

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The nexus of leadership, well-being, and creativity: A mediated-moderated model of ambidextrous leadership's influence on employee creative behavior

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Keywords

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Received: 25 May 2024**Accepted:** 09 September 2024**Published:** 23 December 2024**Abstract**

To make strategic decisions and foster employee competency in the modern work environment, this necessitates an appropriate leadership strategy. The aim of the study is to investigate how Ambidextrous Leadership (AL) influences Organizational Engagement (OE) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS), both of which in turn encourage employee creative behavior. Additionally, the study examines at how wellbeing might enhance creative work practices. A structured questionnaire survey was used to gather data from 3320 IT sector employees working in different technology-related companies in Athens, Greece. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyze the data at a 95% confidence level. The study employed a descriptive research design and the convenience sampling technique for data collection. The results indicate that AL significantly and favorably influences employee creative behavior. Also, perceived organizational support mediating relationship among ambidextrous leadership significantly and favorably influences on employee creative behavior. Furthermore, organizational engagement mediating relationship among ambidextrous leadership significantly and favorably influences on employee creative behavior. However, employee well-being moderates the relationships between perceived organizational support, organizational engagement and employee creative behavior. The study will assist organizations in comprehending how wellness, OE, POS, and AL contribute to IT employees increased capacity for creative activity. By aiming to link the notions of leadership with POS, OE, well-being, and creative work behavior something that has rarely been done in the Athens, Greece context, this study adds to the body of literature on leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

In the present day, creativity is regarded as a growing area of study that helps businesses create environments that can adapt to changing conditions (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). "Ideas are the currency of the new economy," according to Jain (2024). Businesses found themselves in the modern economy, which is largely driven by innovation and creativity, fifteen years after this statement was made. Businesses now must deal with the reality of uncertainty in the business world, which has led them to recognize the value and necessity of innovation in their workplace to adapt to unforeseen changes. Because of this, businesses are increas-

ingly seeking methods to encourage innovative behavior in their staff members, which supports operations effectiveness (Amabile & Mueller, 2024). Fostering Employee Creative Behavior (ECB) is considered a necessary precondition for innovation in organizations (Zulfikar, Khan, & Huo, 2023), and it is one of the key instruments that may give businesses a competitive edge in turbulent times (Aldabbas, Pinnington, & Lahrech, 2023; Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). According to Amabile and Mueller (2024) creative and innovative organizations depend heavily on leadership to survive and grow. But since one leadership style is insufficient to guarantee creativity, the conventional models of leadership

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are insufficient to explain the intricacies of innovation processes (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024).

It has been suggested that fostering innovation requires strong leadership. Liu, Zhu, Liu, and Fu (2020) argued that little is still known about what actions leaders may take to affect the creation, dissemination, and application of ideas. Yasmeen and Ajmal (2024) propose the ambidexterity theory of leadership for innovation to achieve this. To encourage creativity, this theory suggests that leaders should be adaptable in exhibiting both opening and closing leader behaviors (Jain, 2024). Opening leadership behavior refers to actions that support subordinates' attempts to challenge a current situation by encouraging them to try new things and think creatively, as well as by providing them with the chance to think and act independently (Choi, Kang, & Choi, 2021). On the other side, closing leadership action is defined as a leader's efforts that lessen behavioral variety among followers by implementing appropriate measures, setting clear guidelines, and assessing goal achievement (Huang et al., 2021). According to Yasmeen and Ajmal (2024), ambidextrous leadership is the combination of two leadership behaviors: "the ability to foster both explorative and exploitative behaviors in followers by increasing or reducing variance in their behavior and flexibly switching between those behaviors."

Employee beliefs and actions may also be impacted by organization's support. The way an employee views the unit or organization's support is known as Perceived Organizational Support (POS), and it has an impact on employee efficiency, work motivation, and attitude (Djarmiko, Prasetyo, & Azis, 2020). POS is described as an employee's perception of the extent to which a company appreciates employee's contributions and cares about employee well-being. Since employees typically work for a certain team, division, department, or organization, perception of POS plays a significant role in determining employee behavior (Aldabbas et al., 2023). In their discussion of POS, researcher examined the effects and outcomes of organizational support on both individual and organizational domains (Huang et al., 2021). According to other findings, workers' loyalty to their company is influenced by their expectations for future rewards (Xu & Yang, 2021). As a result, workers who feel obligated and wish to repay their "debt of gratitude" may demonstrate greater organizational dedication (Inam et al., 2021).

It was discovered that just 20% of young workers were actively involved. Therefore, it is ideal for employees to be involved in both their work and the organization. This is because engaged employees work hard, have pos-

itive attitudes, and stay with the company longer, all of which contribute to organizational success (Mostafa, Boon, Abouarghoub, & Cai, 2023). An individual's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral state directed towards favorable organizational results is known as employee engagement (García-Cruz, Rincon-Roldan, & Pasamar, 2024). To achieve favorable organizational outcomes, it has been proposed to promote engagement, especially among millennial employees (Mostafa et al., 2023). An employee can give back to the company through engagement (Low & Memon, 2023). Organization increasingly focus on enhancing organizational engagement because of the advantages associated with motivated employees. Jena and Nayak (2023) argued that employees who are consistently motivated, focused, and enthusiastic about their work offers businesses advantages like higher production and profit, decreased staff attrition, cost savings, and improved organization image.

Additionally, during the pandemic, employee well-being has become a significant component (Berraies, 2023). A clear and ambidextrous leader who supports ideas, experimentation, risk-taking, and creative initiative while maintaining balance between execution and goals is considered ideal for fostering creative work behavior in employees (Jain, 2024). Prior research has identified well-being as a critical component in fostering a creative work behavior (Wan, He, Zhang, & Zhou, 2022; Zulfiqar et al., 2023). In addition to improving performance (Mostafa et al., 2023), it also raises staff engagement (Zulfiqar et al., 2023) and customer satisfaction (Babu, Prasad, & Prasad, 2024). There are, however, fewer studies examining the connection between employee creative behavior and worker well-being (Volery & Tarabashkina, 2021). Consequently, it may be presumed that the model's moderator will be well-being.

The current study addresses the following research gaps by incorporating the ambidextrous (open & closing) leadership approach into the literature on creative work behavior. The study's primary goal is to investigate how AL can foster more innovative employee behavior. Another goal is to evaluate how perceived organizational engagement and support mediate the association between ambidextrous leaders and innovative employee behavior. Additionally, the study examines how well-being influences the relationship between ambidextrous (open & closing) leadership and employee creative behavior. Testing this research framework in a developing economy such as Athens, Greece, is the final research gap that the project aims to address. In developing economies such as Athens, Greece, little is known about ambidextrous (open & closing) leadership and its function in

the employee creative behavior (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). The layout of the research paper is as outlined below: the literature review, which leads to the creation of a research model and the development of hypotheses, is presented in the second section. Research methods are the main topic of the third segment. The fourth and fifth sections provide the results and discussions. Lastly, the sixth and seventh sections address the management implications, future perspectives, and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Underpinning

According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), Social Exchange Theory is regarded as one of the most important and prominent theories in the organizational environment for comprehending human conduct at work. Though theorists concur that social exchange behavior entails a variety of contacts that result in obligations, different perspectives have emerged on this topic (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013). According to SET, people evaluate the predicted risks and rewards in a relationship either consciously or unconsciously when making decisions. SET is regarded as the most enduring structure that is frequently utilized in the workplace because it is founded on such a simple idea. Ahmad, Nawaz, Ishaq, Khan, and Ashraf (2023) claimed that SET offers a starting point for forecasting the importance of ambidextrous leadership and its influence on workers' favorable views toward their jobs. By actively implementing the organization's social responsibility to achieve common objectives and reciprocal advantages, AL seeks to build mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization, according to Cook et al. (2013). Furthermore Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) employed SET in their study to support the idea that organizational support and ambidextrous leadership play a crucial role in influencing an employee's creative behavior. Because everyone values reciprocity to some degree, ambidextrous leadership can foster more creative behavior in employees. This is especially true when it comes to human perceptions and responses to social influence, which in turn impact the quality of social exchange (Ahmad et al., 2023). Employees also work hard for the company and think they are treated fairly when they believe their leader and organization are ethical and responsible (Cook et al., 2013).

Using the Componential Theory of Creativity, the current

relationship is also examined. According to Amabile and Mueller (2024), the Componential Theory is a comprehensive framework of the psychological and social elements necessary for a person to be creative. The fields of professional knowledge, creative thinking, task motivation, and social environment are typically included in the componential theory. Throughout the creative process, the four domains of the componential model of creativity need to be operationalized. This process starts with problem identification, followed by preparation for the solution, generation of response options, evaluation of those options, and finally the selection of the most appropriate response. Applying this to the development of creativity, the creator may work alone at the beginning stages of development, but performers and other creative interpreters may contribute to the construction of the finished result (Amabile & Mueller, 2024). Research on organizational settings has shown that a variety of elements, such as the ability to express oneself freely, supervisor support, a team-oriented atmosphere, a culture that values information, etc., can foster creativity. Leadership is one of the most important components influencing employees' work-related behavior, according to pertinent literature (Amabile & Mueller, 2024). Leaders who encourage knowledge sharing among staff members and support innovative ideas and creative solutions to issues by articulating a clear and inspiring vision inspire their staff to contribute novel ideas and creative solutions. The graphical representation of the proposed model is shown in Figure 1.

Ambidextrous (Open & Closing) Leadership and Employee Creative Behavior

According to Yasmeen and Ajmal (2024), creativity entails employees development novel or workable solution to a problem in addition to coming up with new ideas for products and services. It is not only essential for an employee to have his or her own characteristics to boost his or her creative performance, but organizational factors are additionally an essential role in this. Organizational elements may have a positive impact on employee creativity. Among these is ambidextrous leadership, defined as a crucial organizational element that empowers followers by elevating or expanding their objectives and inspiring them to surpass the terms of the agreement's stated and tacit requirements (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024).

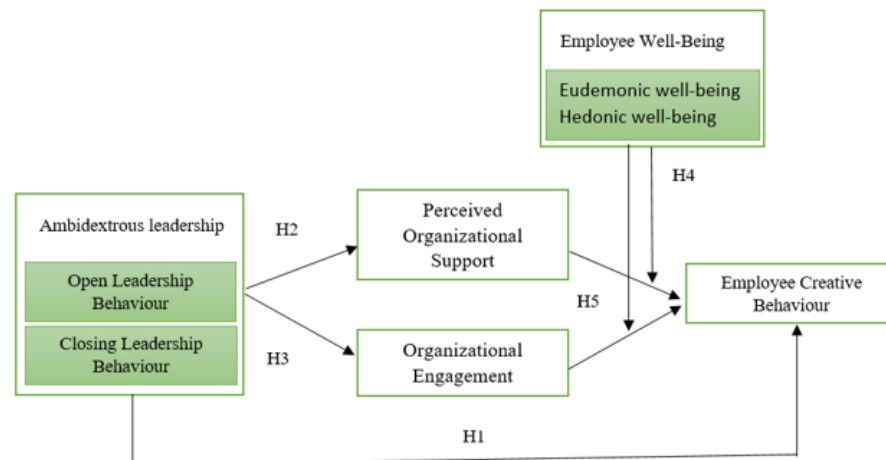


FIGURE 1. Proposed model

This aspect of leadership, according to earlier studies, enables followers to achieve their full creative potential. When a leader uses an ambidextrous leadership style, employee performance improves (Zulfiqar et al., 2023). Babu et al. (2024) claimed that followers' creative actions are associated with ambidextrous leadership. Additionally, Jain (2024) showed that ambidextrous leadership was a positive predictor of employees' creative performance. These leadership strategies interact to affect follower outcomes rather than impacting follower outcomes separately since the ambidextrous leader regularly switches between opening and closing behaviors (Liu et al., 2020). Theoretically, the many circumstances and behaviors needed for the various aspects of innovation roughly correspond to the opening and shutting behaviors. According to ambidextrous leadership theory, opening and closing leader behaviors moderately each other's effects on innovation, meaning that creativity is most severe when both opening and closing leader actions are high. This is because successful creativity necessitates not only the generation of these ideas but also their subsequent advancement and execution. According to Huang et al. (2021), AL and creative work practices are favorably correlated. It has a favorable impact on the team, the organization, and the person (Choi et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020). Leaders that embrace the AL style can play a key role in encouraging employee creativity and business process improvement during the epidemic by strategically utilizing both opening and closing leadership characteristics. In contrast to closing leadership behavior, which involves utilizing current capabilities, convergent thinking, and reducing risk-taking in favor of solely concentrating on goal achievement, opening leadership behavior is associated with creative behavior, wherein leaders encourage staff members to investi-

gate novel concepts, employing divergent thinking and fostering independence while taking risks (Amabile & Mueller, 2024; Jain, 2024). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Ambidextrous (open & closing) leadership has direct impact on employee creative behavior.

Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

According to Djatmiko et al. (2020), POS can ease stress and motivate workers to take chances since it lowers the perceived risk of creativity. Therefore, when workers believe that their company values creativity, they will act creatively (Inam et al., 2021). People will feel driven to be creative and reciprocate the positive treatment they have received from the organization if they perceive high organizational support. Employee perceptions regarding the extent to which their employer values their efforts and puts their well-being first are referred to as perceived organizational support (Xu & Yang, 2021). Because it can give access to a variety of support resources, perceived organizational support can be a useful tool for staff members in handling their job duties (Aldabbas et al., 2023). This supports the Social Exchange Theory, which holds that employees attempt to return favors from the company or its representatives. When an individual receives support from the organization, it fosters a positive work atmosphere where they may think creatively and share new ideas (Xu & Yang, 2021). Employees' cognitive thinking, motivation, and ability to engage in creative work are all enhanced by the organization's support of them (Volery & Tarabashkina, 2021). Prior research indicates that, POS has a positive and considerable impact on employees' creativity (Huang et al., 2021). When employees feel more supported by their organization, they are more inclined to engage in creative activities. POS is crucial to the in-

teraction between employees and employers, and it can improve workers' well-being and alignment with company objectives (Choi et al., 2021). Additionally, POS promotes psychological well-being and satisfies socioemotional demands (Saadeh & Suifan, 2020). According to Imran, Elahi, Abid, Ashfaq, and Ilyas (2020), POS will improve when the company values employee contributions and attends to their demands. However, organizations must invest in employee's capabilities to improve their sense of support, grow their capacities, and unleash their creative potential. POS entails rewarding, praising, and supporting staff members who exhibit innovation and encouraging them to come up with new ideas. There is still much to learn about the connection between POS and creative behaviors.

Furthermore, the association between POS and Employee Creative Behavior (ECB) represents a notable research gap (Jain, 2024). According to Zulfiqar et al. (2023), POS is founded on Organizational Support Theory (OST), which emphasizes the significance of viewing employees as valued and appreciated organizational assets worthy of the organizational investment. Employees are motivated to adopt positive attitudes and behaviors when they perceive that their organizations are providing them with high levels of support (Mostafa et al., 2023). To comprehend the relationship, the current study makes use of both self-determination theory and SET. Employers and employees form social exchange relationship in the workplace, according to SET (Ahmad et al., 2023; Cook et al., 2013), where interdependence is demonstrated in a way that one person's action lead to reciprocal responses from others. Because these relationships are reciprocal, workers are more likely to act in ways that they believe their superiors approve of. In a similar vein, workers avoid actions they perceive to be unacceptable by their superiors. The Social Exchange Theory Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) states that the three key psychological needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When an ambidextrous leader uses POS to support these needs, employees' creativity can be increased. Employees with high POS thus tends to perform proactive, innovative behaviors under the AL (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). Therefore, we can speculate that:

H2: Perceived organizational support has a mediating relationship among Ambidextrous (open & closing) leadership and employee creative behavior.

Mediating Role of Organizational Engagement

The conceptual definition of organizational engagement, on the other hand, is still unclear because it has not been thor-

oughly developed in the literature. Nonetheless, we have attempted to comprehend the construct based on literature. Organizational engagement climate refers to perceptions of employees' voluntary effort and commitment to accomplish organizational objectives. Therefore, it may be concluded that organizational engagement clarifies how people relate to an organization's strategy, goal, and vision. A great deal of effort has been put into understanding organizational engagement by García-Cruz et al. (2024). AL, which stands for the fusion of directive and empowering leadership philosophies Mostafa et al. (2023) and Rai and Maheshwari (2020), is presently gaining traction in practitioner and academic research (García-Cruz et al., 2024). According to Jena and Nayak (2023), the best leadership style for fostering creativity and invention is AL, which consists of opening and closing leadership behaviors as well as the adaptability to switch between them depending on the circumstance. According to recent studies, AL might help businesses counteract the difficult demands of a variety of organizational contexts. According to earlier research, AL is more effective than a single leadership style since it fosters both individual and collective creativity (Low & Memon, 2023). The primary goal of these practices is to foster a positive working connection between the company and its staff (Aldabbas et al., 2023). Vigor, absorption, and dedication are characteristics of a pleasant, rewarding "organization-related" state of mind that is referred to as organizational engagement (Wan et al., 2022). Workers with high levels of organizational engagement are very active in everything that occurs inside the organization (dedication); they see their membership as thrilling and energizing (vigor); and fascinating and compelling (absorption) (Imran et al., 2020). Based on the studies, this study concluded that employee engagement is the level of commitment a person makes to their work, which encompasses social participation, emotion, and cognition. The degree to which a person performs their job duties, such as focusing and activating efforts to accomplish objectives or overcome obstacles, is known as cognitive engagement (Djatkiko et al., 2020). The extent to which a person feels positively impacted by their job, including when they are able to elicit pleasant emotions, is known as emotional involvement. The degree of social association inside the workplace and the degree of shared values with coworkers is known as social engagement. Activating, starting, and sustaining social activities linked to one's job and actively engaging with others are also necessary for social participation (Jain, 2024). An organization's ability to be creative is essential to its development. The organization's overall

innovative capacity to create new items for the market or open new markets through the implementation of strategic orientations is determined by creative behavior (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). According to Berraies (2023), an employee's innovative behavior is essential to enhancing his or her job and task performance at work, which enables an organization to confront issues with fresh solutions. Although creativity is currently getting a lot of attention in the business sector, its extensive history in other domains, including education and the arts, shows that little is known about how it affects the business sector (Babu et al., 2024; Zulfiqar et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Organizational engagement has mediating relationship among Ambidextrous (open & closing) leadership and employee creative behavior.

Moderating Role of Employee (Eudemonic & Hedonic) Well-Being

Numerous leadership philosophies have been recognized as having a strong correlation with the attitudes and behaviors of employees and as antecedents of their work-based behavior (Jain, 2024). Nonetheless, there are still many obstacles to overcome to fully understand the intricate relationship between these variables (Chtioui, Berraies, & Dhaou, 2023). Berraies (2023) identified two employee well-being constructs: Hedonic Well-Being (HWB) and Eudaimonic Well-Being (EWB). HWB incorporates both affective and cognitive aspects and is subjective in character. The expression of pleasant emotions that exceed negative ones, such as happiness and pleasure, is referred to as the emotional dimension. When employees' needs and expectations are met, their work-life happiness is reflected in the cognitive dimension. The psychological eudemonic approach is associated with growth, expressiveness, and personal fulfillment (Berraies, 2023). EWB stands for psychological WB, which Zhang, Lin, Liu, Chen, and Liu (2020) described as a six-dimensional idea. The first three dimensions autonomy, positive interpersonal interactions, and self-acceptance or favorable attitudes about oneself are associated with self-efficacy and self-determination, challenge, independence, and social WB. The final three aspects are developing one's knowledge and abilities, realizing one's potential, and mastering and contributing to a work environment that fulfils one's own needs and values as well as one's life purpose (Chtioui et al., 2023). Similarly, Chtioui et al. (2023) described an employee's Work-Life Balance (WB) as an individual's psychological state resulting from positive relationships with coworkers, oneself, the time spent at work, the

quality of the physical environment, and managers' appreciation of efforts and sensitivity to goals and personal development.

Nevertheless, a study of the literature revealed that no studies have been conducted to look at the relationship between these factors in a commercial setting (Low & Memon, 2023). Through the development of positive relationships amongst members of the organization, DL can promote workers' well-being by providing resources and enhancing their positive psychological states. It usually results in the development of excellent relationships that ultimately have a beneficial impact on employees' WB (Babu et al., 2024). Because of the social and meaningful support that their coworkers provide, employees in such an environment report feeling less burned out and more satisfied with their jobs. In distributed environments, employees may feel more empowered and involved, enjoy working in a collaborative and supportive environment, and believe that their bosses provide them with the resources they need and value their abilities. Prior research has sought to explain the positive correlation between HRMPs and EWB from the viewpoints of Social Exchange Theory (Cook et al., 2013). According to Jain (2024), AL is a constructive leadership approach that promotes favorable outcomes for staff members, thus promoting workplace thriving. Employee performance is thought to improve when AL is present. Additionally, higher levels of well-being among employees foster creativity and innovation in a company (Mascareño, Rietzschel, & Wisse, 2021). If these levels are not met, depression, anxiety, unhappiness with work, and employee turnover and absences result (Jain, 2024; Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). AL has been linked to both thriving at work and inventive work behavior, according to Zulfiqar et al. (2023). Therefore, it can be speculated that:

H4: Employee (Eudemonic & Hedonic) well-being has moderating impact on perceived organizational support and employee creative behavior.

H5: Employee (Eudemonic & Hedonic) well-being has moderating impact on organizational engagement and employee creative behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

To validate the questionnaire, two practitioners and two management academics participated in a pretest and pilot test. Because there were limited sampling frames available for the target population, a convenience sampling strategy based on practical considerations were employed to collect data. In accordance with a Web-based questionnaire we

administered to 320 IT participants in Athens, Greece, between August 2024 and December 2024. The final sample comprised 320 IT sector workers from various technology-related companies in Athens, Greece. A total of 390 employees were contacted; 320 valid responses were used in the study, yielding an 82% response rate. The study's participants were selected using easy sampling from among IT sector personnel employed by different technology-related companies in Athens, Greece. Athens, Greece, a substantial

proportion of IT sector employees were permitted to work from home for a considerable period.. The following criteria were used to identify participants: they had to be above 21 years old, have worked for a company for at least a year, and have encountered WFH options during the pandemic. The model was tested using SmartPLS software version 3.0. Additionally, the moderating effect was examined using moderation analysis. The demographic details of the participants are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Demographics profile

S. no.	Demographics Characteristics	Categories	Percentages %
1	Gender	Male	69%
		Female	31%
2	Work Experience	1-6 Years	25%
		6-12 Years	33%
		12-20 Years	42%
3	Qualification	High Level	30%
		Graduate	44%
		Others	26%
4	Marital Status	Married	51%
		Unmarried	37%
		Divorced	12%

Measures

Ambidextrous Leadership- AI measured with 12- item scale developed by Rosing, Frese, and Bausch (2011). The scale included six items of each of open and closing leadership behavior. Open leadership behavior include item, "A vision that motivates exploratory behavior" and closing leadership behavior item include, "A vision that motivates confirmatory behavior".

Perceived Organizational Support- POS measured with 6-item scale developed by Djatmiko et al. (2020). The scale included, "the organization is proud of employee achievements" and "the organization cares about employee welfare".

Organizational Engagement- OE measured with 9-item scale developed by Djatmiko et al. (2020). The scale included, "feelings of readiness and willingness to start the workday" and "a high level of energy is experienced during work activities."

Employee Well-Being- EWB measured with 8-item scale developed by Biétry and Creusier (2013). The scale included, "positive relationships are maintained with colleagues" and "a sense of inclusion within the workplace community is experienced." **Employee Creative Behavior- ECB** measured with 6-item scale developed by Rice (2006). The scale in-

cluded, "generation of new and useful ideas for improving work processes and tasks."

Data Analysis

For several reasons, PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling) via the SMART PLS 3 was employed to estimate the measurement model and the structural model. Initially the proposed model is relatively complicated, integrating first- and second-order constructs, and dealing with intricate models integrating exogenous, mediating, and endogenous factors conceptualized by numerous measurement items, the PLS approach is suitable for this study (Hair, Sharma, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Liengaard, 2024). Furthermore, this method allows the measurement and structural models to be estimated independently. Third, the prediction-oriented nature of PLS-SEM is appropriate for this investigation because the theoretical development of the correlations between DL and the other variable in the model is still in its infancy. Lastly, the PLS-SEM makes it possible to avoid issues with normalcy and multi-collinearity. The guidelines made by Hair et al. (2024), which specify which analyses to carry out, which statistics to verify, and how to present the PLS-SEM results, are the main emphasis of this study.

Measurement Assessment Model

The measuring model is evaluated in this study using the methodology of Hair et al. (2024). Table 1 highlights the reliability of good constructs by demonstrating that the loadings of the various items are over 0.708 and statistically significant at 5% (Hair et al., 2024). Since every construct's Cronbach's α value is greater than the cut-off of 0.7, they all

satisfy the dependability standards (Table 2). Additionally provided are Composite Reliability (C.R.) values, which are less than 0.95 (Hair et al., 2024). Additionally, convergent validity for each construct was assessed by ensuring that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was higher than 0.5, indicating a good level of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2024) (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Reliability, validity and AVE

Construct	Mean	SD	Range of Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
AL	3.783	1.010	741-770	0.908	0.922	0.508
ECB	3.821	1.197	835-794	0.856	0.893	0.584
EWB	3.698	1.297	841-701	0.888	0.911	0.563
OE	3.297	1.287	859-721	0.926	0.938	0.629
POS	4.198	1.998	869-745	0.912	0.932	0.696

To assess the discriminant validity of the components, we used the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) method. The discriminant validity of the constructs is supported by Table 3 shows that the HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85, thereby supporting discriminant validity

(Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Lastly, to reduce the possibility of a potential Common Method Bias (CMB), the full collinearity VIF values were examined. All VIF values were below 3.3 (Hair et al., 2024), indicating that the CMB does not represent a significant concern in this study.

TABLE 3. Discriminant validity

	1	2	3	4	5
AL	0.785				
ECB	0.731	0.864			
EWB	0.768	0.722	0.850		
OE	-0.693	-0.708	-0.719	0.793	
POS	0.722	0.774	0.830	-0.768	0.834

Evaluation of the Direct and Indirect Effects

By assessing the dependent variables' coefficient of determination (R square value), which needs to be higher than the 10% threshold, the quality of the structural model was assessed (Hair et al., 2024). For EWB (0.158), HWB (0.523), and ambidextrous innovation (0.661), this value is modest. AL significantly and favorably influences employee creative behavior, as seen in Table 3 and Figure 2 ($\beta = -0.693$, $p < 0.001$). H1 is therefore validated. Perceived organizational support mediating relationship among ambidextrous leadership significantly and favorably influences on employee

creative behavior ($\beta = -0.121$, $p < 0.005$). H2 is therefore validated. Organizational engagement mediating relationship among ambidextrous leadership significantly and favorably influences on employee creative behavior ($\beta = 0.172$, $p < 0.005$). H3 is therefore validated. Employee well-being moderating role on perceived organizational support and employee creative behavior ($\beta = -0.221$, $p < 0.005$). H4 is therefore validated. Employee well-being moderating role on organizational engagement and employee creative behavior ($\beta = -0.927$, $p < 0.001$). H5 is therefore validated.

TABLE 4. Direct and indirect effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	R^2	β	p
H1	AL -> ECB	0.854	-0.693	0.000
H2	AL -> POS -> ECB	0.521	-0.121	0.007
H3	AL -> OE -> ECB	0.480	0.172	0.013
H4	EWB*POS -> ECB		-0.221	0.001
H5	EWB*OE -> ECB		-0.927	0.000

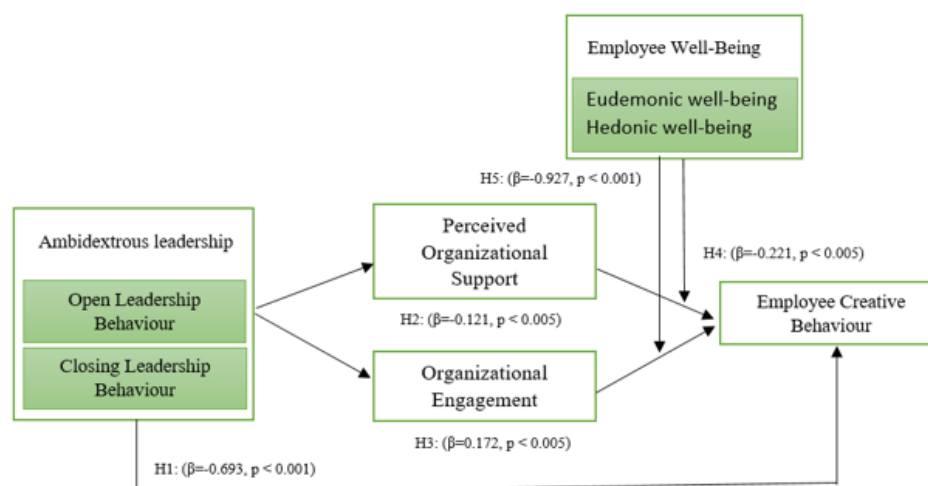


FIGURE 2. Assessment of structural model

DISCUSSION

For the most part, the study's findings align with the conceptual model (Figure 1). The fact that every hypothesis is accepted shows the reliability of the model. Testing the link between the independent, mediating, and dependent variables was the first step of the investigation. It has been determined that AL has a key impact in fostering creative activity. According to earlier research, AL techniques help organizations handle challenging assignments while also fostering followers' creativity (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024; Zulfiqar et al., 2023). High levels of innovation are the outcome of AL's emphasis on both open and closed behaviors among its staff (Amabile & Mueller, 2024). Nevertheless, the most crucial aspect of ambidextrous leadership is the temporal flexibility required of leaders to transition between leadership behaviors as needed for innovative activities. With its focus on skillfully striking a balance between creativity and efficiency-seeking behaviors, ambidextrous leadership offers a novel viewpoint that aligns with the needs of the present (Jain, 2024). This creative strategy demonstrates an understanding of the need for leaders who can simultaneously promote innovation, manage ambiguity, and increase efficiency.

It was discovered that AL and ECB had a substantial mediation connection through perceived organizational support. It has been noted that knowledge workers typically refrain from sharing their expertise as doing so could reduce their control and potential advantages. However, a context which is demonstrated by value and consideration offers psychological support, which promotes candid conversation. People can respectfully and cooperatively communicate their thoughts, opinions, and viewpoints during constructive con-

versations, which fosters innovative conduct. Building AL requires cooperation and confidence between present and future social relationship-supporting resources (Yasmeen & Ajmal, 2024). Employee creativity would improve because of this. POS and ECB have been found to have a positive and substantial link in several recent empirical investigations (Jain, 2024). The impact of POS on ECB is still up for dispute, though (Choi et al., 2021). Mascareño et al. (2021) reported no significant association for certain EC aspects, while several recent research have identified no significant relationship for POS with individual creativity (Berraies, 2023). According to Alghamdi (2018), supportive management can have a variety of effects depending on an individual's personality and cognitive characteristics.

OE is one of the most powerful ECB determinants, according to the literature García-Cruz et al. (2024) and Mostafa et al. (2023). However, the present research differs somewhat from the findings above. Verifying the mediation function of organizational engagement between AL and ECB adds even more value. As SET advocates, offering professional development opportunities inside an organization can result in pleasant and happy feelings that serve as a high notch AL, which in turn makes employees feel obligated to return by extending their services. Additionally, Low and Memon (2023) verified in their research that a shared trust environment boosts employees' primary drive for innovative behavior. Previous studies by Aldabbas et al. (2023) verified that leaders' specific attention to and support of their staff members' needs can inspire followers to engage in innovative endeavors.

The link between AL and ECB was found to be moderated by well-being. This showed that when ambidextrous leaders

help people with higher levels of well-being, their creative behaviors are higher than those of those whose well-being is neglected by the organization. Because AL may require workers to take advantage of existing resources and investigate new avenues, this could lead to stress if not handled appropriately. Employees that receive high levels of well-being assistance, however, might be better able to manage the demands of (Inam et al., 2021), lessening the detrimental effects of stress on their innovative behavior (Aldabbas et al., 2023). Therefore, a high level of well-being can enhance the beneficial effects of AL on creative behavior by lowering stress and creating an environment that is favorable for invention (Low & Memon, 2023). On the other hand, poor well-being may limit the potential advantages of AL by preventing workers from being engaged and from thinking creatively (Inam et al., 2021). As a result, companies that prioritize and support worker well-being are probably going to have more innovative workplaces.

Study Implications

Theoretical implications

The current study made SET more applicable in an Athens, Greece setting. By emphasizing the social dynamics and interactions that take place within an organization, SET can aid in the explanation of the connection between AL and creative work behavior. According to Cook et al. (2013), SET proposes that people participate in social interactions with the expectation of reciprocity. Leaders that display AL characteristics successfully strike a balance between perceived organizational support and engagement. Employees may develop a sense of reciprocity and trust as a result. Workers may believe that their bosses value their attempts to engage in innovative work behavior, which is frequently linked to exploration. They are more inclined to respond by exerting more creative effort in return. The SET Ahmad et al. (2023) principles, which state that people expect resources or rewards in exchange for what they contribute, are in line with this resource allocation. Additional assets, such time, instruction, or access to cutting-edge tools, are frequently needed for creative work behavior. Employees may feel more obligated to use innovative work practices when leaders make these resources available.

Workers with an inventive attitude can successfully navigate the highly innovative environment of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As organizations are aware, the generation of unique and beneficial ideas by individuals or teams working collaboratively is essential to competitive success (Choi et al., 2021). Because leaders have a big influence on work-

ing conditions, employees require leadership advice to be creative (Volery & Tarabashkina, 2021; Xu & Yang, 2021). The capacity to lead from both the front and the rear makes ambidextrous leaders effective. The main objective of this study is to determine how employees' creativity is impacted by ambidextrous leadership. The subject of ECB research in Athens, Greece has gained new insights thanks to this work. First, it's a significant discovery that AL plays a part in creative conduct. It implies that for innovative activity, both opening and closing leadership actions are essential. A significant addition to the theoretical foundations is the additional function of POS and OE as a mediator in the interaction between AL and ECB. Because of the relationships that members have with one another, POS and OE become a significant relation. Finally, the perspective in studies on AL and ECB is expanded by the moderating effect that well-being has on the link between AL and ECB. There is probably a larger and more favorable correlation between AL and creative conduct when workers are happy. Conversely, a weaker or even negative relationship may emerge when employee well-being is low.

Practical implications

The study's managerial implications are listed below. However, AL's function becomes apparent as a crucial aspect of creative conduct. Thus, it becomes crucial for organizations to develop AL in leaders through appropriate hiring practices and leadership development programs. By encouraging open communication, trust, and teamwork among team members, ambidextrous leaders foster POS and OE. This facilitates knowledge sharing, cross-functional collaboration, and the exchange of varied ideas all of which are necessary for creative behavior (Wan et al., 2022). Above all, it is crucial to understand that a leadership style that is as complicated as innovation itself is necessary. Therefore, to encourage staff innovation, companies may focus on hiring leaders that can exhibit ambidextrous leadership. Furthermore, companies might offer training programs to help executives learn how to hone their ambidextrous leadership skills in a fast-paced setting. Employees who exhibit suitable opening and closing leadership behaviors should be considered for managerial positions, both now and in the future (Mostafa et al., 2023). It is critical that managers adopt a flexible approach when interacting with staff members who work remotely. Additionally, it's critical to increase employees' organizational engagement. Numerous strategies, such as networking and collaboration, resource availability, psychological safety, and encouragement and recognition, can improve

POS inside an organization. Employees are more likely to feel emotionally secure and committed to sharing their innovative ideas when they perceive that they are a member of a trustworthy and encouraging group. Therefore, an organization's high POS levels can foster a climate that is encouraging and supportive of ECB, which can increase creativity and the organization's chances of success. It is now crucial to reconsider procedures and guidelines that facilitate remote work. Additionally, employees should receive training in the skills necessary to handle the demands of working remotely (Babu et al., 2024). Policies that improve employee well-being even after work hours should be the organization's main priority (Mascareño et al., 2021).

Limitations and Future Research

The following limitations of the study should be acknowledged. This research is cross-sectional, to start. Longitudinal data with an experimental research design is necessary to make an accurate and more trustworthy causal inference between the variables since it allows for the control of unrelated variables and allows for a definitive conclusion regarding the causal association. The aforementioned requirements should be taken into account in future research. Second, because the study uses self-reported data, it is susceptible to response bias. Therefore, managerial reports can be used to do additional study. Third, all of the variables' data come from the same source. Although Harman's single factor method in our study indicates that CMB is not present, future investigations should focus on alternative methods of reducing the danger of CMB. In this study, only one moderator was examined due to time constraints. Future studies can therefore improve the model and examine other mediators like trust and job crafting. Additionally, more studies

might investigate how demographic factors fit into the current model. Lastly, just a small number of IT organizations' personnel provided the data. To improve generalizability, multiple industries and organizations could be included in the future.

CONCLUSION

Organizations must identify employee problems and provide the necessary support to continue operating effectively and adding value in these changing circumstances. According to the current study, companies should create a culture that allows executives to support both closed and open ALs. This will undoubtedly improve POS and OE, which are crucial components in encouraging innovative activity from staff members. The results indicate that investing in POS and OE can foster more innovative behavior, which will increase the organization's ability to respond proactively to impending difficulties. To sum up, ambidextrous leaders with strong POS and OE may foster an environment that is encouraging and supportive of ECB, which can result in more innovation and success for the company. Ambidextrous leaders with strong POS and OE can contribute to the development of a work environment that fosters creativity and innovation by skillfully striking a balance between exploitative and exploratory activities, promoting collaboration, creating psychological safety, and granting access to resources. This study demonstrates how important AL is to preserving an environment of organizational creativity when a business engages. Furthermore, the ECB places a high priority on well-being. To achieve higher levels of creativity, organizations must ensure that employee well-being is appropriately addressed.

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