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The Role of Ambidextrous Leadership and Self-Serving Bias in Enhancing Organizational Agility through Psychological Safety as a Mediating Variable in Non-Formal Education

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Abstract

Rapid environmental changes require organizations, including education and training institutions, to develop high adaptive capabilities, commonly referred to as organizational agility. This study aims to examine the role of ambidextrous leadership and self-serving bias in enhancing organizational agility through psychological safety as the mediating variable in non-formal education. A quantitative research design was employed using a survey method involving 108 employees of Build Better Communication, a non-formal education. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that ambidextrous leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational agility ($\beta = 0.394$; $p < 0.05$) and psychological safety ($\beta = 0.568$; $p < 0.05$). Psychological safety also has a positive and significant effect on organizational agility ($\beta = 0.335$; $p < 0.05$). Self-serving bias has no significant direct effect on organizational agility ($\beta = 0.028$; $p > 0.05$), but it significantly influences psychological safety ($\beta = 0.245$; $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, psychological safety partially mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organizational agility ($\beta = 0.190$; $p < 0.05$) and fully mediates the relationship between self-serving bias and organizational agility ($\beta = 0.082$; $p < 0.05$). The R-square values of 0.412 for Psychological Safety and 0.433 for Organizational Agility indicate a moderate explanatory power of the model. These findings highlight the critical role of ambidextrous leadership and psychological safety in enhancing organizational agility and emphasize psychological safety as a key psychological mechanism linking leadership behavior and cognitive bias to organizational adaptability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly rapid, uncertain and complex changes in the business environment require organizations to have high adaptive capabilities in order to survive and be competitive (Junengsih, 2022). In modern management, this capability is known as organizational agility, which refers to an organization's capacity to respond to change quickly, flexibly, and effectively through adjustments in strategy, structure, and work processes. Organizational agility has become a strategic issue not only for commercial enterprises but also for educational service organizations facing dynamic learner needs, advances in learning technology, and increasing competition among institutions.

Organizational agility is a strategic concern for educational service organizations as well as commercial businesses, given the ever-changing needs of students, technological

advancements in education, and inter-institutional competition. According to management literature, developing organizational agility is largely dependent on effective leadership. The results of earlier studies, however, continue to be inconsistent with respect to the leadership philosophies that best promote organizational agility. While some studies stress the value of stability and control, others stress the significance of leadership that is focused on innovation. Because of this circumstance, there is a research gap about how leaders can manage the demands of both exploration and exploitation at the same time.

Ambidextrous leadership has emerged as a promising approach because it emphasizes leaders' ability to manage the paradox between innovation and efficiency. However, most previous research has focused on the context of manufacturing and technology companies, leaving its application to educational service organizations relatively limited. Furthermore, psychological and cognitive factors of leaders, such as self-serving bias, have rarely been studied simultaneously to explain the mechanisms of organizational agility formation.

This research addresses this gap by integrating ambidextrous leadership and self-serving bias into a single conceptual model and positioning psychological safety as a mediating variable. By studying the non-formal educational institution Build Better Communication as a case study, this research is expected to provide theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of management literature, particularly in the context of educational and service organizations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research proceeds from the need to understand how organizations, especially education and training institutions, can improve their adaptive ability to cope with dynamic and uncertain environments. In this context, the dynamic capabilities theory (Dynamic Capabilities Theory) proposed by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) is the main basis. This theory asserts that an organization's competitive advantage is determined not only by resource ownership, but rather by the organization's ability to sustainably integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to changing environments. Teece (2016) further explains that dynamic capabilities are realized through three main processes, namely sensing, seizing and transforming, which collectively produce organizational agility and organizational performance sustainability.

In the context of educational institutions, sensing skills are reflected in the leadership's sensitivity in reading changes in students' needs, developments in learning technology, and labor market dynamics. Seizing capabilities can be seen from strategic decisions in adopting new learning methods, developing adaptive curricula, and utilizing digital technology. Meanwhile, transforming capabilities are reflected in changes in organizational structure, work culture and learning systems that enable organizations to continue learning and innovate. These three capabilities operate simultaneously and are the foundation for the creation of a sustainable organizational agility.

Ambidextrous Leadership

Ambidextrous leadership is a leadership concept rooted in organizational ambidexterity theory introduced by O'Reilly and Tushman (2013). This concept emphasizes the importance of the leader's ability to balance two opposing but complementary strategic orientations, namely exploration and exploitation. Exploration is concerned with the search for new ideas, innovation and risk-taking, while exploitation focuses on the efficiency, stability and optimisation of existing processes.

Rosing et al. (2020) explain that ambidextrous leadership is realized through two main behaviors, namely opening behavior and closing behavior. Opening behavior

encourages creativity, experimentation and tolerance for mistakes as part of the learning process, while closing behavior emphasizes control, discipline and achieving performance targets. Ambidextrous leaders are able to combine these two behaviors flexibly according to the demands of the organizational situation. In the context of educational institutions, ambidextrous leaders are required to provide space for teaching staff to innovate learning methods, while maintaining academic quality standards and operational effectiveness.

Theoretically, ambidextrous leadership is also supported by transformational and transactional leadership theories. Transformational leadership promotes change, long-term vision, and intrinsic motivation, while transactional leadership ensures stability through oversight and reward systems. The combination of these two approaches allows leaders to drive innovation without sacrificing organizational efficiency (Babu, 2024). Thus, ambidextrous leadership becomes a concrete representation of dynamic abilities at the leadership level.

Self-Serving Bias

Self-serving bias is a form of cognitive bias that explains an individual's tendency to attribute success to internal factors, such as personal abilities and efforts, as well as attributing failure to external factors, such as environmental conditions or other parties. According to Cristofaro and Giardino (2020), this bias serves as a psychological mechanism to protect self-esteem and maintain a positive self-image. In an organizational context, self-serving bias can affect the quality of decision making, performance evaluation processes, and organizational learning.

The attribution theory proposed by Heider (1958) and developed by Weiner (1986) is the main basis for explaining the phenomenon of self-serving bias. This theory states that individuals have a systematic tendency to explain the cause and effect of events in a way that benefits themselves. In work environments, including educational institutions, self-serving bias can arise when leaders or teaching staff reject negative feedback and are reluctant to reflect on failure. Hyun (2022) suggests that self-serving bias can significantly reduce the ability of individuals and organizations to learn from failure.

Apart from attribution theory, self-esteem theory also explains that self-serving bias arises as an effort to maintain individual psychological stability in situations full of evaluative stress. In competitive organizations, this defensive behavior can develop into a culture of blame (blaming culture) that hinders openness and collaboration. Therefore, managing self-serving bias is important so that organizations can create an objective work climate that supports collective learning.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is a shared belief that organizational members feel safe to express opinions, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences. This concept was introduced by Edmondson (1999), who stated that “psychological safety is a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking” and is increasingly relevant in the context of modern organizations that demand collaboration and continuous innovation. Psychologically safe work environments allow individuals to take constructive interpersonal risks, thereby encouraging learning and creativity.

Theoretically, psychological safety is supported by organizational climate theory and social belief theory. A supportive and open organizational climate creates a collective perception that organizations value individual contributions and are tolerant of mistakes as part of the learning process (Weinzimmer et al., 2017). Meanwhile, social trust theory emphasizes that psychological safety grows from trust between individuals and towards a fair and transparent organizational system (Edmondson, 2023).

In the context of educational institutions, psychological safety plays an important role in encouraging teaching staff and staff to innovate learning methods, share best practices, and reflect on the teaching process. Frazier et al. (2017) found that psychological safety contributes significantly to organizational learning and adaptation to change.

Organizational Agility

Organizational agility is defined as the ability of an organization to detect environmental changes and respond to them quickly and effectively through adjustments to strategies, structures and work processes. Groenewald et al. (2024) emphasized that organizational agility is the main prerequisite for the continuity of organizations in the VUCA era (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous). Agile organizations are able to balance internal stability with external flexibility.

In educational institutions, organizational agility is reflected in the institution's ability to adapt curriculum, learning methods and HR management systems according to changing demands. McKinsey & Company (2021) states that organizational agility combines value and goal stability with structural and process dynamics that enable fast and collaborative decision making.

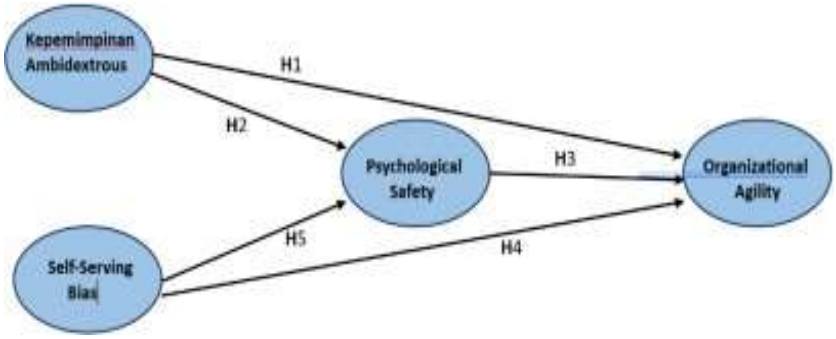
Based on this theoretical study, it can be concluded that ambidextrous leadership and self- serving bias management have an important role in shaping psychological safety, which in turn contributes to increasing organizational agility. The integration of leadership concepts, cognitive biases and psychological mechanisms is still relatively limited in previous research, especially in the context of educational organizations, so this research offers relevant conceptual novelty to the management literature. The integration of these four concepts provides a solid conceptual framework to explain how educational organizations can increase their agility and competitiveness amidst rapid environmental change. This research develops a conceptual framework that describes the influence of Ambidextrous Leadership and Self-Serving Bias on Organizational Agility, with Psychological Safety as a mediation variable.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Research Conceptual Framework

This research proposes a conceptual model that places ambidextrous leadership and self- serving bias as determinants of organizational agility in educational institutions, with psychological safety as a mediation mechanism. The model emphasizes the role of a safe psychological climate in strengthening adaptive leadership practices while minimizing the impact of cognitive biases on the ability of educational institutions to adapt and learn sustainably.

The following is the relationship flow between the variables:



Research Hypothesis

Based on the description above, the research hypothesis in this research is:

H1: Ambidextrous leadership has a significant influence on Organizational Agility.
H2: Ambidextrous leadership has a significant effect on Psychological Safety.
H3: Psychological Safety has a significant effect on Organizational Agility.
H4: Self-Serving Bias affects Organizational Agility.
H5: Self-Serving Bias affects Psychological Safety.
H6: Psychological Safety mediates the influence of Ambidextrous Leadership on Organizational Agility.
H7: Psychological Safety mediates the influence of Self-Serving Bias on Organizational Agility.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach using survey methods. The research population is administrative and academic staff as well as instructors from the non-formal education institution Build Better Communication, spread across several areas in Jabodetabek. The sampling technique was carried out using saturated samples. Data were collected through a Likert 1–5 scale-based questionnaire. Data analysis was carried out using SEM-PLS through the evaluation stages of the outer model and inner model.

This research uses a quantitative approach using survey methods. With a population of 150, a sample of 108 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan tables. Data collection was analyzed through a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. Model evaluation includes construct validity and reliability tests, structural model testing, and direct and indirect hypothesis testing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.Research Results

Evaluation of Measurement Models

This test was conducted to determine the construct validity and reliability of each variable. The results of the measurement model (outer model) test showed that all indicators had outer loading values > 0.70, with a value range between 0.710 and 0.890, thus meeting the convergent validity criteria. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs was above the minimum limit of 0.50, indicating that each construct was able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators. Thus, the research instrument was declared convergently valid.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability

Construct	Outer loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Ambidextrous Leadership	0.764 - 0.862	0,866	0,873	0,903	0,651
Organizational Agility	0.710 – 0.890	0,909	0,915	0,928	0,650
Psychological Safety	0.750 – 0.835	0,811	0,816	0,876	0,638
Self-Serving Bias	0.735 – 0.858	0,821	0,930	0,873	0,633

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs were above 0.70, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency and reliability. With the convergent validity, discriminant validity (HTMT < 0.85), and reliability criteria satisfied, the measurement model was declared feasible for structural analysis.

Tabel 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Ambidextrous Leadership	Organizational Agility	Psychological Safety	Self-Serving Bias
Ambidextrous Leadership	**0,807**			
Organizational Agility	0,596	**0,807**		
Psychological Safety	0,594	0,578	**0,799**	
Self-Serving Bias	0,105	0,171	0,305	**0,796**

Evaluation of Structural Models

The results of the evaluation of the structural model showed all inner VIF values are below 0,50, indicating that there were no multicollinearity issues among the constructs. It means Ambidextrous Leadership, Psychological Safety, and Self-Serving Bias exhibit low VIF values when predicting Organizational Agility and Psychological Safety. These results confirm that the structural model is free from collinearity concerns, allowing the path coefficients to be interpreted reliably.

Tabel 3. Collinearity statistics (Inner VIF)

	Ambidextrous Leadership	Organizational Agility	Psychological Safety	Self-Serving Bias
Ambidextrous Leadership		**1,560**	**1,011**	
Organizational Agility				
Psychological Safety		**1,701**		
Self-Serving Bias		**1,114**	**1,011**	

Furthermore, the R-square value shows that 43.3% of the Organizational Agility variation can be explained by Ambidextrous Leadership, Self-Serving Bias, and Psychological Safety, while 41.2% of the Psychological Safety variation described by Ambidextrous Leadership and Self-Serving Bias. This value is included in the category of moderate explanatory power.

Tabel 4. Determination Coefficient Value (R^2)

Endogenous Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Organizational Agility	0,433	0,417
Psychological Safety	0,412	0,401

Effect size (f^2) tests show the relative impact of each predictor on the endogenous variables. Ambidextrous Leadership has a moderate influence on Organizational Agility ($f^2 = 0.175$) and a large influence on Psychological Safety ($f^2 = 0.543$), highlighting its strong explanatory power. Psychological Safety has a small-to-medium effect on Organizational Agility ($f^2 = 0.117$). In contrast, Self-Serving Bias has very little effect on Organizational Agility ($f^2 = 0.001$), but has little effect on Psychological Safety ($f^2 = 0.101$). Overall, the results indicate that Ambidextrous Leadership is the most influential variable in the model.

Tabel 5. Effect Size Test Value (F^2)

Variable	Ambidextrous Leadership	Organizational Agility	Psychological Safety	Self-Serving Bias
Ambidextrous Leadership		**0,175**	**0,543**	
Organizational Agility				
Psychological Safety		**0,117**		
Self-Serving Bias		**0,001**	**0,101**	

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effect Analysis

The results of hypothesis testing through a bootstrapping procedure showed that Ambidextrous Leadership had a positive and significant effect on Organizational Agility ($\beta = 0.394$; $t = 3.428$; $p < 0.01$) and Psychological Safety ($\beta = 0.568$; $t = 8.908$; $p < 0.001$). Psychological

Safety was also shown to have a significant effect on Organizational Agility ($\beta = 0.335$; $t = 2.679$; $p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, Self-Serving Bias has no a direct significant effect on Organizational Agility, but has a positive effect on Psychological Safety.

Table 6. Direct Hypothesis Test Results

Relationship	Coefficient (β))	T statistics	P values	Decisions
Ambidextrous Leadership → Organizational Agility	0,394	3,428	0,001	Accepted
Ambidextrous Leadership → Psychological Safety	0,568	8,908	0,000	Accepted
Psychological Safety → Organizational Agility	0,335	2,679	0,007	Accepted
Self-Serving Bias → Organizational Agility	0,028	0,293	**0,769**	Denied
Self-Serving Bias → Psychological Safety	0,245	3,195	0,001	Accepted

Indirect Effects Analysis

Indirect effect testing results showed that Psychological Safety mediated the relationship between Self-Serving Bias and Organizational Agility ($\beta = 0.082$; $t = 2.136$; $p < 0.05$), indicating full mediation. In addition, Psychological Safety also mediates the relationship between Ambidextrous Leadership and Organizational Agility ($\beta = 0.190$; $t = 2.484$; $p < 0.05$), indicating partial mediation.

Table 7: Specific Indirect Effect Testing

Relationship	Coefficient (β))	T statistics	P values	Description
Self-Serving Bias → Psychological Safety → Organizational Agility	0,082	2,136	0,033	Full Mediation
Ambidextrous Leadership → Psychological Safety → Organizational Agility	0,190	2,484	0,013	Partial Mediation

4.2.Discussion

The results suggest that Ambidextrous Leadership has a direct and strategic role in improving Organizational Agility through Psychological Safety and Ambidextrous Leadership influence Psychological Safety positively and significantly. Thus, it was confirmed that leaders' effective balancing of exploratory and exploitative functions of an organization result in the organization being adaptive, flexible, and responsive to environmental changes. Furthermore, Ambidextrous Leadership positively impacts Psychological Safety, which reinforces the idea that leadership can be open, supportive, and participative, resulting in a work environment that is safe psychologically.

The influence of Psychological Safety positively and significantly on Organizational Agility was demonstrated. Employees' innovativeness, effective collaboration, and experimentation which accelerates the organization's adaptability stems from a psychologically safe atmosphere. Considering this is an Educational and training organization, this study shows that the psychological condition of the employees is paramount in achieving Organizational Agility.

At the same time, Self-Serving Bias did not have a notable direct impact on organizational agility. This indicates that an individual's bias may not translate to an organization's ability to adapt, especially in work contexts that entail teamwork and shared accountability. Nonetheless, self-serving bias did positively and significantly impact psychological safety. To some degree, this bias could foster a sense of self-assurance in people, allowing them to be more outspoken and more inclined to take action.

In addition, Self-Serving Bias only influences Organizational Agility through the presence of a Psychologically Safe work Environment. This suggests that the effect of Self-Serving Bias on Organizational Agility will only be felt in a work environment that is Psychologically Safe. Aside from that, psychological safety was found to be a partial mediator of the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and organizational agility. This means that, in addition to creating a psychologically supportive environment, ambidextrous leadership directly and indirectly improves organizational agility.

In summary, the results suggest that the psychological state of employees is an important pillar of organizational agility that is not only provided by the structure and the leadership, which illustrates the importance of strengthening ambidextrous leadership and psychological safety to improve organizational agility and sustainability in the long run.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, we can examine the elements that contribute to the greatest direct and indirect effects of Ambidextrous Leadership on Organizational Agility through Psychological Safety. Since psychological safety was the only one of the four factors that was shown to be a psychological mechanism of strength, self-serving bias can

only be said to support organizational agility in this situation by enhancing psychological safety. The implications highlight the safe psychological environment and the working environment of the adaptive leadership approach.

In the educational context, these results suggest that psychological safety and ambidextrous leadership are essential for educational institutions to stay flexible in the face of swift societal, technological, and pedagogical changes. In order to improve educational quality and institutional sustainability, leaders who strike a balance between innovation and operational stability and create a psychologically safe environment enable staff members and teachers to try out novel teaching strategies, freely exchange feedback, and continuously enhance learning practices.

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