, the characteristics of LPDs as community-based financial institutions operating within a system of traditional village governance, social trust, and communal accountability make this research context different from business organizations in general. Therefore, generalizing the findings to other sectors requires caution. Future research could test the same model in the banking sector, cooperatives, microfinance institutions, and other service organizations to assess the

consistency of the mechanisms identified in this study. In addition to broadening the research context, future research could also develop a conceptual model by considering contextual factors that potentially influence the effectiveness of ambidextrous leadership, such as environmental turbulence, digital transformation, or organizational cultural characteristics. This development is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions that strengthen or weaken the psychological and social mechanisms that bridge the relationship between leadership and employee creativity.

Statement about AI and AI-assisted technology in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT for discussions. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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