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Examining the Role of Core Self-Evaluation and Learning Goal Orientation in Determining Individual Ambidexterity

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ABSTRACT

Purpose-The recent astronomical growth witnessed in the study and the importance of achieving organizational ambidexterity by scholars, the ensuing focus on promoting individual ambidexterity to achieve organizational ambidexterity, and the further focus on the micro-foundations of individual ambidexterity warrants to dig deep into the factors that determine individual ambidexterity. Research has largely missed the individual differences in people that may either promote or hinder their ambidextrous behavior. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of core self-evaluation as a broad personality trait in determining the ambidextrous behaviors of employees at an individual level. This study also investigates the role of learning goal orientation as a mediator between core self-evaluation and individual ambidexterity.

Design/Methodology/Approach-This study uses data from 396 managerial level employees collected through structured questionnaires in two waves from various organizations across multiple industries. Data is analyzed through Hayes Process Macro using SPSS and Amos v.24.

Findings -The data analysis shows that core self-evaluation has a positive impact on individual ambidexterity and that learning goal orientation mediates the relationship between core self-evaluation and individual ambidexterity.

Practical Implications-This study offers significant implications for human resource managers and top management of the organization by highlighting the importance of selecting employees with positive core self-evaluation and the importance of encouraging those employees to set learning-oriented goals.

Originality/Value-Very few researchers have studied the impact of the personality trait of core self-evaluation on complex but desired behavioural outcomes in organizations. The individual differences between employees play an important role in their behavioural manifestations, hence, understanding the differences is crucial to achieving goals and success. This study positively contributes to the literature on core self-evaluation and individual ambidexterity by demonstrating a positive link between them.

Keywords: Core self-evaluation, learning goal orientation, individual ambidexterity

1. INTRODUCTION

To successfully compete in industries and markets characterized by dynamism, turbulence, and uncertainty and driven by technology, researchers have considered it

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imperative for companies to become ambidextrous (Paul & Antons, 2020). The rapid growth of research on organizational ambidexterity (Amjad & Nor, 2020; Snehvrat et al., 2018) and its significant impact on positive organizational outcomes (Schnellbächer & Heidenreich, 2020; Tarba et al., 2020), for instance, firm's environmental and financial performance (Zhao et al., 2021), innovation performance (Ardito et al., 2019), was ensued by research on the antecedents of organizational ambidexterity (Kafetzopoulos, 2021). However, research is still scarce on ambidexterity at an individual level (Karani et al., 2022) even though the importance of its prevalence and its connection to organizational ambidexterity has been widely recognized (Mom et al., 2019). Empirical studies have demonstrated the importance of achieving organizational ambidexterity through individual ambidexterity along with the contemplation that organizational ambidexterity is not possible without ambidexterity at the individual employee level. It is also contemplated that ambidexterity can be present at all levels of an organization, from macro to meso to the individual level (Mom et al., 2019).

Individual ambidexterity is the ability of a person to adapt to dynamic contexts and increased demands by successfully shifting, balancing, and managing two contradictory tasks that compete for the same finite resources. Explorative behavior in individual ambidexterity refers to focusing on probing alternative behaviors by disengaging from the current task. While an individual's exploitative behavior focuses on improving task performance. However, not every individual will respond to the situation in the same manner due to differences in their personality that predisposes them to engage in certain behaviors and avoid others (Farčić et al., 2020). Hence, it is imperative to dig deeper into the personality traits of people that predispose them to take risks and cope with challenges and complexity. Core self-evaluation (CSE) determines an individual's evaluation of individual's capability, self-worth, and competence. There are very few studies on the personality dispositions of individual employees which is the focus of the current study.

Learning goal orientation (LGO) delineates a people's desire to learn new and novel things and increase competence which makes them capable of persisting and actively managing in adverse and challenging situations, and learn from failures (Islam et al.,

2021). It is proposed that positive CSE will predict ambidexterity, this means that a person who has a positive CSE, in all likelihood, will engage in both exploitation and exploration.

The objective of this research is to see how personality-based dispositional factor of employees predict their ability to simultaneously engage in and balance between exploitative and explorative activities at their workplace. This research intends to investigate the impact of the personality factor of CSE on ambidextrous behavior and to see how LGO intervenes in the relationship between CSE and ambidexterity. Hence, the objectives of the study are.

- To investigate the impact of personality factors on individual ambidextrous behavior
- To investigate the role of learning orientation as a mediation mechanism in predicting individual ambidexterity

The current study has contributed to filling the gap in studies on the dispositions of ambidextrous employees and takes it as an opportunity to find out the prerequisite dispositional factor that makes an employee ambidextrous. This study draws on the social cognitive theory (SCT) to explain the relationships between CSE, LGO, and individual ambidexterity as shown in the figure. 1. Among the very few researches that have included employees' dispositional factors include studies on employees' locomotion and assessment orientation (Caniëls & van Assen, 2019), self-efficacy (Ma et al., 2023; Mom et al., 2019), learning goal orientation (Snehvrat et al., 2022), and big five personality model (Park & Kim, 2022). Furthermore, learning goal orientation has been linked with ambidexterity in extant research, however, it is a relatively unstable construct with different definitions and measures due to which the results from studying its impact on behavior can be questioned. Taking LGO as a self-regulatory mediation mechanism that may be affected by other variables, this research uses CSE as the stable dispositional variable to predict ambidexterity. This study makes major contribution to the literature of ambidexterity as well as CSE, by explaining the psychological mechanism behind the occurrence of ambidexterity at micro or individual level by taking into account a major individual difference between employees i.e their CSE. CSE as a broad personality

construct becomes more powerful in predicting behavior but has been ignored in ambidexterity literature up till now. Besides, taking a strong, stable, and enduring personality character as a predictor is important than taking weak and malleable predictors. LGO is a malleable construct with trait and state characteristics, however, presence of a stable trait like CSE positively influences an individual's state and malleable characteristic like LGO to engage in positive, challenging, complex and rewarding behaviors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Relationship between core self-evaluation and individual ambidexterity

As already mentioned, ambidexterity is the behavioural ability of a person to create a balance between two contradictory and paradoxical work behaviors namely exploitation and exploration by engaging in and alternating between them. The more an individual engages in both types of behaviors, the more ambidextrous that individual is. Exploitation behavior is focused on the at-hand tasks and behaviors that involve refining existing competencies and assets, on the contrary, explorations refer to looking for alternate methods, increasing knowledge, and creating new products and assets. Any factor that increases the level of engagement of an individual in exploration activities without compromising on exploitation activities is a good candidate to be a predictor of ambidexterity because people in organizations tend to engage more in exploitation activities due to the need to focus on achieving short-term goals (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016). However, a lot of challenges are involved in becoming ambidextrous, for instance, limitation of time, fighting for the same resources, the organization's inherent focus on exploitative activities, and the intellectual challenge to switch between two very different behaviors requiring very different sets of minds. Despite the many challenges involved people do engage in ambidextrous behaviors at different levels, suggesting that the differences in their personality traits influence their ability, motivation, and confidence to embrace challenges.

CSE was first developed as a higher-order personality trait, a broad personality trait comprising four different personality traits to predict the degree of job satisfaction. The

traits that form the framework include emotional stability, the ability of a person to stay calm in all situations, generalized self-efficacy (GSE), a person's confidence in his ability to perform and manage in a broad range of circumstances, locus of control (LOC), the belief of a person that whatever is happening in his life is due to his self and not due to any external factors or powers and that a person can influence things to get desired results, and self-esteem, a person's assessment of his self-worth. Hence, these traits are closely interrelated, and their interrelationship means that they can predict similar relations with many other variables. Though the four traits of CSE have been studied in isolation, however, any single trait of personality tends to be a weak predictor of behavior at work, hence, a broader personality variable should be taken to evaluate a better personality predictor of work behavior.

The SCT proposes that the behavior of people is a product of their personality, hence, we draw on SCT to propose that there is a positive association between CSE and ambidexterity. Literature on CSE depicts that it has been significantly related to many valuable and positive organizational phenomena and outcomes such as thriving at work (Usman et al., 2021), individual human capital, individual structural capital, individual relational capital, and incremental and radical creativity (Z. Wang et al., 2021; Y. Zhang et al., 2020), knowledge sharing (Y. Zhang et al., 2020), innovative behavior of follower (Ding & Yu, 2020), work engagement (Gullifor et al., 2022), job crafting (Kim & Beehr, 2020), and positive affect and emotional intelligence (Ding & Lin, 2020).

An individual who has a positive CSE is emotionally stable and does not stress in difficult situations, for instance, while balancing exploitation and exploration. An internal locus of control ensures that the individual can influence the environment, stay positive even when faced with stressful events (Qurrahtulain et al., 2022), make positive changes, and get the desired results if sufficient efforts are put in. High GSE makes an individual confident in an individual's ability to perform a variety of challenging tasks and having high self-esteem means that the individual believes in his or her abilities. In totality, people with positive CSE can cope with challenging work demands (Kim & Beehr, 2020). The specific personality trait of self-efficacy has been positively associated with ambidexterity (Mom et al., 2019). Another research shows a positive association between

exploratory self-efficacy and employee ambidexterity (Boemelburg et al., 2018). In addition, an IOC has been positively linked to innovative work behavior (Betsy Sparks PhD, 2021) and vigor at work (Qurrahtulain et al., 2022) which means that people with an internal LOC can stay strong and enthusiastic and are willing to put efforts to achieve their goals. Furthermore, self-esteem and self-efficacy have also been linked with proactive work behavior (Damayanty et al., 2022), and emotional stability is positively associated with work engagement (Kundi et al., 2022).

The fact that positive CSE has been linked with job performance and incremental and radical creativity makes it plausible that it will be a good predictor of ambidexterity as well. Employees with positive CSE are highly motivated which can contribute to engaging in ambidextrous behaviors (Paul & Antons, 2020) because the desire to engage in behaviors that are complex, demanding, and may not offer immediate gratification require high levels of intrinsic motivation (Mom et al., 2019). Individuals with positive CSE can skillfully utilize their abilities and make the most out of their abilities to achieve the success which makes them good candidates for ambidextrous behavior. So, we propose our first hypothesis as

H1*: There is a positive association between core self-evaluation and individual ambidexterity.*

2.2. Relationship between Core Self Evaluation and Learning Goal Orientation

Learning goals stimulate individuals to learn and master new things and increase their competence. Learning goals are adaptive so people with learning goals or mastery-oriented goals are challenge seekers, persist effectively in the face of adversity, and enjoy putting effort into achieving their learning goals. These people don't easily get stressed as they enjoy challenges and difficulty. All the individual traits included in CSE, when combined, lead people toward setting challenging goals. Faith in one own self, confidence in own abilities, the belief that one can control events and what happens in one's surroundings, and the ability to stay calm in difficult situations automatically lead a person to set goals and targets that are interesting, challenging, knowledge gaining, and complex. The self-confidence in a person that he can do whatever tasks he may have to take encourages the person to aim for mastery goals that may challenge his abilities and

boundaries.

There is a dearth of research on the direct relationship between CSE and LGO, however, few studies have found a significant positive relationship between CSE and LGO (Debicki et al., 2016) and proactive personality and LGO (Lin et al., 2019), which trigger similar positive organizational behaviors. Likewise, a couple of studies have found a positive association between some specific traits of CSE and LGO. A study by Kauppila and Tempelaar (2016) has found a positive association between GSE and LGO, where GSE is a predictor of LGO. A meta-analysis by Payne et al. (2007) found that GSE and self-esteem are antecedents of LGO. As the specific traits of CSE are positively related to LGO, it is reasonable to assume that the combined construct of CSE will also predict learning-oriented goal setting in people with positive CSE. Based on the above arguments, we propose our next hypothesis as

H2*: There is a positive association between core self-evaluation and learning goal orientation.*

2.3. Relationship between Learning Goal Orientation and Individual Ambidexterity

Extant research has found LGO to be an important predictor of behavior in organizations and scholars have understood and acknowledged its importance. It has long been established that to engage, persist and get success in challenging tasks, a person needs the ability to do so. However, over and above ability, a person's motivation to engage in challenging tasks also plays an important role in determining the selection of behavior and resulting success (Mom et al., 2019). Experimental studies have shown that with an increase in a challenging situation, people with learning goals perform better. Research has also concluded that employees can become ambidextrous if they are supported by managers whose goals are learning-oriented (Yen et al., 2022).

So, the achievement goal a person adopts will most likely affect his performance behavior besides his abilities and external factors influencing behavior. LGO is a self-regulatory variable that is flexible and subject to an individual's ability to regulate one's self. Research has linked LGO to important organizational outcomes e.g. work engagement and creativity (Bakker et al., 2020; Rozkwitalska et al., 2022), and individual

creativity (J. Zhang et al., 2020). Extant research has also shown a positive relationship between LGO and individual ambidexterity (Snehvrat et al., 2022; Xiang et al., 2019). LGO's relationship with creativity and work engagement suggests that it leads to both explorative and exploitative work behaviors. Hence, our next hypothesis is.

H3: *There is a positive association between learning goal orientation and individual ambidexterity.*

2.4. Learning Goal orientation as Mediator

This study has hypothesized that people with a positive CSE will be motivated to engage in ambidextrous behaviors, however, to understand how CSE will lead people to behave ambidextrously we need to understand the means that people may use to approach their work problems. A mid-level, state like the construct of learning goal orientation which is flexible and can be self-regulated may explain how people tend to engage in ambidextrous activities. A person's desire to learn and persist in face of adversity depends on how a person evaluates oneself in terms of capability, control, and being worthy of persisting in difficult tasks. People set goals based on their evaluations of themselves. If people think that they can accomplish difficult tasks because they can do so (Branden, 2021), they will set higher goals for accomplishing the task. Difficult and novel tasks pose challenges and create stress; however, emotionally stable people can overcome work stressors as they have control over their emotions, so they can set difficult goals and persist in achieving them. Research has shown a negative relationship between CSE with stress and emotional exhaustion (Geuens et al., 2020). A person's assessment of his or her capability to cope with stress determines the process of goal formulation. Based on this, it can be safely assumed that emotionally stable people generally feel less work stress and in turn, can set high learning goals. Research has also shown that people with high self-esteem actively engage in tasks that are deemed difficult (Branden, 2021) and there is a tendency in people with high self-esteem and self-efficacy to feel less stress (Piekarska, 2020). In addition, people with positive CSE tend to have goal-setting behavior (Judge et al., 2003). Hence, people with a positive CSE can cope with stress while facing challenging and complex work tasks so they can set learning-oriented goals, create additional knowledge and challenge them, and engage in

ambidextrous behaviors to achieve those goals. LGO has been positively linked with work engagement (Rozkwitalska et al., 2022) which means that people with LGO keep their focus on exploitation activities, however, their learning goals also encourage them to engage in knowledge-seeking activities which then translate into explorative activities. Therefore, we propose that CSE will impact ambidexterity through LGO.

H4*: Learning goal orientation will mediate the relationship between positive core self-evaluation and individual ambidexterity.*

2.5. Proposed Research Model

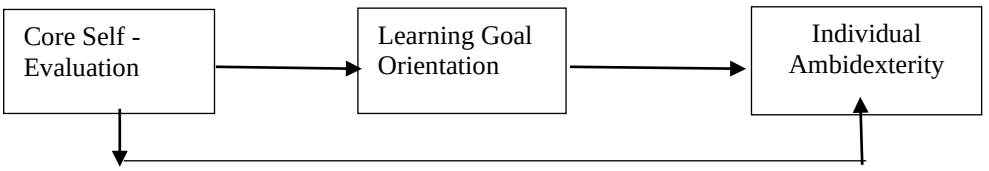

Figure 1. Research model

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants and Procedures

Data were collected through self-administered structured questionnaires in English in two waves with a gap of eight weeks. Questionnaires were sent to lower and middle-level managerial employees from different organizations belonging to various industries including telecom, banking, and manufacturing. 515 questionnaires on CSE and LGO were sent via emails, in-person visits, and mail at T1, and after a lag of eight weeks, the next questionnaire was sent at T2 containing questions on ambidexterity. The time lag was introduced to ensure temporal separation between personality and subsequent behavior as ambidexterity is hard to achieve at the individual level, hence, people take time to engage in both behaviors. A total of 439 responses were received from the 515 questionnaires sent out at T1. At T2 questionnaires were sent to those who completed and returned the first set of questionnaires. A final response rate of 77% was achieved with 396 appropriate responses. Following the survey data screening, only valid questionnaires were chosen.

Table 1 lists and summarizes the sample characteristics. The sample comprised 38%

females and 62% males, with a graduation rate of 59% as the greatest educational attainment. 39% of respondents belong to the 31–40 age group, 32% are in the 41–50 category, 16% are in the 21–30 category, and the remaining 13% are in the 51–above age bracket. The majority of respondents (42%) have 11 to 15 years of experience, 28% have 16 or more years, 23% have 6 to 10 years, and the remaining 7% have up to 5 years of experience in the current organization.

Table 1
Respondents' Profile (n=396)

Category	Characteristics	%Age
Gender	Male	62
	Female	38
Age	21-30	16
	31-40	39
	41-50	32
	51 and above	13
Level of Education	Higher secondary or equivalent	2
	Under-graduate	12
	Graduate	59
	Post-graduate	27
Length of Service in the current organization:	Up to 5	7
	6-10yrs	23
	11-15yrs	42
	16 & above	28

3.2. Measures

The study employed developed items from past studies to examine the measures' validity and reliability. All items are rated on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree," 3 representing "neutral," and 5 denoting "strongly agree" (strongly agree).

Core Self-Evaluation (T1): Using a 12-item scale (α= 0.803) established by Judge et al. (2003) on a Likert scale with five possible points ranging from 1 to 5, employees' CSE is assessed. For instance, "I sometimes feel useless when I fail."

Learning Goal Orientation (T1): A four items scale developed by Elliot and Church

(1997) was used to measure the degree of willingness of individuals in setting learning-oriented goals. A sample item from this scale is 'In my job, I prefer tasks that challenge me so I can learn new things' (α=.810).

Individual Ambidexterity (T2): We used a scale developed by Mom et al. (2009) to determine each person's level of ambidexterity. We performed a two-step ambidexterity test in accordance with (Mom et al., 2009) and used a common methodology for ambidexterity research (e.g., Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016). First, to quantify exploration and exploitation separately, we applied two orthogonal scales. Questions from Mom et al. (2009) such as "Activities of which the associated yields or costs are still unclear," were adapted to evaluate exploration behaviour (α=.931). Each activity's level of exploration during the previous 12 months was rated by the participants. Likewise, items were adapted from Mom et al. (2009) exploitation-behavior scale (with items like "Activities you engage in as though they were routine") with scale reliability (α =.912). Then, we computed a multiplicative interaction between exploitation and exploration to find a sign of ambidexterity. Previous researchers have proposed that the most accurate way to quantify ambidexterity is through the commutative interaction between exploration and exploitation since ambidexterity is a multidimensional construct made up of non-substitutable, synergistic, and interdependent components (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016; Mom et al., 2009).

3.3. Control Variables

In this study, the employee's age was controlled as Mom et al. (2009) found a negative correlation between ambidexterity and age. Additionally, we accounted for the number of years of employment because engaging in the same activity again over an extended period of time may hinder innovation. We also considered the gender of our participants because it is possible for businesses to discriminate against female employees by assigning them to less innovative or challenging tasks.

3.4. Analytical Strategy

Firstly, since there are potential hazards the following conditions pose to the normal data distribution, incomplete data and exceptions are first identified and then removed using 'SPSS 24.0.' Secondly, using AMOS 24.0, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is

run using all study variables. Then, a detailed examination of reliability and validity is conducted by evaluating the measurement model's composite reliability and convergent and divergent validity.

The average variance scores are determined using the construct-related standardized weights (Sarstedt et al., 2021). Thirdly, common method bias—another important issue with the study—was investigated using 'Harman's single factor score', which upholds the loading of all items (measuring unobserved variables) into a unified measure. One (single) factor's overall variance must be less than 50%, and if it is, there is very little likelihood that common method bias will have an effect on the data or the results (Bozionelos & Simmering, 2022). Then, using SPSS 24.0, all constructs' descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and Cronbach alphas are calculated. Finally, Hayes Process Macro (2017) is used to test hypotheses using a biased confidence interval.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and Cronbach alphas of the research variables at T1 and T2 before the analysis of the hypothesized model is summarized in Table 2. The correlations between all the variables considered are shown in Table 2. All analyzed variables have a strong positive correlation, as shown.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics

Variable	α	Mean	SD	Correlation		
				1	2	3
1. CSE	0.803	3.5	0.601	1		
2. Ambidexterity	0.931	8.9	5.22	0.321	1	
3. LGO	0.81	3.4	0.82	0.717	0.329	1

Note: CSE: Core self-evaluation, LGO: Learning goal orientation

4.2. Measurement Model

CFA is used to estimate each variable's validity. Individual ambidexterity must be investigated using both dimensions of exploration and exploitation. Researchers have demonstrated that an individual cannot engage in the exploitation and exploration dimensions of individual ambidexterity at the same time, hence two different CFA were

conducted. Each CFA considered each dimension of individual ambidexterity separately (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016). The measures of this study consist of numerous item scales (e.g., CSE 12 items). To prevent the issue of model under-identification, an item parceling strategy was used. Because of item parceling, a decreased number of parameters lead to stable scales, insignificant standard errors, and an enhanced model fit (Sterba & Rights, 2022). All items assigned to parcels were averaged. Each study constructs—CSE, LGO, and individual ambidexterity thus forming a minimum of three parcels. The CFA result demonstrates the independence of all variables.

CFA results for the exploration dimension of individual ambidexterity are presented in figure 2. Comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.975, Tucker-Lewis's index (TLI) = 0.961, The goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.966, root-mean-square error approximation (RMSEA) = 0.063, and standardized root means residual (SRMR) = 0.047. CMIN/ df = 3.110, p <0.000. All values of the model fit for individual ambidexterity (exploration) fall within permissible bounds (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Likewise, results of the CFA for exploitation behaviour of individual ambidexterity are presented in figure 2b. The model fit values CFI=0.969, TLI= 0.951, GFI= 0. 960, SRMR=.041, CMIN/Df= 3.132 & REMSEA= 0.073 fall in acceptable limits (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 3a
Factor loadings, composite reliability, and AVE (individual Ambidexterity as exploration)

Constructs	Loadings	CR	AVE
Core Self-Evaluation		0.827	0.622
CSE Parcel 1	0.687		
CSE Parcel 2	0.975		
CSE Parcel 3	0.866		
Learning Goal Orientation		0.902	0.708
LGO 1	0.998		
LGO 2	0.758		
LGO 3	0.709		
LGO 4	0.977		
Individual Ambidexterity		0.931	0.818
IA Exploration parcel 1	0.906		
IA Exploration parcel 2	0.900		
IA Exploration parcel 3	0.908		

Note(s): CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted; p < 0.01

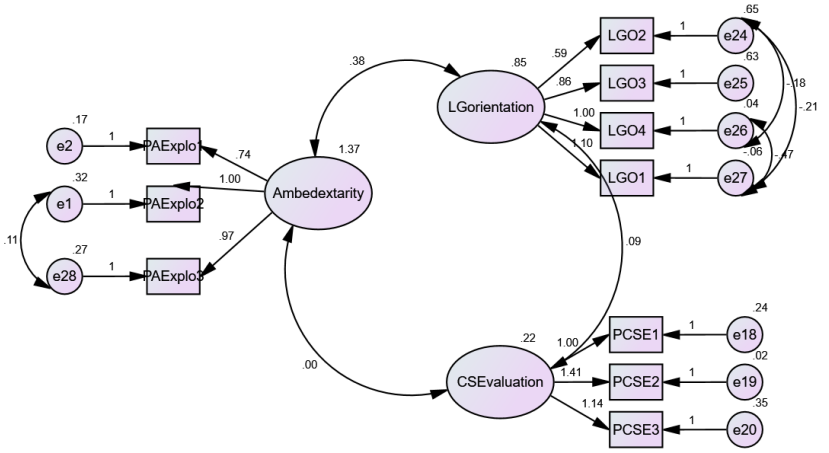

Figure 2a. Measurement Model (Individual Ambidexterity as Exploration)

Table 3b *Factor loadings, composite reliability, and AVE (individual ambidexterity as exploitation)*			
Constructs	**Loadings**	**CR**	**AVE**
Core Self-Evaluation		0.827	0.623
CSE Parcel 1	0.681		
CSE Parcel 2	0.984		
CSE Parcel 3	0.861		
Learning Goal Orientation		0.888	0.676
LGO 1	0.992		
LGO 2	0.544		
LGO 3	0.736		
LGO 4	0.939		
Individual Ambidexterity		0.861	0.676
IA Exploitation parcel 1	0.683		
IA Exploitation parcel 2	0.908		
IA Exploitation parcel 3	0.861		
Note(s): CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted; p < 0.01			

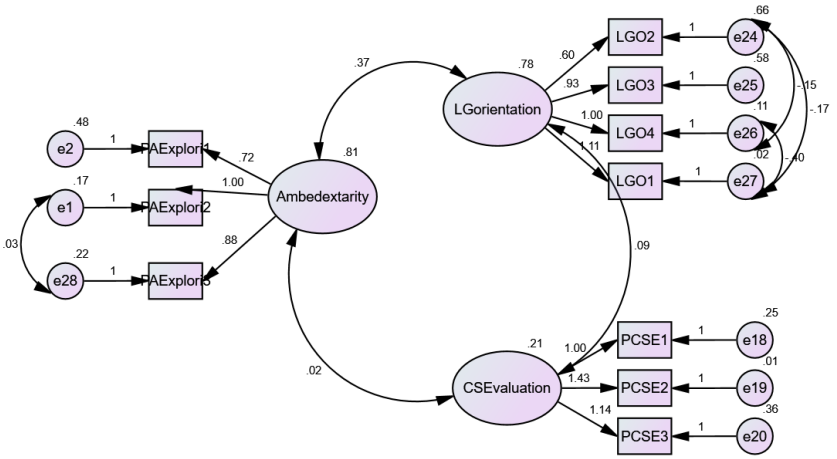

Figure 2b. Measurement Model (Individual Ambidexterity as Exploitation)

Table 4a.
Measurement model analysis result (individual ambidexterity as exploration)

Variable	A	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	CSE	Ambidexterity	LGO
CSE	0.803	0.827	0.622	0.045	0.954	0.789		
Ambidexterity	0.931	0.931	0.818	0.125	0.931	0.321	0.905	
LGO	0.81	0.902	0.708	0.125	0.848	0.717	0.329	0.841
Note: CSE: Core self-evaluation, LGO: Learning goal orientation								

Table 4b.
Measurement model analysis result (individual ambidexterity as exploitation)

Variable	A	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	CSE	Ambidexterity	LGO
CSE	0.803	0.827	0.623	0.051	0.970	0.789		
Ambidexterity	0.931	0.861	0.677	0.217	0.894	0.051	0.823	
LGO	0.81	0.888	0.676	0.217	0.986	0.225	0.466	0.822
Note: CSE: Core self-evaluation, LGO: Learning goal orientation								

Additionally, all research constructs' AVE values, Cronbach's alpha (α), and composite reliability (Dreaver et al.) values (see table 4a & 4b) are securely above the threshold values. The recovered values for alpha, composite reliability, and average variance ensure the measurement model's convergent validity (see Table 4a & 4b). Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, which is used to evaluate discriminant validity, explains that

the square root of each variable should be greater than the different inter-construct correlations. On the diagonals of Table 4 (a & b), the square root of the average variance extracted for each observed variable is given. Upon thorough examination of the data, it becomes apparent that the square root of the average variance extracted from each variable has the strongest connection with other variables of each given variable; as a result, discriminant validity is assessed and confirmed for both dimensions (exploration & exploitation) of individual ambidexterity.

4.3. Hypotheses testing

The study's hypotheses were tested using SPSS Process Macro developed by Hayes (2017), and the results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5
Model path co-efficient

HYPOTHESIS	Path	β	P-value	Confidence Interval		Decision
				L	U	
Hypothesis1	CSE-IAMB	1.532	0.010	0.3728	2.692	Accept
Hypothesis2	CSE-LGO	0.9795	0.000	0.8851	1.203	Accept
Hypothesis3	LGO-IAMB	1.285	0.000	0.437	2.134	Accept
Hypothesis4	CSE-LGO-IAMB	1.2596	0.000	0.4534	2.138	Accept
R-square	0.5144					
Variables Controlled	B	P-value				
Gender	0.197	0.094				
Tenure	0.049	0.713				
Age	0.038	0.413				

These findings suggest a significant relationship exists. Almost all results agree with findings in the literature between investigated variables. First, we examined the direct relationship, and then the indirect (mediation) relationship. A significant and positive relationship is found between employees' CSE and their LGO and ambidexterity, according to hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 1 respectively, and LGO and employee ambidexterity are also strongly correlated, according to hypothesis 3. Besides confirming H1, the findings are aligned with the existing literature where some traits of CSE are related to ambidexterity (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016), by demonstrating a strong positive

relationship between employee CSE (β= 1.532, p 0.01) and individual ambidexterity. Employees' ambidextrous actions are impacted by their self-efficacy characteristic of CSE in a competitive and fierce work environment that necessitates such behaviour (Ma et al., 2023; Mom et al., 2019). Given the intense competition in the market, employees and businesses must make the most out of their scarce resources, making it essential to maintain a successful balance between powerful exploitative improvements and exploratory innovations. Wang's research on intellectual capital and how technology-based enterprises can survive (J. Wang et al., 2021) also supports this notion.

Moreover, as shown in table 5, the results indicate that CSE is positively related to LGO (β=.9795, p <.01) and to individual ambidexterity (β=1.285, p 0.01) in support of H2 and H1 respectively which are also aligned with the prior studies in the literature (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016). Employees' self-efficacy and internal locus of control which are the defining features of CSE affect their LGO positively and stimulate employees to develop themselves by acquiring new skills and improving their competence to survive in challenging but uncertain situations. Goal orientation indicates an individual's self-development attitudes which encourage people to use effort and tenacity to accomplish challenging tasks by fostering an intrinsic enthusiasm for the task itself. Studies have shown that LGO promotes ambidextrous behaviour (Xiang et al., 2019).

Mediation exists when with a change in the predictive variable, there is a mediation (indirect relationship) between that change and the mediating variable, which then has an impact on the outcome variable. According to hypothesis 4, employee learning goal orientation may mediate the relationship between individual ambidexterity and CSE. Table 5 lists the results of Hayes' (2017) macro process measuring the indirect relationship (mediation) between CSE and employee ambidextrous behaviors. The results show that CSE (via LGO) significantly affects employee ambidexterity [β= 1.596, p <0.01, 95% CI (0.453, 2.138)]. Additionally, bias-corrected bootstrap analysis reveals that 0 is excluded from the 95% confidence interval (CI) for the mediating effect of LGO, supporting H4. This result is consistent with literature that emphasizes the mediating function of LGO (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016).

5. DISCUSSION

Ambidexterity at the individual level is an emerging phenomenon with many studies today focused on studying its antecedents. As research has shown that individual ambidexterity leads to organizational ambidexterity (Mom et al., 2019), the benefits of which have been widely discussed in the literature (Snehvrat et al., 2018), the research on drivers of individual ambidexterity has gained momentum. However, the psychological underpinnings of individual ambidexterity are still understudied and need attention (Park & Kim, 2022). This study investigates the role of an individual's personality trait of CSE and learning orientation focus in predicting the individual's ambidextrous behavior. The results of the study are in line with the previous studies. A positive association between CSE and ambidexterity can be seen in the results, which is in line with past studies where ambidexterity has been linked with the individual constructs of self-efficacy (Mom et al., 2019) and where CSE has been linked with incremental and radical creativity (Z. Wang et al., 2021), innovative behavior of follower (Ding & Yu, 2020), and work engagement (Gullifor et al., 2022). Previous literature on ambidexterity shows that strong personality traits influence the work behavior of employees, and they tend to engage in complex and demanding work roles.

Furthermore, the results of this study on the positive association between LGO and ambidexterity are also consistent with previous studies where LGO has been studied as an antecedent of ambidexterity (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016; Xiang et al., 2019). People with learning goals set goals that assist them in learning new things. People tend to focus on at-hand tasks in organizations because doing routine work is a necessity, however, people with learning goals focus on both current at-hand tasks as well as future-oriented learning tasks, hence, they can divide their time in doing both types of tasks.

The results also support the mediation of LGO between CSE and ambidexterity. In extant research, LGO is often taken as a mediator due to it being a mid-level and flexible construct that is influenced by a strong personality predictor (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016). This study also takes LGO as a mediator between CSE and ambidexterity with the notion that a strong personality does not automatically translate to ambidextrous behavior.

Along with a strong personality, people need to be learning-oriented to be able to engage in ambidextrous behaviors.

This study is consistent with past studies that postulate that individual differences in employees affect their ability and motivation to engage in complex behaviors (Kauppila & Tempelaar, 2016).

6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

6.1. Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the ambidexterity and CSE literature, extending it by including a broad personality measure that can be a stronger predictor of ambidextrous behavior. Up till now, a gap was evident in ambidexterity literature with only a few studies on individual differences between employees. It can be seen in organizations that despite having the same kind of facilities, opportunities, and context, people behave differently. Hence, it is important to study the individual differences in employees to understand the psychological mechanisms that shape their way of doing things. CSE has been completely ignored in ambidexterity literature despite having strong associations with positive and productive behaviors at work, hence, this study included it as a predictor of ambidexterity. The results of the study add to the literature on CSE and ambidexterity.

6.2. Practical Contribution

Due to the emergence of a turbulent and dynamic environment, organizations know that they can no longer operate in the same old ways. Organizations know that to keep afloat and be successful they need to learn new ways of doing things and this can be possible only through the employees of the organization. With changing work roles, the complexity of task demands, and the need to constantly engage in exploitative and explorative tasks, organizations need to recruit individuals with high capacity to fill the demanding work roles. This study has significant implications for HR managers as the positive association between CSE, LGO, and individual ambidexterity establishes that people with CSE and LGO tend to engage in ambidextrous behavior, hence, the human resources department should introduce personality instruments and learning orientation

measures to measure the personality and learning orientation of their applicants and offer the job to only those who have a positive CSE and an inclination towards learning behavior. Inducting employees that have a positive CSE means that the organization has a rich pool of confident, able, and emotionally stable employees that can deal with the challenges of new and complex work roles.

Furthermore, having a positive CSE personality does not automatically mean that a person will engage in ambidextrous behaviors. With having a broad positive personality trait, the employees need to know that they have to set high learning goals as well that can improve their breadth of knowledge along with depth. The exploration and exploitation dimensions of ambidexterity are mutually enabling hence engaging in explorative behaviors will help employees to increase their knowledge of their tasks at hand, and further knowledge of at-hand tasks will push employees to learn new things about the task. These mutually enabling behaviors need people with an attitude toward learning new and complex things. People need the kind of personality which enables them to learn, and learning leads to explorative behaviors, which then enhance an individual's exploitative behavior. Learning goal orientation being a flexible construct, can be influenced by higher-level managers. Thus, managers at higher organizational levels can support their subordinates in setting learning-oriented goals to stimulate knowledge-pursuing behavior and engagement in explorative activities along with exploitative activities.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

This study has some shortcomings. Firstly, even though we employed two-wave data collection, which tested the predictors and criterion variable at two different points, there is no separation of time between CSE and LGO so we can't conclude causality between study variables based on the results. We support the temporal separation of the predictor and the mediator along with experimental designs with greater temporal separation of a couple of months between predictor and mediator and at least one year between predictor and criterion variable. This is because people take time to switch between explorative and exploitative behaviors and become consistent in engaging in and switching between both

types of behavior. Secondly, there may be issues with the common method bias due to all the study measures being self-reported.

The ideology of individual ambidexterity goes beyond the ambidexterity literature and manifests its significance in motivation and work design literature as well. Scholars have realized the importance of the ability of employees to perform diverse tasks due to the complexity of work roles in contemporary organizations and to be proactive in identifying, developing, and following their goals. Scholars are encouraged to find different motivational and dispositional traits that stimulate ambidexterity. Researchers highlight the importance of adopting ambidextrous behavior to motivate employees and make the jobs interesting for them, future researchers may test this model in different industries and sectors for greater generalizability of the results.

In addition, future studies may focus on organizational factors that may influence behavior of employees, for instance, organizational culture, structure, and teams on individual ambidexterity. As employees are not free from the context of their organizations, some boundary conditions can be introduced and studied to investigate the impact of different organizational contexts and variables on the relationship between personality traits and individual ambidexterity. Besides offering many positive outcomes, being ambidextrous runs the risk of burnout, exhaustion, and high turnover. Future studies can study the negative outcomes of individual ambidexterity and the organizational and personal constructs that can mitigate the negative effects of ambidexterity.

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