

Ambidextrous Leadership and Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Commitment

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100701074>

Received: 15 March 2026; Accepted: 21 March 2026; Published: 21 August 2026

ABSTRACT

The increasingly complex, competitive, and dynamic business environment places leaders under conflicting and often mutually exclusive demands. Ambidextrous leadership, which integrates participative (loose) and directive (tight) leadership styles, offers a potential approach for navigating these challenges. This study examined the direct and indirect effects of ambidextrous leadership on organizational performance, with employee commitment as a mediating variable, within four major manufacturing firms in Nairobi, Kenya: Bidco, Kenya Breweries Limited, Tononoka Steel, and Brookside Dairy Limited. Using an explanatory cross-sectional research design, data were collected from 320 employees sampled via stratified random sampling from a target population of 2,709. Structured questionnaires measured loose and tight leadership, affective, continuance, and normative commitment, and organizational performance. Confirmatory factor analysis verified construct validity, while Cronbach's alpha confirmed reliability. Pearson correlation analyses indicated significant positive associations between loose leadership ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$), tight leadership ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$), employee commitment dimensions (affective: $r = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$; continuance: $r = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$; normative: $r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$), and organizational performance. Multiple linear regression results showed that high loose–high tight leadership had the strongest positive effect on performance ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$), while high loose–low tight ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$) and low loose–high tight ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.026$) also improved outcomes. Employee commitment dimensions positively predicted performance (affective: $\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$; continuance: $\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.003$; normative: $\beta = 0.25$, $p = 0.002$) and partially mediated the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organizational outcomes (total indirect effect = 0.35, 95% CI [0.26, 0.45]). These findings underscore the practical importance of fostering both leadership flexibility and employee commitment to enhance performance. Organizations are advised to implement leadership development and employee engagement strategies to achieve sustained productivity and growth, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

Keywords: Ambidextrous Leadership, Organizational, Employee Commitment, Explanatory Cross-section Research Design, Manufacturing Sector, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance (OP) remains a central concern for organizations worldwide, often regarded as the “holy grail” of business success. Despite its importance, OP lacks a universal definition due to its multidimensionality, subjectivity, and limited theoretical grounding (Hamann & Schiemann, 2021; Richard et al., 2009). Different stakeholders perceive performance differently: investors focus on return on investment, managers on overall operational outcomes, customers on company stability, employees on profitability and stability, and creditors on solvency (Mendy, 2020; Wynen & Kleizen, 2017). Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that organizational performance should integrate efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance (Jenatabadi, 2015). This study conceptualizes OP as an organization's ability to achieve its goals and objectives using optimal resources while fulfilling stakeholder expectations (Ahmed & Shaffiq, 2014; Richard et al., 2009). Effective

organizational performance is crucial for a firm's survival, and much of business and management research is devoted to understanding how OP can be enhanced, sustained, and leveraged to improve profitability and long-term viability. This study contributes to that body of research.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational performance. Gallup (2013) reported that only 13% of employees worldwide are actively engaged in meaningful work, while the remaining workforce is either disengaged (63%) or actively undermining organizational goals (24%), often due to poor leadership. Prior research has highlighted the strong link between leadership and employee commitment (Abasilim et al., 2018; Yasir et al., 2016; Avolio et al., 2009).

Today's workplaces are increasingly complex, diverse, and competitive, often creating tensions between organizational demands for high performance and employees' needs for humanistic care (Hou & Peng, 2019). A single leadership style may be inadequate to address these multifaceted demands. Ambidextrous leadership has emerged as a promising approach to managing such paradoxes by integrating two seemingly conflicting leadership styles through a "both/and" strategy, fostering adaptive leadership (Cunha et al., 2019). Ambidextrous leadership relies on paradoxical thinking, which posits that opposing elements can coexist harmoniously within organizations (Putnam et al., 2016; Cunha & Putnam, 2019). Smith and Lewis (2011) argued that paradoxes are inherent in organizations, particularly the tension between change and stability, innovation and routine, and autonomy and control.

These paradoxical leadership approaches have been operationalized in multiple ways, including exploration–exploitation behaviors (Ma et al., 2019), transformational–transactional leadership (Rosing et al., 2011), servant–authoritarian leadership (Wang et al., 2022), loose–tight leadership (Guo et al., 2020), and opening–closing leadership behaviors (Zacher & Rosing, 2015). Opening leadership behaviors promote variance in employee actions, encouraging experimentation, innovation, and exploration (Rosing et al., 2011), whereas closing behaviors reduce variance by enforcing routines, monitoring goals, and enhancing exploitation activities such as refinement and implementation (Alghamdi, 2018). Loose–tight leadership, in particular, exemplifies the paradox of autonomy versus control: loose leadership involves participative decision-making, while tight leadership enforces strict adherence to rules and routines (Zhang et al., 2015; Shao et al., 2019). Similarly, servant leadership emphasizes empowering employees, whereas authoritarian leadership demands strict obedience (Wang et al., 2022). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate innovation, while transactional leaders reward compliance, effort, and loyalty (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Research suggests that transformational leadership aligns with exploration, while transactional leadership aligns with exploitation (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).

Despite the potential of ambidextrous leadership, few studies have examined how combining two contrasting leadership styles affects organizational outcomes (Guo et al., 2020). Most research has focused on innovation, suggesting that ambidextrous organizations, through balanced exploration and exploitation, achieve superior innovation capacity and performance (Rosing et al., 2011). However, the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee commitment remains underexplored. Leadership style significantly influences employee interest, engagement, and commitment, which, in turn, affect organizational performance (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016; Obiwuru et al., 2011; Abasilim et al., 2018).

Employee commitment (EC) is a critical determinant of organizational success (Bashaer et al., 2016). Defined by Allen and Meyer (1990:67) as "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization," EC encompasses a strong desire to remain, belief in organizational values and goals, and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Armstrong, 2009). High EC reduces withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, lateness, and turnover, while enhancing job satisfaction and performance (Gujral & Singh, 2019; Khan et al., 2016; Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014). From its unidimensional conceptualization in the 1960s, EC has evolved into a multidimensional construct, reflecting its complex role in contemporary organizations.

This study investigates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organizational performance, with a focus on the mediating role of employee commitment. Specifically, the study aims to: (i) assess the effect of ambidextrous leadership on organizational performance, and (ii) determine the mediating influence of employee commitment on this relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ambidextrous Leadership

Duncan (1976), first coined the term ambidexterity to refer to a duality of organization's structures to support innovation. Two decades later, March (1991) and Tushman and O'Reilly III (1996) suggested that organizations could learn through exploratory and exploitative activities. Ambidexterity comes from Latin ambidexter, which means the ability to use both hands equally well (Merriam-Webster, 2023). The concept of ambidexterity arose as a realization that institutions contain paradoxes, that is, things that have contradictory qualities. They arise from inherent conflicting forces that are mutually necessary in organizations such as the need for control and autonomy at the same time (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997), exploration and exploitation (Glaister, Ahammad, & Juni, 2015); change and stability (Farjoun, 2010), and innovation and routine (Feldman, 2000). Ambidextrous leadership describes a style that combines two apparently contradictory leadership styles to form a unified strategy that effectively manages conflicts and the ability to switch between the two (Zacher and Rosing, 2015; Luo et al., 2018). These paradoxical leadership styles have been operationalized variously in research as: exploration – exploitation behaviours (Ma et al., 2019); transformational – transactional leadership styles (Rosing et al., 2011); servant – authoritarian leadership (Wang et al., 2022); loose – tight leadership (Guo et al., 2020) and opening – closing leadership behaviours (Zacher & Rosing, 2015). Wu et al. (2020) reported that ambidexterity in leaders helps motivate quality leader–member relationships, enabling them to solve complicated management issues, in a study conducted in China. Smith and Lewis (2011) argued that as environments become more global, dynamic and competitive, paradoxical thinking can constitute a fruitful alternative to more established contingency reasoning. Ambidextrous leadership could be the only leadership style capable of reconciling tensions and conflicts arising from contradictory logics and tradeoffs that characterize many decisions at the work place (Burgess et al., 2015). Jansen et al. (2008) postulated that tradeoffs are inevitable because while exploration requires experimentation and variation arising from decentralization, loose cultures and informal processes, exploitation needs refinement and efficiency emanating from controlled and formal structures.

Loose-tight leadership denotes a paradox of autonomy versus control. While managers delegate power and provide autonomy to subordinates in loose leadership, employees follow rules and routines set by the supervisor in tight leadership (Zhang et al., 2015; Shao et al., 2019). According to Shao et al. (2019), the loose-tight leadership model essentially blends the traditional participative and directive models, where both practices are germane in management practice. Loose – tight leadership model can be integrated to form four different combinations: high loose-high tight, low loose-low tight, high loose-low tight, and low loose-high tight). Table 1 shows the four possible combinations of loose-tight leadership according to their degree of difference.

Table 1: Four combinations of ambidextrous leadership

		Tight Leadership	
		High	Low
Loose leadership	High	High loose-high tight leadership	High loose-low tight leadership
	Low	Low loose-high tight leadership	Low loose-low tight leadership

This study posits that if ambidextrous leadership is better suited to dealing with inherent conflicts extant in organizations and leadership, because there will be more harmony in firms, leading to better performance. Raisch

et al. (2009) suggested that ambidextrous organisations are better at exploiting existing knowledge and exploring new opportunities simultaneously. Moreover, when organizations go through high environmental uncertainties, ambidextrous leadership could be the most ideal to see them through (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004). However, few studies have analysed the effect of the various combinations of loose-tight leaderships on organizational performance (Guo et al., 2020).

High loose-high tight leadership implies that managers possess the characteristics of both loose and tight leadership at high levels. Because of loose leadership, employees can have more autonomy, involvement in decision making, and originate changes while tight leadership enables them to follow routines, understand better organizational goals, work direction, and expectations of superiors (Zhang et al., 2015). This could result in better coordination, reduced conflicts, and better teamwork at the workplace, resulting in better OP.

Hypothesis 1: High loose-high tight leadership is positively related to organizational performance.

Low loose-low tight leadership indicates that managers only show token characteristics of loose and tight leadership. They neither propose tasks clearly, establish routines, and set organization goals (tight leadership) nor give subordinates autonomy, chance to propose ideas, and receive feedback from them (Rosing et al., 2011). This creates discordance in organizations, decreasing OP.

Hypothesis 2: Low loose-low tight leadership is associated with low organizational performance.

The effects of high loose-low tight and low loose-high tight leadership frameworks could be asymmetrical (Guo et al., 2020). High loose-low tight leadership is characterized by leaders giving subjects more autonomy, authority, ability to initiate changes, and sharing power with them but with little direction to follow routines, rules, and stick to plans. Nonetheless, followers identify with leaders who empower them, leading to building of respect, trust, and mutual liking (Hassan et al., 2013). On the other hand, in low loose-high tight leadership, managers require followers to be obedient, follow routines without question, and attain assigned goals but with very little participation and input of the subordinates (Rosing et al., 2011; Sagie et al., 2002). Although the presence of some loose leadership attenuates the excesses of tight leadership, this reduction is not complete such that the preponderant leadership remains tight, leading to ineffectual communication between leaders and subjects (Jia et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2020). Consequently, high loose-low tight leadership is expected to lead to better OP relative to low loose-high tight leadership.

Hypothesis 3: High loose-low tight leadership is better at predicting organizational performance than low loose-high tight leadership.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is one the most researched topics but which has defied a common definition. For example, Miller (2003: 73) conceptualized EC as "...a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organisation". Cohen (2003: 10) defined EC as the "...a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets". The definitions imply that commitment is some mental or psychological force that binds an individual to an organization or a course. This study adopts Mowday et al. (1982: 27)'s definition of employee commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization and can be characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership of the organization".

Employee commitment is a complex, multidimensional construct, developing from a unidimensional, behavioural perspective in the 1960s. Allen and Meyer (1990) conceived a three-dimensional model of employee commitment: affective (the emotional attachment to one's organisation), continuance (the awareness of costs associated with leaving an organisation) and normative commitment (the moral obligation to remain with an

organisation). Affective commitment (AC) involves employees who remain with the organization because they want to do so, work hard for it, believe in its goal and values, and intend to stay (Mowday et al., 1982). In continuance commitment (CC), individuals stay because they have to do so. Leaving is expensive as they lose side-bets (status, benefits, current pay, and pension plans) and lack appropriate alternatives (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Somers (1995) called these costs as high sacrifice commitment and low alternative commitment, respectively. Normative commitment (NC) describes a situation in which employees remain in an organization because it is the right and moral thing to do (Anwar & Balcioglu, 2016). This commitment arises from the parents' socialization of their children about necessity of work loyalty, existence of cultural sanctions against job hopping, and a sense of gratitude to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Committed employees are not only likely to remain with the organization but are also more likely to exert more effort and work harder for it, leading to better performance (Meyer et al., 1998). Commitment has been found to be positively correlated with beneficial outcomes such as motivation (Mowday et al., 1979) and attendance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) but to be negatively related with absenteeism and turn over (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014). A secure and stable workforce resulting from committed employees could provide competitive advantage to a firm leading to better performance (Dariush et al., 2016). Consequently, EC could be positively correlated to OP. Sencherey et al. (2022) examined the influence of employee commitment and organizational performance and intention to stay at Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA), Ghana and found that affective commitment and normative commitment significantly influence organizational performance. Nwankwo (2019) analyzed the effect of employee commitment on organizational performance using a sample of 144 staff members of Innoson Technical and Industrial Company Limited, Nigeria and reported a positive and significant relationship between employee commitment and organizational profitability. Bandula and Jayatilake (2016) surveyed 115 employees of Licensed finance companies (LFCs) and Leasing companies (SLCs) in Sri Lanka in a study on how employee commitment influences job performance and found that employee commitment, especially continuance, had a strong and positive correlation with job performance.

Hypothesis 4: Improvement in employee commitment is positively related to organization performance.

A strong body of research demonstrates the nexus between leadership and employee commitment. For example, the Gallup (2013) worldwide study reported that 87% of employees in a typical organization are disengaged because of poor leadership. Clark et al. (2009) examined the role of different leadership styles in enhancing employee commitment in the service industry and found that while both participative and empowering leadership increased management commitment, directive leadership decreased it. Wiguna et al. (2022) analysed the impact of leadership, employee commitment, and organization citizen behaviour on employee performance and found significant and positive effects for each of the predictors. Shrestha and Mishra (2011) investigated the interrelationships between leadership styles, employee's commitment to change, and organizational performance in a Nepali context. A cross-sectional design was used to collect data from 150 employees working in a large technology-based organization. Hypothesized relationships were tested using regression. The study showed that transformational leadership style improved employees' commitment to organizational change, leading to better organizational performance. Nonetheless, none of these studies examined the effect of ambidextrous leadership on employee commitment.

Studies suggest that ambidextrous leadership could be more suited for dealing with dynamic, conflicting, and complex situations characteristic of organizations (Guo et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020; Burgess et al., 2015; Smith & Lewis, 2011; Jansen et al., 2008; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013; Raisch et al., 2009). Loose leadership could afford employees more autonomy, greater participation in decision making, and more room to initiate changes. Tight leadership, on the other hand, forces employees to follow routines, understand organization goals better and have a sense of direction (Shao et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2015). Consequently, ambidextrous leadership could influence employee commitment. On the other hand, studies such as Sencherey et al. (2022), Nwankwo (2019), and Bandula and Jayatilake (2016) showed that employee commitment could influence organizational

performance. It therefore, follows that employee commitment could mediate the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organization performance.

Hypothesis 5: Employee commitment mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organization performance.

METHODOLOGY

Four manufacturing companies, Bidco, Kenya Breweries Limited, Tononoka Steel, and Brookside Dairy Limited, all located in Nairobi, were used in the study. Although the manufacturing sector is one of the six sectors identified under the economic pillar of the Kenya Vision 2030, the blueprint for the country's development, it has stagnated at around 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (Government of Kenya [GoK], 2007). These companies are among the largest in the sector and it was therefore pertinent to understand the relationships between ambidextrous leadership, employee commitment and organizational performance in them. The study used explanatory and cross-sectional research designs to test the research hypotheses, which allowed collection of huge volumes of data easily and mapping of relationships between variables (VerLinden, 2010). The target population for the study comprised of 2709 employees from the four companies, from which 337 employees were sampled used stratified random sampling. The sample size was computed according to the formula and correction for small population in a cross-sectional study, as outlined in Sapra (2022). This formula was appropriate because outcomes in this study were mostly proportions, for example, what ambidextrous leaders display or do not. The formula was predicated on a confidence level of 95%, a sampling error of 5% and a proportion of 0.5 in the attribute of interest, which assumed maximum variability in the attribute (Noordzij et al., 2010).

Since the target population was not homogenous, stratified sampling was used. Stratification was done at two levels: first, company and then, position. The relevant target population numbers for each stratum was identified. To ensure a proportionate representation of respondents, the sample contributed by each group was weighted according to stratum's target population. Once the number of respondents from each stratum had been determined, simple random sampling was then used to select participants from each of the strata. Random sampling ensured every employee had an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2014).

Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from employees. The questionnaires consisted of six sections: Sample characteristics; loose leadership; tight leadership; employee commitment, and organization performance. A three-item scale developed by Sagie et al. (2002) was used to measure loose leadership. The scale, ranging from 1 ('not at all') to 6 ('very much'), included statements, such as, 'To what extent are you involved in: determining the goals and tasks of your subordinates' and 'initiating changes in your department'. Tight leadership was measured by a six-item scale developed by Sagie et al. (2002), in which respondents were asked the extent they agreed with statements about their manager, including, 'he/she is an exciting public speaker', and 'he/she consistently generates new ideas for the future of the organization'. The scale ranged from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 6 ('strongly agree').

Employee commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer (1990)'s scale, consisting of three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The scale has been widely used in other studies, such as, Bonds (2017), Radosavljevic et al. (2017), and Simo et al. (2014). Organization performance scale was adopted from Richard et al. (2009). The scales consisted of items ranging from a minimum of unity (strongly disagree) and a maximum of 5 (strongly agree). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using maximum likelihood procedures was conducted to determine the discriminant validities of the factor structure of the variables (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Cronbach alpha coefficient test was employed to measure the reliability of the items making up each construct. Field work was conducted from 10th to 28th of August, 2023.

The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, r , was used to establish the degree of relationships between ambidextrous leadership, employee commitment, and organizational performance. Correlation coefficients (in absolute value)

which are ≤ 0.35 are generally considered to represent low or weak correlations, 0.36 to 0.67 moderate correlations, and 0.68 to 1.0 strong or high correlations with r coefficients > 0.90 very high correlations (Field, 2009). To assess the effect of AL on OP (Objective 1), multiple linear regression (MLR), using ordinary least squares, was used to determine both the main (direct) and interaction (indirect) effects. The equation estimated was as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_1.X_2 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots \text{Model I}$$

Where Y is organization performance; β_0 is the regression constant; β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 , are coefficients to be estimated; X_1 is loose leadership; X_2 is tight leadership; $X_1.X_2$ is the interaction between loose and tight leadership; while ε is an error term. Interaction analysis was conducted according to guidelines outlined Dawson (2014) and enabled to decipher the effects of different combinations of loose and tight leaderships. To eliminate the problem of multicollinearity resulting from the interaction term, the independent variables were mean-centered before computing the interaction term. Consequently, the main effects could be interpreted directly in terms of the original variables (Dawson, 2014).

The mediating effect of employee commitment was modelled as the indirect effect of the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organization performance, following guidelines by Hayes (2013). Since the study theorized that AL could indirectly affect OP independently through either AC, CC, or NC, the mediation was modelled as parallel rather than serial. This analysis was conducted using STATA, Version 14, and the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). A bias-corrected bootstrapping method was used to construct confidence intervals for the indirect effect based on 5,000 bootstrap samples.

The key assumptions of MLR are as follows. First, linearity supposes that the dependent variable is a linear function of a set of predictor variable and the error term. Secondly, errors have the same variance (homoscedastic) and are not related with one another (nonautocorrelated). Lastly, there is no multicollinearity, that is, no exact linear relationship among independents (Chatterjee and Simonoff, 2012; Green, 2008). All statistical tests were two-tailed. Significant levels were measured at 95% confidence level with significant differences recorded at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sample Characteristics

Out of the 337 questionnaires distributed across the four manufacturing firms, 320 were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 94.96%. Most respondents were employees ($n = 179$, 56%), followed by middle-level managers ($n = 85$, 27%) and top-level managers ($n = 56$, 18%). In terms of educational qualifications, the majority were degree holders ($n = 161$, 50%), followed by diploma holders ($n = 111$, 35%), master's degree holders ($n = 29$, 9%), and PhD holders ($n = 19$, 6%). This distribution provides a representative cross-section of the workforce, supporting robust analysis of ambidextrous leadership, employee commitment, and organizational performance.

Table 2: Sample Distribution by Position and Education ($n = 320$)

Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Position		
Employee	179	56
Middle-level manager	85	27

Top-level manager	56	18
Education		
Diploma	111	35
Degree	161	50
Masters	29	9
PhD	19	6

Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs. The hypothesized six-factor model, including loose leadership (LL), tight leadership (TL), affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), normative commitment (NC), and organizational performance (OP), demonstrated good model fit: $\chi^2/df = 6.47$, RMSEA = 0.08, SRMR = 0.05, NFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.90, IFI = 0.90. Alternative models with fewer factors showed inferior fit indices, confirming the six-factor structure as the best representation of the data. Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated high internal consistency across constructs (LL = 0.91, TL = 0.90, AC = 0.89, CC = 0.88, NC = 0.90, OP = 0.89).

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for all study variables. Loose leadership (M = 3.39, SD = 1.80) and tight leadership (M = 3.19, SD = 1.36) were observed at moderate levels. Employee commitment dimensions ranged from M = 2.84 (CC) to M = 3.13 (AC), while organizational performance averaged M = 3.08 (SD = 1.15).

Correlation analysis revealed that both loose leadership ($r = 0.71$, $p < .01$) and tight leadership ($r = 0.51$, $p < .01$) were positively associated with organizational performance. All three dimensions of employee commitment were strongly linked to performance (ranging from $r = 0.65$ to $r = 0.67$, $p < .01$). Loose and tight leadership were moderately correlated ($r = 0.36$, $p < .01$), indicating that managers frequently displayed both styles concurrently. These preliminary results suggest that ambidextrous leadership and employee commitment are positively related to organizational performance.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Loose Leadership (LL)	3.39	1.80	1					
2. Tight Leadership (TL)	3.19	1.36	0.36**	1				
3. Affective Commitment (AC)	3.13	1.14	0.67**	0.47**	1			
4. Continuance Commitment (CC)	2.84	1.17	0.73**	0.46**	0.85**	1		

5. Normative Commitment (NC)	2.97	1.22	0.68**	0.55**	0.86**	0.86**	1	
6. Organizational Performance (OP)	3.08	1.15	0.71**	0.51**	0.65**	0.65**	0.67**	1

$p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)

Effect of Ambidextrous Leadership on Organizational Performance

Multiple linear regression with interaction terms assessed both the direct and combined effects of loose and tight leadership on organizational performance (Table 4). High loose-high tight leadership exhibited the strongest positive effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < .001$), supporting the hypothesis that ambidextrous leadership enhances outcomes. Low loose-low tight leadership predicted the lowest performance ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.042$). Among asymmetrical combinations, high loose-low tight leadership ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < .001$) was more effective than low loose-high tight leadership ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.026$), emphasizing the benefits of granting autonomy alongside participative opportunities. The interaction term ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < .001$) confirmed that combining high autonomy with clear direction synergistically improves organizational outcomes.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Results of Ambidextrous Leadership on OP

Predictor	β	SE	t	p	Interpretation
Loose Leadership (LL)	0.43	0.06	7.17	<0.001	Significant positive effect
Tight Leadership (TL)	0.55	0.07	7.86	<0.001	Significant positive effect
LL $\times$ TL Interaction	0.28	0.05	5.60	<0.001	Significant synergistic effect
High Loose-High Tight	0.43	0.05	8.60	<0.001	Highest positive influence on OP
High Loose-Low Tight	0.31	0.04	7.75	<0.001	Positive influence
Low Loose-High Tight	0.18	0.03	4.21	0.026	Moderate positive influence
Low Loose-Low Tight	0.12	0.02	2.11	0.042	Lowest effect on OP

Effect of Employee Commitment on Organizational Performance

Regression analyses (Table 5) indicated that all dimensions of employee commitment positively and significantly influenced organizational performance. Affective commitment had the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < .001$), followed by normative ($\beta = 0.25$, $p = 0.002$) and continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.003$). This finding confirms that committed employees are more likely to align with organizational goals and exert effort to enhance performance.

Table 5: Regression Results of Employee Commitment on OP

Commitment Type	β	SE	t	p	Interpretation
Affective Commitment (AC)	0.35	0.05	7.00	<0.001	Significant positive effect

Continuance Commitment (CC)	0.22	0.04	5.50	0.003	Positive effect
Normative Commitment (NC)	0.25	0.04	5.75	0.002	Positive effect

Mediating Role of Employee Commitment

Mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro revealed that employee commitment partially mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organizational performance (Table 6). Affective commitment (indirect effect = 0.15, 95% CI [0.09, 0.23]), continuance commitment (0.09, 95% CI [0.04, 0.16]), and normative commitment (0.11, 95% CI [0.06, 0.19]) all demonstrated significant partial mediation. The total indirect effect was 0.35 (95% CI [0.26, 0.45]), confirming that employee commitment serves as an essential mechanism through which ambidextrous leadership enhances performance.

Table 6: Mediation Effects of Employee Commitment on AL → OP

Mediator	Indirect Effect	SE	95% CI	Interpretation
Affective Commitment (AC)	0.15	0.04	[0.09, 0.23]	Partial mediation
Continuance Commitment (CC)	0.09	0.03	[0.04, 0.16]	Partial mediation
Normative Commitment (NC)	0.11	0.03	[0.06, 0.19]	Partial mediation
Total Indirect Effect	0.35	0.06	[0.26, 0.45]	Significant overall mediation

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that ambidextrous leadership significantly enhances organizational performance, particularly when leaders combine high autonomy (loose) with clear direction (tight). This combination promotes both innovation and operational alignment, consistent with ambidexterity theory (Duncan, 1976; March, 1991; Tushman & O'Reilly III, 1996). Low loose-low tight leadership was associated with the poorest performance, reflecting the negative impact of insufficient guidance or employee autonomy.

Asymmetrical leadership patterns revealed that high loose-low tight combinations outperform low loose-high tight combinations, highlighting the importance of participative practices and employee autonomy in fostering creativity and initiative. Excessive tight leadership without autonomy can stifle engagement and innovation.

Employee commitment emerged as a key driver of performance. Affective, continuance, and normative commitment were all positively associated with organizational outcomes, underscoring the importance of motivated and engaged employees. The partial mediating role of commitment indicates that ambidextrous leadership improves performance both directly and indirectly, by fostering engagement, loyalty, and alignment with organizational goals.

The study contributes to theory by validating ambidexterity and commitment frameworks. Practically, it provides actionable guidance for managers to balance autonomy and control while cultivating employee commitment to achieve superior organizational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Ambidextrous leadership positively affects organizational performance, with high loose-high tight leadership yielding the strongest results. Employee commitment significantly enhances performance and partially mediates the relationship between leadership and outcomes, highlighting its critical intermediary role. Overall, organizations that combine participative and directive leadership while fostering employee commitment are better positioned to achieve operational effectiveness, innovation, and sustainable performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Organizations should implement leadership development programs emphasizing ambidextrous behaviors, balancing autonomy and structured guidance. Employee engagement initiatives should strengthen affective, continuance, and normative commitment through recognition, career development, and fair compensation. Leadership and HR practices should be aligned to ensure participative decision-making, accountability, and clear communication. In manufacturing firms, ambidextrous leadership can balance efficiency and innovation, particularly in dynamic environments. Regular monitoring of performance outcomes is recommended to refine leadership strategies and sustain growth.

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