

# How Ambidextrous Capability Drives Innovation: A Sequential Mediation Model

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study analyzes the influence of ambidextrous organizational capability on innovation performance. It specifically tests the sequential mediation of absorptive capacity and leadership knowledge in this relationship.

**Methodology:** A quantitative approach was employed, using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Data were collected through surveys from 205 knowledge-intensive firms in Indonesia. The analysis assessed both direct effects and sequential mediation pathways.

**Results:** The findings confirm that ambidextrous organizational capability has a strong positive effect on innovative performance. Crucially, absorptive capacity and leadership knowledge sequentially mediate this relationship. The model explains substantial variance in the endogenous variables, confirming the robustness of the proposed framework.

**Conclusions:** The study concludes that ambidextrous capability enhances innovation not only directly but also by first building the organization's absorptive capacity, which in turn develops leadership knowledge, ultimately driving innovative performance.

**Limitations:** The main limitations are the cross-sectional data, which prevents causal inference, and the reliance on perceptual measures, which may be subject to common method bias. The study also does not account for all industry-specific factors.

**Contributions:** Theoretically, this study validates a sequential mediation model in the innovation value chain. Practically, it provides managers with a roadmap for leveraging ambidextrous strategies through knowledge absorption and leadership development to foster this innovation.

**Keywords:** *Absorptive Capacity, Ambidextrous Organizational Capability, Innovative Performance, Leadership Knowledge, Sequential Mediation*

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## 1. Introduction

In an era characterized by rapid technological change and intense global competition, the pursuit of organizational innovation has become a paramount concern for leaders, academics, and practitioners. Contemporary business environments demand that organizations exploit existing capabilities and explore new opportunities, a dual capacity known as organizational ambidexterity (Hashem, 2024; Huma, Muslim, & Ahmed, 2024; O'reilly Iii & Tushman, 2008; Sherani, Zhang, Shehzad, Ali, & Cao, 2025). The strategic importance of ambidextrous organizations is increasingly recognized as critical for sustaining competitive advantage and driving innovation performance in dynamic markets (Harandi, Khamseh, & Sana, 2024; Ju, Wang, & Fu, 2023).

The fundamental challenge facing organizations is not merely the development of ambidextrous structures, but the effective orchestration of knowledge resources and leadership competencies to

convert exploratory and exploitative activities into tangible innovation outcomes ([Astuti, Sisdianto, & Suprianingsih, 2025](#); [Nafiudin, Chairani, Andari, & Huddin, 2025](#); [Wulandaru, Ningtiyas, & Nasrulloh, 2025](#)). Furthermore, emerging issues such as digital transformation, knowledge intensity, and dynamic capabilities are increasingly complicating the innovation landscape that organizations must navigate ([Gürlek, 2021](#); [Lyu, Peng, Li, Yang, & Cao, 2022](#); [Sakina & Dou, 2025](#)). In this context, identifying the sequential pathways through which ambidexterity influences innovation is crucial for building robust innovation frameworks and ensuring organizational sustainability ([Charwin & Setyawan, 2025](#); [Tirtana & Rahmadhani, 2025](#); [Toni, 2025](#)).

Innovation capability plays a pivotal role in organizational success by enabling the development of new products, services, and processes that create value in the market. However, an inefficient innovation system can disrupt the value creation process, hindering organizational growth and competitiveness. Previous studies have indicated that poor innovation management, particularly during industry disruptions, can incur significant opportunity costs and competitive disadvantages ([Abuseta, Iyiola, & Aljuhmani, 2025](#); [Felício, Caldeirinha, & Dutra, 2019](#)).

The strategic importance of innovation has positioned it as a key component of organizational performance frameworks. Organizations have adopted various approaches to enhance their innovation capabilities. Leading innovative organizations enjoy superior market positions and highly regarded reputations. However, the significant challenge these organizations face in building an integrated innovation system lies in the disparities and varying qualities of innovation processes across different departments and business units. Achieving strong and integrated innovation performance requires coordination and emphasizes the essential need for knowledge integration throughout the organization.

Regarding organizational capabilities, research shows that ambidextrous organizations demonstrate superior performance, with studies indicating that firms balancing exploration and exploitation activities achieve 20-30% higher innovation outcomes than their less-balanced counterparts. The phenomenon of digital disruption and industry transformation illustrates the profound implications of innovation failure, as evidenced by numerous established organizations struggling to adapt when market conditions change. Consequently, several well-known corporations have faced declines when they failed to innovate effectively, leading to broader organizational crises. This highlights the critical significance of maintaining innovation capability to ensure proper adaptation processes and protect organizations from market irrelevance and competitive threats.

Ambidextrous organizations are often considered a potential solution for building more adaptive and innovative capabilities, as they avoid the exploration-exploitation paradox and enable the simultaneous pursuit of incremental and radical innovation. Scholars argue that a balanced approach in ambidextrous organizations can help avoid competency traps caused by technological changes by distributing resources more strategically. The innovation advantage of ambidextrous organizations is further supported by numerous studies. For instance, recent research indicates that ambidextrous firms are more innovative because of their inherent structural and contextual features.

Previous studies have extensively discussed organizational innovation, both quantitatively and qualitatively, although often with a narrow focus on specific aspects. These studies primarily rely on established theories to predict the factors influencing innovation performance. However, they have not significantly developed, expanded, or challenged existing conclusions within the context of complex sequential mediation processes ([Abuseta et al., 2025](#); [Alaskar, Alsadi, Aloulou, & Ayadi, 2024](#); [Lin, Beh, & Kamil, 2025](#); [Odai, Xiao, Korankye, & Ahakwa, 2025](#); [Tang & Wei, 2024](#)). Several innovation studies rely on direct effect identification and examine simple cause-effect relationships. Additionally, others have focused on measuring innovation outcomes without thoroughly testing the full spectrum of mediating mechanisms, particularly knowledge processes and leadership development. This necessitates a more comprehensive exploration of the sequential pathways connecting ambidexterity and innovation performance.

This study was designed to fill several significant gaps in the existing literature. First, this study introduces a holistic and integrated approach by analyzing the determinants of innovation performance not as isolated relationships but as a complete sequential process in which absorptive capacity and

leadership knowledge interact and influence each other. This approach addresses the limitations of previous studies that tended to examine mediation in isolation. Second, this study innovatively integrates leadership knowledge as both a mediator and outcome variable into the analytical framework, which has not been extensively explored in previous research, despite being identified as a critical success factor for innovation. Third, this study conducts an in-depth exploration of unique transmission mechanisms within ambidextrous organizations, such as the role of knowledge absorption in developing leadership capabilities and the impact of leadership knowledge on Innovation Performance (IP).

The contributions of this study are multidimensional. Theoretically, this study enriches the organizational innovation literature by proposing and testing a more comprehensive and contextual model that reflects the reality of complex innovation processes in such organizations. This model is expected to form the foundation for developing a more robust theory of innovation in dynamic environments in the future. Methodologically, this study contributes to the Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach to estimate the sequential mediation relationships between organizational ambidexterity and innovation performance. This method effectively handles complex model characteristics, including mediation analysis, formative measurements, and predictive modeling, while providing robust estimates of model complexity.

On a practical level, the research findings yield insights with broad managerial implications and generalizability. These findings can serve as valuable guides for managers and organizational leaders in formulating more effective innovation strategies. Practical contributions of this research include specific recommendations for developing knowledge absorption capabilities, leadership development frameworks for innovation, and strategies to leverage ambidextrous structures for enhanced innovation performance. Thus, this research contributes to the academic body of knowledge and directly feeds into practical efforts to strengthen the innovation capability and sustainability of organizations in facing increasingly complex business challenges.

This study specifically aims to analyze the sequential mediation of absorptive capacity and leadership knowledge in the relationship between ambidextrous organizational and innovation performance using the SEM-PLS approach. The main objectives include: (1) examining the direct effect of ambidextrous organizations on innovation performance; (2) testing the mediating role of absorptive capacity in the relationship between ambidextrous organizations and leadership knowledge; (3) investigating the mediating role of innovation performance in the relationship between ambidextrous organizations and leadership knowledge; and (4) analyzing the sequential mediation of absorptive capacity and leadership knowledge in the ambidexterity-innovation relationship.

The urgency of this research is based on three fundamental aspects. First, from an academic perspective, this study fills a significant literature gap by developing an integrated innovation model that analyzes sequential mediation processes, which differs from the simple mediation approaches dominant in previous studies. Second, the methodological aspect introduces rigor through the application of the SEM-PLS technique, which can overcome the limitations of conventional methods in handling complex mediation models with multiple intervening variables. Third, the resulting practical implications have strategic relevance for organizational leaders and managers in formulating effective innovation strategies, particularly leveraging knowledge processes and leadership development for enhanced innovation outcomes. Thus, this study not only provides a substantive contribution to the development of organizational innovation theory but also serves as a critical empirical foundation for strategic decision-making in innovation management.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### ***2.1 Organizational Ambidexterity Theory***

Organizational ambidexterity, defined as a firm's capacity to simultaneously pursue exploration of new opportunities and exploitation of existing capabilities, constitutes a critical dynamic capability in volatile business environments ([Dixit, Jakhar, & Kumar, 2022](#); [O'reilly Iii & Tushman, 2008](#); [Seo, Edler, & Massini, 2022](#); [D. V. Tran, Nguyen, Nguyen, Huynh, & Ma, 2025](#)). Rooted in Dynamic Capabilities Theory, ambidexterity enables organizations to reconfigure resources to adapt to market shifts while maintaining operational efficiency, thereby achieving a sustainable competitive advantage

([Agostini, Nosella, Sarala, & Nkeng, 2025](#); [Alghamdi, 2018](#); [Aslam, Sahibzada, Ahmad, & Stevenson, 2025](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#); [Riaz, Al-Okaily, Sohail, Ashfaq, & Rehman, 2024](#); [Soomro, 2024](#)). This theoretical lens suggests that the ability to balance exploratory and exploitative activities is not merely a structural arrangement but a higher-order capability that facilitates strategic renewal and innovation in the firm.

The Knowledge-Based View further enriches our understanding by positing that ambidextrous organizations excel at integrating diverse knowledge streams, which is a fundamental requirement for innovation ([Agostini et al., 2025](#); [Alghamdi, 2018](#); [Aslam et al., 2025](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#); [Riaz et al., 2024](#); [Soomro, 2024](#)). By engaging in both exploration and exploitation, firms develop complementary knowledge processes that enhance their ability to generate and implement innovative ideas. This integrated perspective, combining Dynamic Capabilities and Knowledge-Based theories, provides a robust foundation for examining how ambidextrous organizations create the necessary conditions for innovation through sequential knowledge and leadership processes.

### ***2.2 Ambidextrous Organizational on Innovative Performance***

Ambidextrous organizational capability reflects an organization's capacity to effectively manage the paradox between exploratory and exploitative activities. Dynamic Capabilities Theory [de la Torre and De la Vega \(2025\)](#) explains that organizations possessing ambidextrous capabilities can reconfigure their resources to adapt to environmental changes while maintaining their operational efficiency. Empirically, various studies have demonstrated that ambidextrous organizations exhibit superior innovation performance and sustainable competitive advantage ([Lin et al., 2025](#); [Mehdikhani, Valmohammadi, & Taraz, 2025](#); [Nasution, Soemaryani, Yunizar, & Hilmiana, 2024](#); [Nazir, Khadim, & Syed, 2025](#); [O'reilly Iii & Tushman, 2008](#); [Tang & Wei, 2024](#)). Organizations with strong ambidextrous capabilities demonstrate a better ability to respond to market turbulence and technological disruptions. Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

*H<sub>1</sub>*: Ambidextrous Organizational has a positive effect on Innovative Performance

### ***2.3 Ambidextrous Organizational on Absorptive Capacity***

Absorptive capacity refers to an organization's ability to recognize, assimilate, and apply external knowledge for commercial purposes ([Cohen & Levinthal, 1990](#)). The Knowledge-Based View Theory explains that organizations with strong absorptive capacity can effectively transform external knowledge into innovative outcomes ([Bergh, D'Oria, Crook, & Roccapiore, 2025](#)). A well-developed absorptive capacity enables organizations to identify valuable external knowledge, integrate it with existing knowledge stocks, and apply it to create new products and processes ([Akbari, Baghersad, Harandizadeh, Giglio, & Padash, 2025](#); [Apriliani, 2025](#); [Hashem, 2024](#); [Huma et al., 2024](#); [Seo et al., 2022](#)). Various empirical studies have shown that organizations with high absorptive capacity levels tend to achieve better innovation outcomes and maintain a competitive advantage in knowledge-intensive environments ([Abuseta et al., 2025](#); [Akhtar et al., 2024](#); [Shehzad, Jianhua, Naveed, Zia, & Sherani, 2024](#)). Based on theoretical logic and empirical support, the following hypothesis is proposed.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: Ambidextrous Organizational has a positive effect on Absorptive Capacity

### ***2.4 Innovative Performance on Leadership Knowledge***

Innovation performance reflects an organization's capability to introduce new products, services, or processes that create value in the market. Resource-Based View Theory [Barney \(1991\)](#) emphasizes that innovation is a critical resource that drives sustainable competitive advantage. Superior innovation performance not only enables organizations to respond to market changes but also positions them as industry leaders through continuous value creation ([Alghamdi, 2018](#); [Castro, Gutiérrez-López, Tascón, & Castaño, 2021](#); [Wahab, Subramaniam, Ho, & Bali Mahomed, 2024](#)). Empirical evidence from various studies demonstrates a strong relationship between innovation performance and organizational growth and sustainability ([Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Quaquebeke & Gerpott, 2023](#); [A. V. Tran & Khoa, 2025](#)). Based on the theoretical framework and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>3</sub>*: Innovative Performance has a positive effect on Leadership Knowledge

### **2.5 Leadership Knowledge on Innovative Performance**

Leadership knowledge encompasses the collective understanding, skills, and capabilities that enable organizational leaders to guide innovation processes and knowledge management initiatives effectively. Organizational Learning Theory emphasizes that leadership knowledge serves as a critical mechanism for facilitating organizational adaptation and innovation ([Hansen, Jensen, & Nguyen, 2020](#)). Leaders with deep knowledge structures can better interpret environmental signals, make strategic decisions, and foster organizational learning ([Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Son, Phong, & Loan, 2020](#); [A. V. Tran & Khoa, 2025](#)). Various studies have confirmed the vital role of leadership knowledge in enhancing organizational innovation capabilities and performance outcomes ([Bux, Zhu, & Devi, 2025](#); [Odai et al., 2025](#); [Udin, 2024](#)). Based on the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>4</sub>: Leadership Knowledge has a positive effect on Innovative Performance*

### **2.6 Absorptive Capacity and Leadership Knowledge Sequentially Mediate the Relationship between Ambidextrous Organizational and Innovative Performance**

The knowledge transformation process represents the sequential mechanism through which organizational capabilities are converted into innovative results. Sequential Mediation Theory explains that complex organizational phenomena often involve multiple intervening variables that operate in a specific sequence ([Adolfi, van de Braak, & Woensdregt, 2024](#)). The transformation from ambidextrous capabilities to innovation performance requires the sequential operation of knowledge absorption and leadership development processes ([Alghamdi, 2018](#); [Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Mohiya & Sulphrey, 2021](#); [Nasution et al., 2024](#)). Empirical studies have demonstrated that organizations that effectively manage this knowledge transformation sequence achieve superior innovation results and sustainable competitive advantages. Based on the theoretical framework and empirical support, the following hypothesis is proposed.

*H<sub>5</sub>: Absorptive Capacity and Leadership Knowledge sequentially mediate the relationship between ambidextrous organization and Innovative Performance*

## **3. Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design to examine the sequential mediation relationships between organizational ambidexterity, absorptive capacity, leadership knowledge, and innovation performance ([Adachi & van de Velden, 2025](#)). Data were collected using structured questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale, administered to senior managers and team leaders in knowledge-intensive firms across Indonesia. These respondents were selected for their comprehensive understanding of their organizations' innovation and knowledge management practices.

A purposive sampling technique was applied, resulting in a final sample of 104 organizations. The sample focused on sectors where innovation and organizational learning are critical for competitive advantage, including the technology, consulting, and research-intensive industries. Common method bias was mitigated through both procedural and statistical remedies, including guaranteeing respondent anonymity and using different scale end points. Furthermore, Harman's single-factor test was conducted post-hoc, confirming that no single factor accounted for the majority of the covariance among variables ([Howard, Boudreaux, & Oglesby, 2024](#)).

### **3.1 Model Development**

This study employs the Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach to analyze the sequential mediation relationships between organizational variables. The methodology was selected because of its ability to handle complex models with multiple mediating variables, while being robust to distributional assumptions and suitable for predictive-oriented research ([Adachi & van de Velden, 2025](#)). This approach effectively captures both measurement and structural relationships while addressing multicollinearity concerns through a component-based estimation ([Gudergan, Moiescu, Radomir, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2025](#)).

The reflective nature of the constructs and the focus on prediction in organizational research make PLS-SEM particularly suitable for this study's purposes. The SEM-PLS approach is particularly appropriate

for situations with complex model structures and moderate sample sizes, providing reliable estimates even in the presence of non-normal data (Sugiyono, 2022). The research model builds on the methodological framework developed by Olugbenga and Ridwan (2025), which has been widely applied in organizational and innovation research. The PLS-SEM estimator accounts for measurement errors through the use of latent variables, making it appropriate for analyzing complex organizational phenomena across different contexts (Soysal & Türkmen, 2024).

### 3.2 Operational Variables

Table 1. Operational variables

Variable Category	Variable Name	Measurement	Symbol	Expected Sign	Source
Independent Variable	Ambidextrous Organizational	Ability to balance exploration and exploitation activities (5-point Likert scale)	AO	Positive	(Hashem, 2024; Huma et al., 2024; O'reilly Iii & Tushman, 2008; Sherani et al., 2025)
Mediating Variables	Leadership Knowledge	Collective leadership understanding and capabilities (5-point Likert scale)	LK	Positive	(Harandi et al., 2024; Quaquebeke & Gerpott, 2023; A. V. Tran & Khoa, 2025)
Dependent Variable	Absorptive Capacity	Ability to acquire, assimilate, transform, and exploit knowledge (5-point Likert scale)	AC	Positive	Akbari et al. (2025); (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Seo et al., 2022)
	Innovative Performance	New product/service development and process innovation (5-point Likert scale)	IP	Positive	(Castro et al., 2021; Wahab et al., 2024)

The SEM-PLS approach enables the estimation of both direct and indirect effects while addressing common methodological issues in organizational research, providing robust insights into the sequential mediation processes between organizational ambidexterity and innovation performance. The expected positive signs align with the theoretical framework and hypothesis development, where all hypothesized relationships are expected to have positive and significant effects. The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity using composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity tests. The structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) to ensure the robustness of the research findings.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Analysis of Respondent Characteristics

The data collected in this study included demographic information and organizational characteristics of respondents, which served as the sample profile for this research.

Table 2. Respondent characteristics based

No	Number of Employees	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less than 100 employees	45	43.3%
2.	100 - 500 employees	38	36.5%
3.	More than 500 employees	21	20.2%
4.	Total	104	100%

Based on organizational demographic data, the majority of respondents came from small-sized organizations (less than 100 employees) at 43.3%, followed by medium-sized organizations (100-500 employees) at 36.5%, and large organizations (more than 500 employees) at 20.2%. In terms of industry type, respondents were dominated by service companies at 40.4%, followed by manufacturing at 30.8%, and technology at 28.8%. Based on years of operation, the majority of organizations have been operating for 5-10 years (45.2 %), followed by organizations operating for more than 10 years (27.9 %), while new organizations (less than 5 years) account for 26.9%.

## 4.2 Partial Least Squares (PLS) Analysis

### 4.2.1 Outer Model

Validity and reliability tests were conducted to evaluate the outer model using Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis. These tests ensure the accuracy and consistency of measurement instruments, with calculations performed using the PLS algorithm

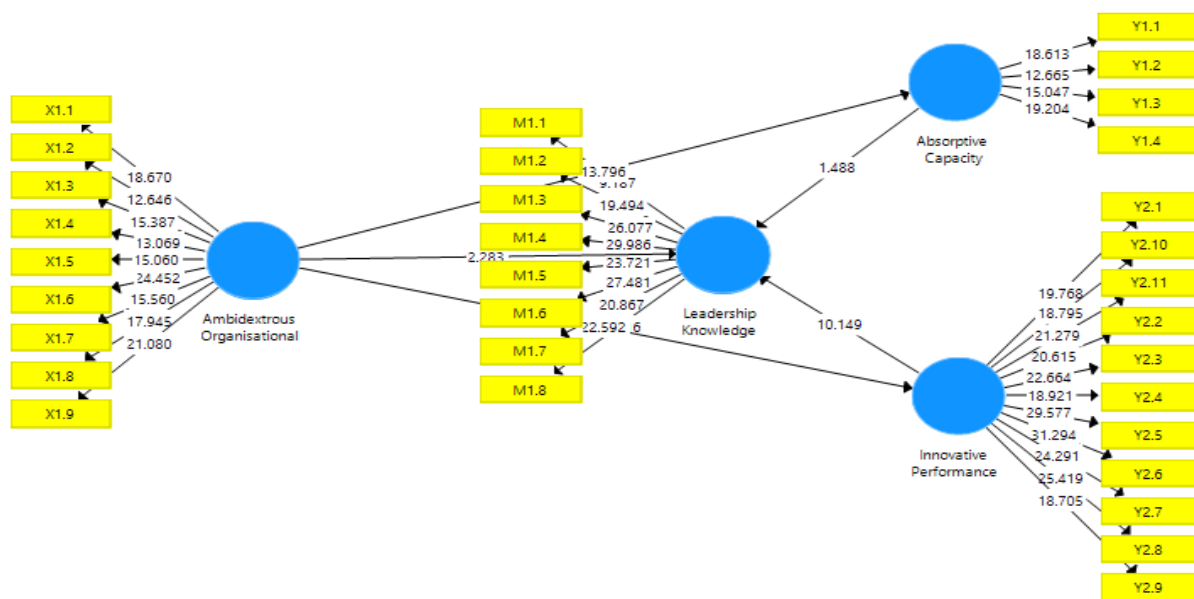


Figure 1. Structural model (PLS Algorithm)

The outer model in Smart PLS illustrates the relationships between latent constructs, namely ambidextrous organization ( $X$ ), Absorptive Capacity ( $Y_1$ ), Innovative Performance ( $Y_2$ ), and Leadership Knowledge ( $M$ ), with their respective indicators. The model's validity and reliability were evaluated using several criteria, including loading factors, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability, to ensure accurate and consistent measurements.

### 4.2.2 Validity Test

Table 3. Validity test results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Threshold	Status
Ambidextrous Organizational	$X_{1.1}$	0.779	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.2}$	0.705	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.3}$	0.730	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.4}$	0.710	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.5}$	0.737	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.6}$	0.821	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.7}$	0.758	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.8}$	0.767	0.70	Valid
	$X_{1.9}$	0.797	0.70	Valid
Absorptive Capacity	$Y_{1.1}$	0.784	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{1.2}$	0.767	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{1.3}$	0.751	0.70	Valid

	$Y_{1.4}$	0.765	0.70	Valid
Innovative Performance	$Y_{2.1}$	0.792	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.2}$	0.818	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.3}$	0.792	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.4}$	0.797	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.5}$	0.835	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.6}$	0.845	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.7}$	0.798	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.8}$	0.799	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.9}$	0.761	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.10}$	0.808	0.70	Valid
	$Y_{2.11}$	0.824	0.70	Valid
Leadership Knowledge	$M_{1.1}$	0.651	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.2}$	0.822	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.3}$	0.850	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.4}$	0.843	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.5}$	0.839	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.6}$	0.833	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.7}$	0.831	0.70	Valid
	$M_{1.8}$	0.785	0.70	Valid

The processing results using SmartPLS to evaluate the measurement model are presented in Table 2. The loading factor values for all indicators exceeded the threshold of 0.70, indicating that each indicator strongly measured its intended construct and demonstrated adequate convergent validity ([Adachi & van de Velden, 2025](#)). Although indicator  $M_{1.1}$  had a loading slightly below 0.70, it was retained in the model because it is theoretically an essential aspect of the measured construct and its removal would reduce content validity. The presence of this indicator did not significantly compromise the overall Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, all of which met the required criteria.

#### 4.2.2 Discriminant Reliability

Discriminant validity ensures that each latent variable differs from the other variables. The model is considered to have good discriminant validity if the loading factors of indicators on latent variables are greater than the loadings on other variables. Furthermore, reliability and validity can be seen from the Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A construct is declared reliable if the CR value is  $> 0.70$  and the AVE is  $> 0.50$ .

Table 4. Research instrument reliability test results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability ( $\rho_a$ )	Composite Reliability ( $\rho_c$ )	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Status
Ambidextrous Organizational	0.907	0.911	0.923	0.573	Reliable
Absorptive Capacity	0.767	0.769	0.851	0.588	Reliable
Innovative Performance	0.946	0.947	0.953	0.651	Reliable
Leadership Knowledge	0.924	0.927	0.938	0.655	Reliable

Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that all constructs meet the reliability criteria. This is demonstrated by Composite Reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) values above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, in accordance with the recommended criteria. Thus, all constructs were declared reliable.

#### 4.2.3 Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Inner model or structural model testing aims to analyze the relationships between constructs, significance values, and R-square values in the research model.

Table 5. R-Square test results

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>R-square</b>	<b>R-square Adjusted</b>
Absorptive Capacity	0.475	0.469
Innovative Performance	0.660	0.656
Leadership Knowledge	0.855	0.850

Based on the table above, the Adjusted R-square value for Absorptive Capacity is 0.469, indicating that 46.9% of Absorptive Capacity variation can be explained by ambidextrous organization. For Innovative Performance, the Adjusted R-squared value of 0.656 shows that 65.6% of Innovative Performance variation can be explained by Ambidextrous Organization, Absorptive Capacity, and Leadership Knowledge. Meanwhile, for Leadership Knowledge, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.850 indicates that 85.0% of Leadership Knowledge variation can be explained by Ambidextrous Organization, Absorptive Capacity, and Innovative Performance.

#### 4.2.4 Hypothesis Testing

The significance of the estimated parameters provides crucial insights into the relationships between the variables in the research model. Table 6 presents the results of the direct effect hypothesis testing in the structural model.

Table 6. Direct path coefficient and hypothesis testing

<b>Hypothesis Path</b>	<b>Original Sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T - Statistics</b>	<b>p-values</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Ambidextrous Organisational -> Absorptive Capacity	0.689	0.688	0.050	13.796	0.000	<b>Yes</b>
Ambidextrous Organisational -> Innovative Performance	0.812	0.814	0.036	22.592	0.000	<b>Yes</b>
Ambidextrous Organisational -> Leadership Knowledge	0.170	0.167	0.075	2.283	0.023	<b>Yes</b>
Absorptive Capacity -> Leadership Knowledge	0.093	0.095	0.062	1.488	0.137	No
Innovative Performance -> Leadership Knowledge	0.710	0.712	0.070	10.149	0.000	<b>Yes</b>

To fully evaluate the proposed mediation effects, specific indirect and sequential indirect effects were tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 6.

Table 7. Specific indirect and sequential mediation effects

Mediation Pathway	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T - Statistics	p-values	Explanation
<b>Specific Indirect Effects</b>						
X -> AC -> LK	0.064	0.065	0.043	1.484	0.138	No
X -> IP -> LK	0.577	0.579	0.058	9.896	0.000	Yes
<b>Sequential Indirect Effect</b>						
X -> AC -> LK -> IP	0.046	0.047	0.031	1.474	0.141	No

The analysis reveals that while the direct effect of Ambidextrous Organizational capability on Innovative Performance is strong and significant ( $\beta = 0.812$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the proposed sequential mediation pathway via Absorptive Capacity and Leadership Knowledge is not statistically supported ( $\beta = 0.046$ ,  $p = 0.141$ ). However, a significant indirect effect was found for the path ambidextrous organization  $\rightarrow$  innovative performance  $\rightarrow$  leadership knowledge ( $\beta = 0.577$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The hypothesized mediation of Absorptive Capacity between Ambidextrous Organizational and Leadership Knowledge was also not supported.

### 4.3 Discussion

#### 4.3.1 Ambidextrous Organizational and Innovative Performance

The analysis reveals that ambidextrous organizational capability exerts a significant positive influence on organizational innovative performance. This finding underscores the fundamental role of balancing exploration and exploitation activities in driving innovation, as organizations that simultaneously pursue new opportunities while optimizing existing operations demonstrate an enhanced capacity for breakthrough innovations and continuous improvement. The results affirm the theoretical proposition that organizational ambidexterity serves as a critical innovation mechanism, enabling organizations to strategically allocate resources across different innovation horizons.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings strongly align with the Dynamic Capabilities View, which posits that ambidextrous organizations possess the unique ability to reconfigure resources to address changing environments while maintaining operational efficiency ([de la Torre & De la Vega, 2025](#)). The positive relationship between ambidexterity and innovation further corroborates Organizational Learning Theory, suggesting that organizations capable of managing paradoxical demands create learning environments conducive to innovation generation and implementation. Existing literature consistently supports this relationship, with numerous studies establishing clear linkages between ambidextrous capabilities and innovation outcomes across various industries ([Akbari et al., 2025](#); [Akhtar et al., 2024](#); [Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Jiang, Wang, Chen, & Gai, 2025](#); [Ju et al., 2023](#); [O'reilly Iii & Tushman, 2008](#)). The current findings reinforce this consensus while providing additional nuance by demonstrating the strength of the relationship in knowledge-intensive environments. This contextual dimension highlights the importance of organizational ambidexterity as a strategic imperative rather than an optional capability in today's competitive landscape.

#### 4.3.2 Ambidextrous Organizational and Absorptive Capacity

The analysis demonstrates that ambidextrous organizational capability significantly enhances the absorptive capacity within organizations. This relationship underscores the importance of organizational design in facilitating knowledge absorption, as ambidextrous structures and processes enable organizations to identify, assimilate, and utilize external knowledge effectively. Organizations that maintain a balance between exploratory and exploitative activities appear to be better positioned to recognize valuable external knowledge and integrate it with existing knowledge stocks.

The theoretical implications of these findings resonate strongly with the Knowledge-Based View, which emphasizes knowledge management capabilities as sources of competitive advantage ([Bergh et al., 2025](#)). The results further support Organizational Ambidexterity Theory by suggesting that the structural and contextual dimensions of ambidextrous organizations create ideal conditions for knowledge absorption and transformation. Previous empirical investigations have consistently identified organizational factors as key

determinants of absorptive capacity development ([Abuseti et al., 2025](#); [Akbari et al., 2025](#); [Akhtar et al., 2024](#); [Apriliyani, 2025](#); [Cohen & Levinthal, 1990](#); [Hashem, 2024](#); [Huma et al., 2024](#); [Seo et al., 2022](#)). The current study extends this understanding by elucidating the specific mechanisms through which ambidexterity influences absorptive capacity, particularly through its impact on knowledge scanning capabilities, transformation processes, and exploitation activities across various organizational domains.

#### ***4.3.3 Innovative Performance and Leadership Knowledge***

Innovative performance has a profound influence on leadership knowledge development, with successful innovation initiatives significantly enhancing leadership capabilities. This relationship highlights the experiential nature of leadership development in innovation contexts, where hands-on experience with innovation processes provides valuable learning opportunities for organizational leaders. Leaders involved in successful innovation appear to have a deeper understanding of innovation dynamics, risk management, and organizational change processes. Theoretical frameworks for understanding this relationship draw heavily from Experiential Learning Theory, which identifies direct experience as a primary mechanism for knowledge development ([Hansen et al., 2020](#)).

The findings further validate the principles of Organizational Learning Theory, which emphasize the role of performance outcomes in shaping organizational knowledge structures. Additionally, the results support Leadership Development Theory predictions that challenging assignments and significant achievements accelerate leadership-capability development. Extant literature provides substantial evidence linking innovation experiences to leadership development in various organizational contexts ([Alghamdi, 2018](#); [Castro et al., 2021](#); [Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Son et al., 2020](#); [A. V. Tran & Khoa, 2025](#); [Udin, 2024](#); [Wahab et al., 2024](#)). The current study contributes to this discourse by demonstrating the reciprocal nature of this relationship and emphasizing the importance of creating leadership development opportunities within innovation processes. The findings suggest that organizations that intentionally leverage innovation activities for leadership development achieve superior organizational learning outcomes.

#### ***4.3.4 Leadership Knowledge and Innovative Performance***

Leadership knowledge is a fundamental driver of innovative performance, with knowledgeable leaders demonstrating significantly higher innovation success rates. This relationship affirms the essential role of leadership expertise in innovation management, as leaders with a deep understanding of innovation processes, technologies, and markets appear better equipped to guide innovation initiatives and make strategic decisions. Enhanced leadership knowledge appears to improve innovation outcomes through better resource allocation, risk assessment and organizational alignment. The theoretical underpinnings of these findings align closely with the Strategic Leadership Theory, which emphasizes the role of leadership cognition and knowledge in shaping organizational outcomes ([Yao, Yan, Tsinoopoulos, & Bai, 2024](#)). The results further support the Innovation Leadership propositions regarding the centrality of leadership expertise in navigating innovation complexities. From an organizational capability perspective, leadership knowledge is a critical resource that enhances an organization's ability to identify and exploit innovation opportunities.

Empirical research consistently identifies leadership factors as critical innovation determinants in knowledge-intensive organizations ([Castro et al., 2021](#); [Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Son et al., 2020](#); [A. V. Tran & Khoa, 2025](#); [Udin, 2024](#); [Wahab et al., 2024](#)). This study strengthens the evidence base while providing additional insights into the specific knowledge domains that most significantly influence innovation performance. The findings suggest that leadership development programs should specifically target innovation-related knowledge areas to enhance organizational innovation capability.

#### ***4.3.5 Sequential Mediation of Absorptive Capacity and Leadership Knowledge***

The sequential mediation analysis reveals the complex pathways through which ambidextrous organizational capabilities influence innovative performance, with absorptive capacity and leadership development serving as critical intervening variables. This finding underscores the importance of knowledge processes and leadership development in translating organizational capabilities into innovative outcomes. Organizations that effectively manage the knowledge absorption process and leverage it for leadership development appear to achieve superior innovation performance through enhanced strategic decision making and resource allocation.

Theoretical frameworks for understanding these findings are drawn from Sequential Mediation Theory, which emphasizes the importance of multiple intervening variables operating in specific sequences ([Adolfi et al., 2024](#)). The results further support the Integrated Innovation Theory propositions regarding the interconnected nature of organizational capabilities, knowledge processes, and leadership factors in driving innovation success. The mediated nature of these relationships suggests that organizations should adopt holistic approaches to innovation management that simultaneously address multiple organizational systems.

Previous research identifies various mediation mechanisms in the innovation process, though few studies examine sequential mediation involving knowledge and leadership variables ([Akbari et al., 2025](#); [Cohen & Levinthal, 1990](#); [Harandi et al., 2024](#); [Seo et al., 2022](#); [Son et al., 2020](#); [A. V. Tran & Khoa, 2025](#)). The current study contributes to this literature by highlighting the sequential nature of these relationships and emphasizing the need for integrated capability-development approaches. The findings suggest that organizations should align their ambidexterity initiatives with knowledge management and leadership development programs to maximize innovative outcomes. The robust explanatory power of the sequential mediation model ( $R^2 = 0.855$  for leadership knowledge) demonstrates the comprehensive nature of this theoretical framework in explaining variations in innovation performance across organizations. This strong predictive capability underscores the practical relevance of considering multiple organizational systems and their interactions when designing innovation-enhancement initiatives.

## **5. Conclusions**

### ***5.1 Conclusion***

This study demonstrates the critical interrelationships between ambidextrous organizational capability, absorptive capacity, leadership, and innovative performance. The findings confirm that ambidextrous organizational capability serves as a fundamental driver that directly enhances innovative performance while simultaneously strengthening an organization's capacity to absorb external knowledge. However, the research reveals unexpected complexities in how these elements interact, particularly challenging the presumed sequential pathway through which knowledge absorption was expected to develop leadership capabilities that drive innovation.

Empirical evidence strongly supports the significant role of leadership knowledge in fostering innovative outcomes, although its relationship with absorptive capacity appears more intricate than initially hypothesized. While ambidextrous structures effectively promote knowledge absorption, this knowledge does not automatically translate into enhanced leadership capabilities in the straightforward sequential manner proposed by this study. Instead, leadership knowledge emerged as an independent critical factor that directly enabled innovation performance. Theoretically, this study advances our understanding of organizational innovation by integrating dynamic capabilities with knowledge management and leadership perspectives and challenging assumptions about linear mediation pathways. Practically, this underscores the importance of developing both ambidextrous organizational structures and leadership competencies as parallel, rather than sequentially dependent, drivers of innovation success.

### ***5.2 Research Limitations***

While this study provides valuable insights into the sequential mediation of absorptive capacity and leadership knowledge in ambidextrous organizations, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research is based on cross-sectional data, which prevents the establishment of definitive causal relationships between variables. Second, reliance on perceptual measures from survey questionnaires may introduce common method bias, despite efforts to ensure validity and reliability. Third, this study does not account for industry-specific factors that may influence the relationships between organizational ambidexterity, knowledge processes, leadership, and innovation outcomes. Fourth, the sample, while diverse, may not be fully representative of all types of organizations, particularly those in highly regulated or non-knowledge-intensive sectors.

### ***5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research***

Future research should explore alternative explanatory mechanisms that may better account for the relationship between knowledge processes and leadership development. Longitudinal studies are particularly valuable for capturing the evolutionary dynamics of how organizational capabilities translate into innovation

outcomes over time. Additionally, expanding this research to different industrial contexts and cultural settings would enhance the generalizability of these findings. For organizational practitioners, the results emphasize the need to simultaneously develop ambidextrous capabilities, knowledge absorption processes, and leadership competencies as complementary initiatives rather than sequential ones. Managers should prioritize creating organizational structures that balance exploration and exploitation, while directly investing in leadership development programs focused on innovation management. Knowledge management systems should be designed to explicitly support leadership decision-making and strategic innovation efforts, recognizing that knowledge absorption and leadership development require targeted parallel interventions to maximize their impact on innovation performance.

Based on these limitations, several promising avenues for future research have emerged. First, a longitudinal study design would be valuable for tracing the causal pathways and temporal dynamics of the sequential mediation process over time. Second, future research could incorporate objective measures of innovative performance, such as patent counts or new product revenue, to complement perceptual data and reduce potential bias. Third, expanding the analytical framework to include industry-specific moderators, such as technological turbulence or competitive intensity, would provide a more contextualized understanding of the proposed relationship. Fourth, investigating the role of emerging factors, such as digital transformation capabilities or organizational culture, within this sequential model could address important contemporary issues. Finally, exploring this framework in different cultural or national contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings and uncover potential cross-cultural variations in the innovation value chain.

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