

UDC 1:316.46

JEL Classification: D21, D23, M12

<http://doi.org/10.21272/mmi.2018.4-01>

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ANTECEDENTS & PERSPECTIVES OF AMBIDEXTROUS LEADERSHIP

Abstract. *This paper summarizes the arguments and counterarguments within the scientific discussion on the issue of ambidexterity in leadership. The main purpose of the research is to provide a theoretical guidance on those antecedents and perspectives of Ambidextrous Leadership (AL) which is based on a literature review. Literary sources and approaches dealing with these paradoxical behaviours indicate that besides a contextual organizational framework especially managers are mainly in the focus of research. The relevance of the decision of this scientific problem is that many organizations today need to be flexible and adaptable simultaneously for fulfilling their goals. Investigation of the topic AL in the paper is carried out in the following logical sequence. After introducing the relevance and need of new approaches in leadership, the fundamental theory and consequences on AL are provided. Therefore, the theoretical basis for ambidexterity is explained and reasons to understand ambidexterity as a leadership challenge are given. Methodological tools of the research methods were undertaken through a review of 25 papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals since 2004 and up to 2017. For this, a more detailed understanding and discussion are also provided, which has been based on the analysis of the most-cited articles. The analysis has been based on English and German language articles that appear in EBSCO and Beluga. The paper presents the results of a first attempt to provide a literature review which covered the concept of ambidexterity and its relevance as a scientific contribution. The theoretical concept provided the main determinants and consequences for the need for flexible, adaptable, and sustainable leadership. It becomes clear that the antecedents of ambidexterity can be used to understand the positive effects on this need and that this management approach has prospects for sustainability. The research literarily confirms and theoretically proves that ultimately, besides implementation and conceptual problems many management issues can take with this approach. The results of the research can be useful for leading researchers and practitioners. The selected papers may be also used as a valid starting point to research AL with respect to antecedents and perspectives. Managers can also benefit from a better understanding of this concept.*

Keywords: adaptability, ambidextrous leadership, antecedents, concept, content-based literature review, exploitation, exploration, perspectives.

Introduction. The global developments of recent decades have strengthened the interdependencies of the world in the economic, financial, political and cultural spheres. The resulting changes, such as disruptive technologies and societal change in values, are now increasingly taking place in the organizational and management landscape (Elbe, 2012). Against this background, it is becoming increasingly complex for managers in different functions of a company to respond and adapt for these global developments. But these skills are needed today for many companies to make strategic decisions about their businesses (March, 1991). Therefore, it seems increasingly important to enhance the leadership style of managers regarding to these changes by analysing the determinants of leadership behaviour. According to the need of being flexible and adaptable at the same time, managers continuously face the challenge to balance their leadership style between improving efficiency on the one hand and for increase creativity on the other hand. In the present day, an increasing number of scientific papers identify this concept of ambidexterity towards as a key driver for organizations to fulfil company targets in handling with these environmental impacts (Raisch et al., 2009). Those activities have been referenced in science as exploitation (utilization of resources) and exploration (being innovative). Gibson and Birkinshaw (2004) brought this concept of ambidexterity on the management surface and described it as an ability to promote efficiency and creativity simultaneously. Based on this premise, AL is considered as a management issue

Cite as: Kraft, M. G. H. (2018). Antecedents & Perspectives of Ambidextrous Leadership. *Marketing and Management of Innovations*, 4, 5-13.
<http://doi.org/10.21272/mmi.2018.4-01>

to ensure competitiveness. Accordingly, the research of leadership of employees in organizations is already well explored in literature (Gupta et al., 2006). Furthermore Raisch et al. (2009) referenced, that the number of studies on ambidexterity in the leading journals of management research has risen from less than 10 in 2004 to more than 80 in 2009. There is already empirical evidence that more ambidextrous behaviour is positively related to company results (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004, He & Wong, 2004). In leadership science, AL was positively associated with performance and innovation issues (Keller, 2012). Against this background of the paradoxical conflict between exploration and exploitation, it is necessary to examine the scientific analysis of antecedents and effects of the individual behavioural level. This also seems to be necessary because managers especially are confronted at risk of failure on their individual level of behaviour. The purpose of my work is therefore to analyse current AL research studies to provide a theoretical overview of antecedents for research and to derive possible perspectives on this leadership style in the context of sustainable issues. To answer this question, I will discuss the basics of leadership and the theory of ambidexterity to identify external and internal factors that affect it. A content-based literature review on the concept on AL in context of antecedents does not yet exist. Hereby a relatively small part was contributed by the articles of Turner, N., Swart, J., & Maylor, H. (2013) and Anderson, N., Potočník, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). However, both works focused on current situations with a resource-oriented view of organizations. Kearny (2013) also analysed the relevance of ambidexterity on innovation in teams. For this article, between 2002 and 2017, 25 peer papers were evaluated of AL. This work deals primarily in human resources, but also in paradoxical, organizational behaviour / management and sociology.

Literature review. Given this evidence, the necessity and difficulty of conducting the two divergent alignments can be highlighted. To address this issue, science has sparked a lively discussion led by the subject of ambidexterity (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Hobus & Busch, 2011; Mom et al., 2009; Weibler & Keller, 2014). The Latin term "ambidexterity" which literally means 'ambos', ('both'), and dexter, ('right') describes the ability to use equal skills for both hands (Jansen et. al., 2009). Transferred into economical context, ambidextrous leaders have the necessary balance between exploration and exploitation. Therefore, ambidextrous behavior enables organizations to take advantage of both actions. Overall, the literature on ambidexterity is not yet agreed (Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). There are ambiguities and discrepancies regarding hermeneutics and the priorities that different authors set. For instance, March (1991) referenced that dealing or managing paradoxical issues has been identified as a characteristic of organizations. According to Smith & Lewis (2011) it considers to contradictory yet interdependent elements that exist simultaneously over time. In addition, Keller (2012) states that this is also an ability of the ambidextrous leader as having the ability to switch between the two styles according to the needs of the company. However, there is currently no consensus in the literature about causes on how ambidextrous behavior can be best conceptualized and learned from leaders (Simsek et al., 2009). In order to derive a suitable leadership concept, the study of causes and possibilities is important to gain a basic understanding and overview of the theory (Jong et al., 2004). This research is about the antecedents and perspectives of AL. Therefore, main aim of this literature review is to determine the antecedents, which are used to define, proposed and applied in the research. To determine the antecedents and perspectives, I accomplished a content-based literature review. According to Roth & Bösener (2015), this type of literature research is particularly suitable for finding causes, because this method allows to focus on relationships of causality and to separate causes and effects from each other. The challenge of this methodology is that only articles that are directly related to the topic can be included and examined. This also means that similar topics should not contribute to research in order to avoid bias in the analysis. As a result, important or essential relations that could contribute are not included. This content-based literature review will be conducted by using major multi-purpose databases such as EBSCO and Beluga. The key for examining and finding articles and documents related to the research agenda are:

"ambidextrous leadership", "antecedences of ambidextrous leadership", "paradoxical leadership approaches", and "perspectives of leadership". A search for more papers using the same search keywords will be conducted on the Internet by using Google Scholar and VHB-JOURNAL ranking to increase the coverage of the search. In the first step, a general list was prepared to focus about ambidexterity in Leadership. Qualified journals were included focusing on leadership and organization. According to Roth & Bösenner (2015), primary data have higher significance in a content-based literature review in terms of significance, since they make the understanding of subject areas comprehensible. For that reason, in the second step, I concentrated on empirical studies. In the third step, I considered the studies to be relevant if they had direct causal relationships of AL. The initial searches revealed that a total of 25 articles were found from several sources including academic and professional journals and other publications. Subsequently, the contents of the articles were analysed for the relevance of the method used for AL. When the articles were found to be relevant to the topic agenda, they would be assessed in more detail of its methodologies, purposes and consequences. The search criteria were applied to get the papers which are most valuable to the research topic. Except the very recently published articles were also considered articles from more than 15 years. The literature reviews from various sources generated 10 articles whose contents substantially related to the topic of antecedents of AL. The coverage of the selected research sources can be classified based on the methodology used for antecedents of AL. There are also some papers cover related topics to AL included such as ambidextrous organizations. The literature review on the antecedents of AL follows the framework of Table 1 in relation to Roth, & Bösenner (2015).

Table 1 – Literature review of effects of ambidextrous leadership

Study	Hypotheses & results	Theoretical foundation	Method
He, Z. L., & Wong, P. K. (2004)	Positive effect of AL on revenue for companies in production sector	Theory of multiplicatively linked dimensions, Gibson und Birkinshaw (2004)	Empirical study
O'Reilly, C. A., & Tushman, M. L. (2004)	Explorative leadership	Theory of Balance Dimension March (1991)	Empirical study
Lubatkin, M. et al. (2006)	Positive effect through AL on performance for large companies	Sum of explorative & exploitative activities	Empirical study
Han, M. & Celly, N. (2008)	Positive effect of AL on market share for Start Up companies	Theory of multiplicatively linked dimensions, Gibson und Birkinshaw (2004)	Empirical study
Uotila, J. et al. (2009)	Positive effect of AL on Profit for R&D companies	Theory of Balance Dimension March (1991)	Empirical study
Cao, Q et. al. (2009)	Positive effect through AL on performance for large companies	Theory of Balance Dimension March (1991)	Empirical study
Jansen, J. P., et. al. (2009)	Positive effect of Ambidexterity as a mediator for effective integration mechanisms	Structural differentiation and ambidexterity	Empirical Study
Gebert, D. & Kearny, E. (2011)	Positive effect through AL on team-innovation & performance	Paradox-theory Gebert et. al. (2010)	Empirical study
Chang, Y. Y., & Hughes, M. (2012)	Positive effect through AL on profit for SME companies	Theory of Balance Dimension, March (1991)	Empirical study
Keller, T. & Weibler, J. (2012)	Low dependence of market perception on AL High dependence and positive effects of management responsibility on AL	Theory of Balance Dimension, March (1991)	Empirical study

Source: Roth, & Bösenner, 2015

In this context, I focus on the antecedents and the theoretical foundations of the proposed relationships. The specification of the perspective variable is another content-based aspect. Table 1 shows the articles writing about antecedents of AL. The following discussion of the identified studies on the effects of AL is divided into two parts. Here, I begin with the antecedents of AL before I derive the characteristics to exploration and exploitation and discuss the assumed relationship.

Consequences. To respond appropriately to changes from the environment, March (1991) linked the adaptation potential of organizations to the ability for using own resources efficiently (exploitation) and ensure simultaneously the potential for developing new and previously unknown alternatives (exploration). Exploration can be characterized as enabling and promoting variation, flexibility, discovery, innovation, risk taking, and experimentation with new ideas, paradigms, technologies and knowledge. Exploitation, on the other hand, is described in terms of improvement, efficiency, implementation, application, or refinement of existing ideas, paradigms, technologies, strategies, and knowledge (Kearny, 2013). The tensions between exploration and exploitation can mainly be attributed to the following two factors: From a majority of scientific contributions, it can be stated that exploration and exploitation activities in general follow divergent behavioural logics and they also differ fundamentally from one another in terms of their objectives (Voss et. al., 2008). Secondly, the simultaneous conduction of both exploratory and exploitative activities in an organization is mainly coupled with available resources (e.g. human capital, technology or even time), which constraints these activities in a theoretical and practical way (Ireland & Webb, 2009, S. 472). Against this background, it can be stated that both orientations are of fundamental important for a company, as they enable the organization to be effectively adapted to its environment and decide on the long-term survival of an organization. A key challenge for this essential balance of exploration and exploitation is the reduction of tensions between these two opposing behaviours (March, 1991). There are several proposals as to how this balancing of opposites can succeed. Some researchers propose that ambidexterity can be obtained by transmitting resources from one case to another, regardless of whether targets are explorative or exploitative in nature.

To overcome the conflicts and tensions between exploration and exploitation, the concept of cyclic and structural ambidexterity was found, thus proposes a temporal and unit's separation of the two alignment patterns. In case of structural ambidexterity some organizational units promoting flexibility and creativity, while other departments are focused on efficiency goals. This idea of structural ambidexterity is mainly associated with two problems. On the one hand, the question arises of how to integrate between these units. The strict separation of orientation makes the coordination and cooperation between these heterogeneous units with fundamentally different priorities and ineffective against the background of organizational target determinants more difficult (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010). Ultimately, structural ambidexterity shifts and differentiates the problem of balancing opposites only from the unit levels, without really offering a solution to dealing with these challenges (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). Another possibility is to separate exploration time from the exploitation. The idea of temporal ambidexterity has its origins in Lewin's three-phase model and may refer to either the overall organization or smaller organizational units. A distinction is made between three phases that must be followed in the context of change and development processes to achieve sustainable success (Lewin, 1946). Temporal ambidexterity also poses problems in terms of generalizability and implementation, since most organizations constantly must adapt to changing environmental conditions. Therefore, many companies must be flexible always. Simultaneously, they must always work stably and efficiently in these phases of adaptation (Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008).

Based on these two ambidextrous possibilities, the concept of contextual ambidexterity developed by Gibson & Birkinshaw (2004) seems to be the most adequate. In doing an appropriate design of the organizational structure and organizational culture, a competence is created on the individual level of action that enables the acting individuals to tackle conflicting requirements at the same time (Kearny,

2013). This basic idea appears promising in science and has been taken up by different authors in different ways (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010).

Antecedents. Given these findings and the demand for a new leadership perspective, part of ambidextrous research has dedicated itself to identifying factors that enable organizations and managers to such an action profile. From a management perspective, leadership approaches are the most valuable criteria regarding to increase profits because they address the scope of performance of employees determine (Humphrey, 2002). From this context, it becomes clear that a paradigm shift has taken place within ambidextrous research. In doing so, the focus has shifted from previously organizational questions to personal or leadership requirements. The reasons for this can be seen above all in the many difficulties in the conception and transfer of the theory on the organizational level. Thus, the manager and his ambidextrous behaviour makes it comprehensible and, above all, delimit able. As mentioned above, most approaches to dealing with divergent opposites refer to the analysis level of organization. Although the need to relate this perspective on a personal level of analysis is acknowledged in most works (Smith & Lewis, 2011), there is much less theory and little empiricism in this regard. For this researcher like Gebert & Kearny (2011) created a concept of AL which defines the leader as being able to promote exploration by opening behaviours on the one hand, and rising behaviour for exploitation on the other hand. Exploration leadership is described as behaviour that increases empowerment. In this case, a leader would give courage for independent thinking and tolerance for mistakes. On the other hand, a leader encourages exploitative activities with clear and measurable goals and tasks. This approach is also characterized as very structured and task-oriented. The ability to balance the effectiveness of leadership approaches optimizes a company's ability to be resilient to environmental change and to perceive market dynamics. This concept of AL is based on organizational behaviour research, which is a relatively new research branch with roots in organizational theory (March 1991). According to Lavie, Stettner & Tushman (2010) practice has shown that it is possible to pursue both activities simultaneously. In doing so, the focus must shift from one to the other activity pattern over time, according to the situational requirements (Simsek et al., 2009). According to Uotila (2009), technology-driven companies are also taken as examples, in addition to the exploitation of internal process chains, the need to design innovative it-solutions must be possible. On human context, a numerous researcher found proof that ambidexterity contributes positively to a performance-enhancing effect (Lubatkin et. al., 2006). Bucic et. al. 2010 found in their empirical study the level of exploration and exploitation in the business units which examined positively associated with performance. The positive influence of an ambidextrous executive has also been scientifically proven and developed by Chang's study for small and medium-sized enterprises (Chang & Hughes, 2012). Jansen et al. (2009) also investigated the positive association between the degree of ambidexterity on effectiveness in organizations. They found that such a connection is supported by flexible hierarchies on the one hand and clear process chains on the other. Such an interaction between an explorative and exploitative orientation also proved to be conducive to He and Wong (2004) in increasing the sales of their companies. In addition, Han and Celly (2008) show that especially start-up companies which already have a high level of internationalization (New Ventures) a short time after their founding, have benefited from the implementation of both explorative and exploitative strategies. In conclusion, Cao et. al. (2009) found an ambidextrous combination of exploration and exploitation to be successful even for large companies with a broad resource base. Given evidence of ambidextrous behaviour from theoretical and practical point of view, part of the two-handed research has been devoted to identifying factors that allow such an action profile. According to the qualitative observations of O'Reilly and Tushman (2004), ambidextrous behaviour must have several different characteristics to promote spatially separate exploration and exploitation (see Table 2). In addition to organizational characteristics, the influence of leadership in organizations is also proved empirical. Furthermore, the external environmental situation also has a significant impact on the organization (Keller, 2015).

Table 2 – Examples for Ambidextrous Leadership in business context

Alignment of:	Explorative Business	Exploitative Business
strategic intend	innovation, growth	profit, cost
critical task	adaptability	operations, efficiency
competencies	entrepreneurial	operational
organizational culture	risk taking	formal, mechanistic
controls, rewards	milestones, growth	productivity, margins
leadership role	visionary, involved	authoritative, top down

Sources: O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004

Perspective & limitations. Based on the previous literature review, the aim of this paper is to identify perspectives that can serve as avenues for future research. The main focus of current research is the effect of AL on short-term performance intentions. This strong focus on these intentions may occur because in contrast to long-term effects the implementation issues might be more difficult, which can turn stimulate a firm's profit. From today's point of view, one knows that successful change processes require more profound leadership approaches regarding to longer-term effects. If AL is viewed against the background of turbulent changes, it seems necessary to analyse AL also regarding sustainability. The Sustainability Leadership Institute (2017) offers definition suggesting that sustainability leaders as individuals who are compelled to make a difference by deepening their awareness of themselves in relation to the world around them. In doing so, the leaders adopt new ways of seeing; thinking and interacting that result in innovative and come to sustainable solution. The sustainable solver is a manager who motivate employees and supports sustainability action towards a better world either in present or future. Added to that, to balancing the motivation and influence of employees towards organizational goals is also one of elements in business practices. Nevertheless, common leader viewpoint to create sustainable organization is by becoming more environmentally, than to usual business practices. To underpin this process to become more environmentally March (1991) described the need of balancing effectively and efficiency in leading. To raise awareness of sustainability in leadership, a company needs to initiate a learning process that highlights the interrelations between working atmosphere, work characteristics, and leadership in health and workplace performance. The Rigotti evaluation study (2013) shows that training measures with managers and their team, which focuses on the balance of exploration and exploitation in the work processes, clearly leads to sustainably positive effects, such as the health of employees. The positive influence of the AL on sustainable effects such as the health of employees suggests that managers, in addition to competencies for self-management and personnel management, also develop competences for the active shaping of exploratory and exploitative elements in the organizational framework. To create suitable learning solutions for the managers, several different professional development tools are at the disposal of an organization. With respect to the learning field of ambidextrous, the challenge is to develop specific learning forms which, in addition to classical training measures, also provide elements of coaching as well as team-based, collegial learning. If new competences are to be implemented for AL, the organization must therefore develop the necessary and supportive structures and processes. This requires an organizational learning process, which must be triggered by top management and must be supported continuously. Only then can functional units such as internal organizational and personnel development address the necessary changes (Kearny, 2013). Like Schwarz said, leadership takes place in a tension field of clearly formulated expectations and requirements, natural and social boundaries, and often not clearly defined choices. Erpenbeck & Rosenstiel (2007) distinguish actions according to requirements, whereby a requirement has no objective character, but an interpretative property of, leadership. The boundaries also include the internal framework conditions such as budget or directives, as well as external factors such as the legislature. The possibilities

to use is however ultimately the side of the stress field. Through the recognition and use of explorative and exploitative opportunities, competence is needed to achieve sustainable success and to measure managers (Keller & Weibler, 2014). At a global level, however, the limits of AL are also becoming clear. In the implementation of the AL concepts, a superregional equitable understanding of sustainability is assumed, which reaches its limits, especially through cultural differences.

Conclusion. The aim of this research was to analyse existing studies on the antecedents and potentials of AL on business targets to provide an overview of the current state of research. Based on this literature review, I identified promising potentials for management issues and many actual problems within terminology and implementations. AL has been presented in the present work as an approach that, from a theoretical point of view, may be particularly well-suited to dealing more complex challenges. Regardless of environment changes, difficulties could also be identified, especially in the implementation of this concept. In addition, this work has shown that there are still many different definitions and conceptions regarding this concept, and that is why the focus of study levels is very differentiated. Ultimately, the quality of the AL could be confirmed empirically by combining different work. It turns out that the leadership process of team innovation is brought to the point, complemented by the various leadership concepts (participatory-delegate leadership and direct leadership). Furthermore, more research is needed regarding the causes of specific characteristics of the leader and its personality, because research on this leadership style shows and predict an increasing complexity in leading (Probst et. al., 2011). In addition to current knowledge in the context of performance and innovation research, future study on the influence of AL could also conduct a closer examination of moderator effects of organizational culture associated with leadership expectations. Evidence from Hofstede culture studies indicates that cultures have preferences for exploration than exploitation approaches (Steenkamp et. al., 1999). Against this background, the challenges of growth and livelihood security are also constant concern for small and medium-sized enterprises. Frequently, this companies must compete in a market dominated by larger companies that have a higher resource availability. On the other hand, ambidexterity in leadership can have an advantage for small and medium-sized enterprises by more efficiently in internal processes and simultaneously working on innovations. Closing this issue could provide an answer not only to the question of whether ambidextrous leaders differ from one-sided leaders in terms of their effective behaviour but also to the question of whether ambidextrous leaders are able to fix sustainable issues for their companies. It can be concluded that ambidexterity in leadership regarding culture, industry, organizational form, personality of the leader and employee structure is determined and influenced. This literature review has demonstrated that despite a relatively large base of existing research on the influence of ambidexterity, several issues exist. Closing these gaps could make an important contribution to science and practice in the context of leadership and sustainable management.

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Передумови та перспективи амбідекстерного лідерства
У даній статті систематизовано аргументи та контраргументи розвитку концепції амбідекстерного лідерства. Основною метою дослідження є узагальнення основних передумов та перспектив розвитку амбідекстерного лідерства на основі аналізу наукової літератури. Автором проведено аналіз теоретико-методичних підходів до визначення сутності та особливостей

концепції амбідекстерного лідерства. У рамках даного дослідження амбідекстерне лідерство розглядається як властивість керівника балансувати та поєднувати якості командного гравця та керівника. Результати дослідження свідчать, що окрім організаційної структури компанії на ефективність її функціонування впливає парадоксальна поведінка менеджерів, що тим самим обґрунтовує актуальність даного дослідження. Так, автором визначено, що у сучасному ринковому середовищі менеджмент компанії повинен швидко реагувати та адаптуватись під нові умови функціонування. У статті представлено теоретичні основи та особливості амбідекстерності як лідерської характеристики. Методологічною основою дослідження є 25 наукових статей за даною тематикою, що були опубліковані у рецензованих журналах у період з 2004 по 2017 роки. При цьому було досліджено найбільш цитовані статті за даним напрямом, що розміщені у базах даних EBSCO та Beluga. Авторами доведено, що основними характеристиками амбідекстерного лідерства є: адаптивність, гнучкість та стійкість. На основі проведеного аналізу виокремлено основні детермінанти та передумови розвитку амбідекстерного лідерства як невід'ємної складової ефективного менеджменту малих та середніх підприємств. Автор наголошує, що результати дослідження можуть бути корисними для дослідників та керівників компаній. Окрім цього, обрані статті для аналізу можуть слугувати відправною точкою для подальшого дослідження особливостей формування концепції амбідекстерного лідерства для малих та середніх підприємств.

Ключові слова: адаптивність, амбідекстерне лідерство, концепція, передумови, експлуатація, дослідження, перспективи.

Manuscript received: 28.09.2018

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