Talent management and employee ambidexterity: the moderating role of learning organization

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine the influence of the talent management (TM) process on employee ambidexterity (EA) and the moderating role of learning organizations in Indian IT and ITes organizations.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is descriptive and based on empirical data from 390 IT and ITES employees from India. Data were collected using three valid and reliable questionnaires. Data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling.

Findings – The findings show that the TM process significantly impacts EA. The moderating effects of the four dimensions of learning organization (LO) on the relationship between the TM process and EA were also noteworthy, even though no direct association was found to be significant. Regarding demographic variables, male and female employees do not vary considerably in their perception of TM process and EA in LO.

Originality/value – The study’s novelty lies in creating and discussing a synthesis of exploration and exploitation stemming from EA in learning organization.

Keywords Talent management process, Employee ambidexterity, Learning organization, Social exchange theory, Organizational learning theory

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In the modern era, firms are moving towards knowledge-intensive work (Vecchi, Della Piana, Feola, & Crudele, 2021). This indicates the criticality of human resources (HR) performance. Organizations are adopting a reactive approach to harness talent (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen, & Scullion, 2020). Many HR professionals reported talent management (TM) as a critical ingredient to achieving competitive advantage (Chen, Tansley, & Chou, 2021a; Chen, Lee, & Ahlstrom, 2021b; Gupta, Hassan, Pandey, & Kushwaha, 2022; Pereira, Collings, Wood, & Mellahi, 2022; Tarique & Schuler, 2018; Zahed, Teimouri, & Barzoki, 2021). In 2001, McKinsey and Company coined the term “war for talent” to identify the demand and supply gaps for talented professionals in companies. Since then, TM has become one of the fastest-growing disciplines in management (Collings, Scullion, & Vaiman, 2015). Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod (2001) predicted the need for knowledge workers. They projected that future organizations would be flatter, information-based and centred on teams in response to market challenges. Almost two decades later, their contention has become a fact. Organizations use TM to seize, use and safeguard talents (Chen et al., 2021a, 2021b; Dries, 2013), which are now viewed as

Funding: The authors declare that no funds, grants or other support were received during the preparation of this manuscript.
To achieve a competitive advantage, organizations need to manage high-potential employees. The conventional approach is insufficient to maintain competitive advantage in a hyper-dynamic environment. For this, corporations need continuous learning and development. “Learning organizations,” according to Senge (1990), constantly expand their ability to achieve the results they seek, where new and expansive patterns of thought are nurtured and where collective aspiration is set free. In this context, the five disciplines popularized by Senge (1990) that empower learning organizations are personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systemic thinking.

Organizational literature often highlights that successful organizations in a dynamic environment tend to be ambidextrous; they exploit current business resources and sufficiently explore new opportunities as needed (Latukha, Michailova, Selivanovskikh, & Kozachuk, 2022; Silva, González-Loureiro, & Braga, 2019). Organizational ambidexterity is managing trade-offs between conflicting demands by putting in place “dual structures” so that specific business units or groups within business units focus on alignment. In contrast, others focus on adaptation (Duncan, 1976). Many researchers argued that for organizations to be ambidextrous, they needed ambidextrous employees (Alghamdi, 2018; Jackson, Lescent-Giles, & Dunn-Jensen, 2017). Employee ambidexterity (EA) encompasses distinct dimensions of exploration and exploitation (Keller & Weibler, 2015; Mom, Fourné, & Jansen, 2015). Hence, it can be boosted through any factor that increases exploration and exploitation.

Even though few businesses in today’s dynamic world have developed the sophisticated procedures required to be considered learning organizations, this article makes the case that many have embraced corollary traits that support the five basic disciplines of learning organizations and have a favourable impact on the learning function, even if they do so indirectly. This paper presents a TM paradigm for IT and ITES practitioners to use as they solve the industry’s complex issues. The framework consists of TM as an independent variable with four dimensions, i.e. identifying critical positions, competency training, talent development and reward management. EA is a dependent variable measured by exploration activities and exploitation activities. This correlation is moderated by seven dimensions of learning organizations: continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, embedded systems, empowerment, system connections and strategic leadership.

1.1 Problem statement
TM, along with retention, performance and motivation, is one of the most commonly used variables in the domains of HR. This study sought to determine how an organization’s learning culture and TM process affected employees’ ambidexterity. Previous studies have examined TM process (Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017; Hedayati Mehdiabadi & Li, 2016; Huang & Kim, 2013) and LO (Alghamdi, 2018; Oladapo, 2014; Iles, Preece, & Chuai, 2010) little research has been done to determine how the TM process (as it relates to individual traits) and LO culture (as it relates to organizational characteristics) affects EA.

Another gap is the paucity of studies examining the moderating impact of learning organizations on the connections between the TM process and EA. Even though the concept of a LO has drawn more attention in the HRD areas, one of the most pressing issues has been the absence of reliable and valuable measuring tools (Osagie, Wesselink, Blok, & Mulder, 2022; Joo, 2012). Prior to the development of the Dimensions of Learning Organization
nothing was known about how to accurately assess the LO culture as a system that supports the organizational learning process (Gupta et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2004). This study fills this knowledge gap by concentrating on the TM process as an antecedent of EA and the moderating impact of LO.

The research aims to examine the relationship between the TM process and EA, as well as the moderating role of the LO by addressing the following two research questions:

RQ1. How do the TM process and EA relate to one another?

RQ2. How do the seven components of a LO (continuous learning, embedded systems, system connections, strategic leadership, conversation and inquiry, team learning and empowerment) affect the interaction between the TM process and EA?

The study flow is as follows. Section 1 introduces the study, Section 2 builds the conceptual framework and hypotheses, and Section 3 outlines the research techniques, such as data collection and measurements. The analysis results are then compiled using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Subsequently, Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 engage in discussion, implications, limitations, future research direction and conclusion.

2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

The actions linked to identifying critical positions, competency training, development and reward management are the foundation of the TM concept (Jayaraman, Talib, & Khan, 2018). Employees' ambidextrous behaviour, such as exploring and exploiting competencies, skills and knowledge, is also critical for achieving competitive advantage (Rogelberg, 2017). The TM process in the behavioural context and the LO in the organizational environment are among the antecedents for this study paradigm. The study’s research model is shown in Figure 1. The subsequent sections will discuss each variable in detail.

2.1 Talent management

TM, a set of procedures for attracting, training, developing and rewarding high-potential and high-performing employees, is crucial when firms want to become more ambidextrous (Al Jawali, Darwish, Scullion, & Haak-Saheem, 2022; Khilji, Tarique, & Schuler, 2015; Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Effective TM of employees with high potential is essential for maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage within an organization (Vecchi et al., 2021). TM is basically an ongoing process of forecasting the need for HR and then making arrangements to meet it (Cappelli, 2008). An organization develop a pipeline of qualified candidates by identifying critical operational positions, comprehending the competencies of its human capital, forecasting economic volatility and being aware of the social and environmental changes that could impact the organization over time (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

Collings and Mellahi (2009) conceptualized TM as an activity and process within the organization. According to them, this process helps in systematically identifying key positions. These key positions contribute differentially towards an organization’s sustainable competitive advantage. The study also suggested that crucial positions should not be restricted to the top management team but should include key positions at lower levels.

2.2 Employee ambidexterity

Successful organizations in a dynamic environment tend to be ambidextrous, meaning they are coordinated and effective in their current business needs while being sufficiently adaptable to changes in the forthcoming environment (Caniëls & Veld, 2019; Huang & Kim,
2013). Duncan (1976) proposed the concept of organizational ambidexterity. According to Huang and Kim (2013), ambidexterity is relatively new to HR management (HRM) research, but its significance has steadily been recognized. Researchers indicated that ambidextrous employees create an ambidextrous organization (Rogelberg, 2017; Huang & Kim, 2013). Moreover, managers looking for ambidexterity recognize HR as critical for working effectively on exploration and exploitation activities.

Skilled and talented HR are scarce. This has led to acknowledging the resource allocation perspective in the ambidexterity literature (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006). Exploration of new knowledge, cognitive abilities, talents and processes that resulted in EA is classified as an exploratory factor. This can be achieved by transforming traditional HRM into TM. In contrast, the exploitative part is characterized as developing current HRM knowledge, talents, skills and procedures required to become ambidextrous. Exploration and exploitation are thus complementing dimensions targeted at “Employee Ambidexterity.”

EA refers to employees’ behavioural inclination to engage in exploration and exploitation activities within a specific timeframe (Keller & Weibler, 2015; Mom, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2009). In the existing literature, two main theoretical perspectives on organizational ambidexterity can be identified and applied to the employee level. The first perspective is contextual ambidexterity, which suggests that the organizational context should support the simultaneous pursuit of explorative and exploitative activities (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). The second perspective is structural ambidexterity, which argues that

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**Figure 1.** Proposed research model

*Source: Prepared by author(s)*
explorative and exploitative activities should be undertaken independently owing to competing goals, resource requirements and different organizational capabilities (Lavie et al., 2010; Benner & Tushman, 2003). Firms can use contextual or structural approaches to achieve EA (Fourné, Rosenbusch, Heyden, & Jansen, 2019; Ossenbrink, Hopmann, & Hoffmann, 2019), or the two can be combined to use each approach (called hybrid ambidexterity) effectively. Members of the organization are free to divide resources between the two learning styles, but this requires a supportive organizational environment.

Talent identification, competency training, talent development and reward management are significant HR antecedents of organizational ambidexterity (Malik, Pereira, & Tarba, 2019; Jayaraman et al., 2018). Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that these HR practices will increase the capacity for exploration and exploitation. The processes underlying the link between TM and ambidexterity are still not completely understood. We examine whether various TM activities have distinct effects on EA and its main characteristics in light of the favourable effects that continuous learning, embedded systems, system connections, strategic leadership, conversation and inquiry, team learning and empowerment team learning, embedded systems LO factors have on ambidextrous learning. We expect that this study will particularly facilitate exploration, as talent identification initiatives encourage the utilization of new knowledge embedded in talented individuals. Organizations can tap into their fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and unique skill sets by actively identifying and nurturing talented employees. This emphasis on talent identification promotes the discovery and application of new knowledge within the organization. Through the involvement of talented individuals, the organization is better equipped to explore new opportunities (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Thus, talent identification serves as a catalyst for exploration, enabling organizations to stay competitive in a dynamic business environment (McDonnell, Collings, Business, & Schuler, 2017).

The management practice related to encouraging the frequent application of existing knowledge suggests that competency training plays a role in facilitating exploitation (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2009). Competency training enable employees to exploit their capabilities to achieve desired outcomes (Raisch et al., 2018). This focus on competency training enhances the ability of employees to leverage their existing knowledge and skills, leading to improved performance in carrying out their responsibilities (Latukha et al., 2022). Finally, as organizational members gain a better understanding of how new and old knowledge can be applied, they become more conscious of the available resources as well as those required for further development outside the organization, enabling both exploration and exploitation (Latukha, 2018). Therefore, we propose the following:

**H1.** TM process (identifying critical positions, competency training, development and reward management) is positively related to EA (exploitation activities and exploration activities).

### 2.3 Learning organization

The current social, economic and political turmoil at the global level is spawning a slew of new management values and working practices (Jamali, Khoury, & Sahyoun, 2006). Management in the 21st century has shifted focus and is profiting from a fundamentally different approach to manage employees than traditional commanding and controlling ideas (Jamali et al., 2006). This has led to the paradigm shift from bureaucratic organizations to learning organizations (LO).

A “learning organisation,” according to Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino (2008), is “talented at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transmitting, and keeping knowledge and then actively moderating role of learning organization
adjusting its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights”. Senge and Sterman (1992) describe LO as a community of people who continuously improve their ability to generate what they wish to create. He further described LO as one who has mastered the four disciplines of “shared ideals, personal mastery, mental models, and team learning.”

A LO incorporates “learning” into all aspects of its mission, vision and values, as well as its day-to-day operations and evaluations (Osagie et al., 2022). It invests in leadership development to support people in discovering their purpose, removing obstacles, creating frameworks for their learning, receiving feedback on progress and reaping the rewards of their learning (Reese, 2021). Learning is seen as a vital part of LO structures and processes (Törmänen, Hämäläinen, & Saarinen, 2022).

LO legitimate a wide range of concepts, beliefs and ways of thinking that stem from employees’ core competencies and talent (Osagie et al., 2022; Marquardt, 2002; McGill, Slocum, & Lei, 1992). Therefore, managers train their employees to think of their organization as a system, build their own knowledge and collaboratively reframe difficulties to create LO (McGill, Slocum, & Lei, 1992). LO provides a conducive environment for high-calibre employees to manage their talent (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1998). Huber (1991) claimed that the organization’s central focus should be on continuously advancing knowledge, which gave rise to the concept of “exploration”. Putting new knowledge into order and preserving it will make it easier to learn new things. Similar importance has been given to information exchange in learning organizations. In the context of a LO, information exchange occurs across various hierarchical levels, encompassing interactions at both individual and group levels. This dynamic exchange influences diverse organizational processes, such as the dissemination of information, the individual’s cognitive construction of organization structure and the codification of established organizational routines (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1998).

Despite much debate about the close relationship between the TM process and EA, few scholars have examined LO as a moderator (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021; Kitapçı & Çelik, 2014; Joo, 2012). Joo (2012) found that TM is effective when employees perceive a conducive learning environment. When identified as critical for the organization, employees are more likely to experience the positive feeling required to create ambidextrous behaviour (Markides & Chu, 2009). Employees perceive that their organization value their contributions (Subramony, 2009), inspiring them to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviours (Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007). Thus, a perceived LO and TM process favourably impacts EA. In previous literature, it is highly accepted that LO moderates the relationship between TM and EA (Kitapçı & Çelik, 2014).

A LO promotes the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge through the organization. TM processes identify and develop individuals with valuable skills. By assimilating TM with a LO framework, expertise can be effectively shared across the organization. This knowledge-sharing facilitates the development of ambidextrous capabilities among employees, as they can access diverse perspectives, best practices and lessons learned from others (Ellinger & Ellinger, 2021). This continuous learning approach enables employees to balance exploration and exploitation effectively. Despite the growing body of research exploring the influence of a LO culture as a moderator in various aspects such as leader-member exchange quality in-role job performance (Joo, 2012), employee creativity (Son & Kim, 2016) and personal performance (Tunwarat et al., 2019), there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning the investigation of the moderating effect of a LO culture on the relationship between TM processes and EA. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge by examining the role of a LO culture as
a crucial environmental factor that fosters TM processes, consequently fostering employees’ ambidextrous behaviour. We therefore advanced the following:

H2. Each dimension of LO (continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning and collaboration, embedded systems, empowerment, system connections and strategic leadership) will moderate the relationship between the TM process and EA.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection

The present study aimed to explore the TM process in the context of IT and ITes employees in India. As India is a big country with many IT and ITes firms (Bhattacharya, Mohapatra, & Bhattacharya, 2018), it was deemed appropriate to restrict the study to NSE-listed top 15 IT and ITes companies. A cross-sectional survey was carried out through a closed-ended questionnaire. Through this approach, initially, 810 employees were contacted from 10 organizations at multiple levels. In the end, 417 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 51.48%. It was discovered that 27 of the 417 responses were incomplete and thus excluded. The final analysis was conducted on 390 valid responses. Respondents’ demographic statistics are shown in Table 1. A majority of the respondents were in the junior and middle levels (52% and 36%), respectively. Out of the total respondents, 27% are females, whereas the remaining 73% are males.

3.2 Survey instrument

Research constructs and items related to the study variables were identified after an extensive literature review. TM items were adopted from the study of Jayaraman et al. (2018), identifying critical position (3 items), competency training (3 items), development (3 items) and reward management (3 items). LO items were adopted from Marsick and Watkins (2003); continuous learning (2 items); dialogue and inquiry (3 items); team learning and collaboration (3 items); embedded systems (3 items); empowerment (3 items); system connections (3 items); and strategic leadership (3 items). EA items were adopted from Keller and Weibler (2015) consist of exploitation (4 items) and exploration (4 items). After

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>52.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>36.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>0–5</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>55.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>5–10</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>37.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 and above</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>72.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>27.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by author(s)

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents
discussing with academicians specializing in HRM, several items were adjusted to meet the situation (Table 2).

The language and format of the instrument were altered throughout the pre-test preparation phase to lessen social desirability bias (Table 2). Furthermore, the research was conducted per previous researchers’ guidelines for research design and statistical process (Hossain, Akter, Kattiypornpong, & Dwivedi, 2020; Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Thiele, 2017; Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016).

3.3 Measurement properties and validity test

Final data were analysed using SPSS and SmartPLS software. SPSS was used for conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to confirm the appropriateness of factors and indicators because of item modifications (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Smart-PLS was used to conduct PLS-SEM analysis for checking hypothetical relationships among the study construct of the proposed model.

EFA was used on 47 items by using SPSS (Version 23). Principal component analysis method with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization were selected for performing EFA. Items below the value of 0.4 were not retained, reducing the number of items to 41. Several researchers have taken similar steps in the past (Hair et al., 2014; Metin, Birisci, Coskun, & Kolomuc, 2012).

Furthermore, to assess the measurement quality of the study construct’s reliability and validity, a test was conducted (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values were found to be at a significant level, i.e. > 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, the results (Table 3) suggested good construct reliability. Next, for measuring validity, both convergent validity and discriminant validity were measured (Hair et al., 2013). Convergent validity was achieved, as all the factor loadings (FL) of the underlying construct and average variance extracted (AVE) were greater than 0.7 and 0.5, respectively (Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, & Ramirez, 2016).

The standardized FL were significantly higher than the cut-off value of 0.50 (Table 3). These values indicate the degree of association between measurement items and a single latent variable (Ab Hamid, Sami, & Sidek, 2017; Purwanto, 2021). TM had an AVE value of 0.588, EA had an AVE value of 0.63, whereas learning organizations had an AVE value of 0.58 (LO). In comparison to the specified lower limit of 0.50, these estimations of AVE are considerably higher (Voorhees et al., 2016).

To establish the discriminant validity, heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) measure was used. As shown in Table 4, all the selected constructs achieved satisfactory discriminant validity because all HTMT were less than 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, in the present study, all the selected constructs achieved reliability and validity (Table 4).

3.4 Model assessment by structural equation modelling

As all the constructs are reflective, the PLS-SEM method is recommended for testing hypotheses and validating the conceptual model (Hair et al., 2019, 2018; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). Additionally, while using this technique to conduct a survey, there are no sample restrictions (Hossain et al., 2020; Willaby, Costa, Burns, MacCann, & Roberts, 2015). This method entails quantifying the respondents’ responses while conducting the survey. A five-point Likert scale was used to quantify responses. The scale ranges from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA).

To establish the results of the proposed research model (Figure 2) and determine the significance of standardized path coefficients, a bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples at a 95% confidence interval was used (Hair et al., 2017). Through this procedure, it was also
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Original items</th>
<th>Modified items</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talent management process</strong></td>
<td>ICP1: My company distinguishes the talent that makes the maximum impact on organization success</td>
<td>ICP3: My company identifies critical positions in line with its business strategies</td>
<td>Integrated talent management scale: Construction and initial validation</td>
<td>Jayaraman, S., Talib, P., &amp; Khan, A. F.</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP2: My Company differentiates talent on the basis of their level of contribution</td>
<td>CT1: The training activities for talent are designed to develop firm-specific skills/knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP3: My company identifies the critical positions aligned with business strategies</td>
<td>CT2: The content of the training activities for talent is based on job performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT1: The training activities for the identified talent are focused on required competencies</td>
<td>CT3: Training activities for talent are in line with assigned critical tasks</td>
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<td>CT2: The content of the training activities for the identified talent are based on job performance</td>
<td>D1: Identified talent have many opportunities for upward mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT3: Training activities for the identified talent are in line with assigned critical tasks</td>
<td>D2: Talents have clear career paths in this organization</td>
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<td>D1: Identified talent have many opportunities for upward mobility</td>
<td>D3: Developmental activities include feedback on individual growth agenda for the identified talent</td>
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<td>D2: Talents have clear career paths in this organization</td>
<td>RM1: My company values my work and contribution</td>
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<td>D3: Developmental activities include feedback on individual growth agenda for the identified talents</td>
<td>RM2: My company has a fair system of rewarding employees</td>
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<td>RM1: My company values my work and contribution</td>
<td>RM3: My company provides recognition for my work in non-financial terms (e.g., paid leaves, promotion, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM2: I believe that my company has a fair and just system of rewarding employees</td>
<td>RM3: My company provides recognition via nonfinancial means, e.g., certificates of recognition</td>
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**Table 2.** Sources of constructs of the study.

**Moderating role of learning organization.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Original items</th>
<th>Modified items</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee ambidexterity</td>
<td>EP1: Activities for which you are well prepared</td>
<td>EP1: Most often, I am called upon to engage in activities for which I am well prepared</td>
<td>What It Takes and Costs To Be an Ambidextrous Manager: Linking Leadership and Cognitive Strain to Balancing Exploration and Exploitation</td>
<td>Keller &amp; Weibler</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EP2: Activities whose execution is completely clear</td>
<td>EP2: Most often, I am called upon to engage in activities whose execution is very clear</td>
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<td>EP3: Easily plannable activities</td>
<td>EP3: Most often, I am called upon to engage in easily plannable activities that can be performed within a specified time</td>
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<td>EP4: Activities that refer to a clearly defined problem area</td>
<td>EP4: Most often, I am called upon to engage in activities that pertain to a clearly defined problem area</td>
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<td>EPR1: Activities in which you have to deal with previously unknown situations</td>
<td>EPR1: Most often, I am dealing with unknown domains and situations</td>
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<td>EPR 2: Activities that are so complex that they are difficult to survey at the start</td>
<td>EPR2: Most often, I am called upon to engage in complex activities that are difficult to comprehend at the beginning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EPR3: Activities that require a completely different strategy</td>
<td>EPR3: Most often, I am called upon to engage in activities that require a completely different strategy to work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EPR4: Activities whose consequences are not yet exactly foreseeable at the time they are carried out</td>
<td>EPR4: Most often, I am engaged in activities whose consequences are not yet exactly foreseeable initially</td>
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<td>Learning organization</td>
<td>CL1: In my organization, people help each other learn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrating the Value of an Organization’s Learning Culture: The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire</td>
<td>Victoria J. Marsick &amp; Karen E. Watkins</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>CL2: In my organization, people are given time to support</td>
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<td>DI1: In my organization, people give open and honest feedback to each other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DI2: In my organization, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think</td>
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(continued)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Original items</th>
<th>Modified items</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DI3: In my organization, people spend time building trust with each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TLC1: In my organization, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLC2: In my organization, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TLC3: In my organization, teams/groups are confident that the organization will act as their recommendations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ES1: My organization creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES2: My organization makes its lessons learned available to all employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ES3: My organization measures the results of the time and resources spent on training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EMP1: My organization recognizes people for taking the initiative,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EMP2: My organization gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMP3: My organization supports employees who take calculated risks</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC1: My organization encourages people to think from a global perspective</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC2: My organization works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Moderating role of learning organization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Original items</th>
<th>Scale items</th>
<th>Modified items</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC3:</td>
<td><em>My organization encourages people to get answers from across the organization when solving problems</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL1:</td>
<td><em>In my organization, leaders mentor and coach those they lead</em></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SL2:</td>
<td><em>In my organization, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn</em></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SL3:</td>
<td><em>In my organization, leaders ensure that the organization’s actions are consistent with its values</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** ICP = identifying critical positions; CT = competency training; D = development; RM = reward management; EP = exploitation; EPR = exploration; CL = continuous learning; DI = dialog and inquiry; TLC = team learning and collaboration; ES = embedded systems; EMP = empowerment; SC = systems connections; SL = strategic leadership

**Source:** Prepared by author(s)
possible to evaluate the path coefficients for various links, probability ($p$) values and $t$-values. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) value for the endogenous variable was also checked. $R^2$ value for EA was found to be 0.386, indicating the good predictive ability of the model in TM research (Hair et al., 2017). Table 5 presents the estimated path coefficients, $p$-values and $t$-values.

### 3.5 Moderation analysis

Moderation analysis has been used to examine the relevance of the moderator learning organization’s (LO) impacts on the relationship between TM and EA by taking bias correlation into account and accelerating bootstrapping with 5,000 re-samples and product indicator method (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis showed that LO strongly moderates the relationship between TM and EA with the level of significance $p < 0.001$. The Gaskin stats package was used to understand the interaction moderation relationship (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). The result demonstrates that at the high level of LO, the level of EA is increasing and vice versa. Therefore, LO strengthens the positive relationship between TM and EA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct items</th>
<th>Factor loadings</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$TM$</td>
<td>0.875–0.670</td>
<td>0.588</td>
<td>0.948</td>
<td>0.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$EA$</td>
<td>0.853–0.621</td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td>0.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$LO$</td>
<td>0.826–0.501</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>0.882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Prepared by author(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>EA</th>
<th>LO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$EA$</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$LO$</td>
<td>0.634</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$TM$</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.** Measurement properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>EA</th>
<th>LO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$EA$</td>
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<tr>
<td>$LO$</td>
<td>0.634</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$TM$</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.** HTMT method for discriminant validity

**Figure 2.** Resultant model
3.6 Results
Two hypotheses have been presented in this study, with one discussing how TM affects employees’ ambidexterity (EA). With the use of the PLS-SEM technique, the hypothesis has been statistically validated. H1 has reportedly been supported, as seen. The analysis shows that there is a significant impact of TM on EA \((H1)\), as the relevant path coefficient is 0.31 and the level of significance is \(p < 0.01\). Another hypothesis covering the LO as a moderator for the relationship between TM and EA has been tested. LO has the strongest moderating effect, as the relevant path coefficient is 0.403 and the significance level is \(p < 0.001\). Hence, \(H2\) is statistically validated and supported.

Another finding is that while there was no evidence of a direct relationship between learning organizational dimensions and EA, four of them – continuous learning, embedded systems, empowerment and strategic leadership – had significant moderating effects on the association between the TM process and the degree of EA. According to the first moderation effect, employees tended to rate their ambidextrous behaviour higher when they perceived higher TM. Regardless of the degree of the embedded system, the low TM group displayed low EA; nevertheless, TM had a more significant impact on the group with a high embedded system. This result suggests that embedded systems may act as a catalyst for boosting EA. EA can barely be improved in an organization that lacks a suitable learning support system, notwithstanding the leader’s support.

4. Discussion
Social exchange theory and institutional learning theory were used as the theoretical framework in this study to evaluate the effect of TM on EA. The findings showed that TM process quality was a significant factor in determining EA \((H1)\). This finding is consistent with previous research, which also found a significant relationship between the TM process and EA (Hassan et al., 2022; Latuka et al., 2022; Salvador et al., 2014). TM practices, such as identifying critical positions, competency training, development and reward management, can be integrated into the learning culture (Mohammed, Hafeez-Baig, Gururajan, & Hafeez Baig, 2020). By investing in employees’ development, TM initiatives contribute to building an adaptable workforce capable of embracing new challenges (Brix, 2019; Caniëls & Veld, 2019; Alghamdi, 2018; Joo, 2012; Bersin, 2007).

This study demonstrated that adequate LO dimensions will significantly strengthen the relationship between TM and EA. The findings highlighted LO as a strong moderator for TM and EA. Similar findings were reported by Baek-Kyoo Joo (2012), who concluded that the LO is an important contextual factor for improving employee’s ambidextrous behaviour. This study established LO as a moderator between TM and EA in the following ways: firstly, LO can identify employees who possess the potential for ambidexterity and provide them with the necessary training to enhance their skills (Latukha et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2017). Secondly, a LO fosters a culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration, enabling employees to learn from each other’s experiences and expertise. This exchange of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Hypothesis no.</th>
<th>Path coefficients</th>
<th>t-values</th>
<th>p-values</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TM → EA</td>
<td>(H1)</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>5.967</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderation effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO × TM → EA</td>
<td>(H2)</td>
<td>0.403</td>
<td>6.087</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by author(s)
knowledge can facilitate ambidextrous behaviours by exposing employees to diverse perspectives and encouraging innovation (Al-Heneiti & Irtaimeh, 2021; Aamir, Jan, Qadus, Nassani, & Haffar, 2021; Caniëls & Veld, 2019). Thirdly, by emphasizing continuous development, a LO equips employees with the ability to adapt changing circumstances and acquire new competencies. This adaptability enables employees to engage effectively in exploratory and exploitative activities, (Kim, 2019). Finally, reward management is crucial in facilitating talented employees and encouraging their ambidextrous behaviours (Kostopoulos, Bozionelos, & Syrigos, 2015).

It has been highlighted in this study that for demonstrating an improved TM process, LO has a major moderating effect on EA, which has been validated by other researchers (Latukha et al., 2022; 2021; Joo, 2012). LO provides the mechanism through which TM may impact EA. A LO fosters a culture of continuous learning and development. It emphasizes the importance of acquiring new knowledge, skills and competencies (Mishra & Reddy, 2021). By integrating TM with a LO approach, employees are encouraged to be open to new ideas, embrace change and develop the necessary skills to adapt to emerging opportunities. This adaptability enhances employees’ ability to exhibit ambidextrous behaviours, as they can navigate and respond effectively to different situations (Latukha et al., 2022; Meyers, 2020).

A LO cultivates a supportive climate that encourages and rewards learning, knowledge sharing and risk-taking. TM processes can reinforce this climate by recognizing and rewarding individuals who demonstrate ambidextrous behaviours. By integrating TM with a LO approach, employees feel empowered to take calculated risks, share knowledge and engage in both exploratory and exploitative activities. This supportive climate enhances EA and fosters a culture of continuous improvement and growth (Brix, 2019; Caniëls & Veld, 2019). Therefore, a LO acts as a vital moderator between TM and EA. It provides a supportive environment for knowledge acquisition, continuous learning, adaptability, innovation and a climate encouraging ambidextrous behaviours. By integrating TM with a LO framework, employees feel empowered to take calculated risks, share knowledge and engage in both exploratory and exploitative activities. This supportive climate enhances EA and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

5. Implications
This study has made several theoretical advancements. In this context, it is essential to note that the social exchange theory offers firms many advantages that help support their TM practices. In light of social exchange theory, this whole paradigm of the TM process is comprehensible (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory, however, is inadequate in explaining how LO factors such as continuous learning, embedded system, empowerment and strategic leadership impacts EA. In order to evaluate EA holistically, it is crucial to integrate organizational learning theory with social exchange theory.

To incorporate how different elements could affect the execution of the TM process in a LO, we have merged the organizational learning theory with the social exchange theory. As well as how this merger could improve employees’ ambidexterity in LO. Based on this assumption, a theoretical model has been suggested, and it can potentially have a high prediction accuracy (76%). By integrating organizational learning theory and social exchange theory, this study might concurrently consider both economic and normative rationality in decision-making, conduct a scientific analysis of the acceptability and availability of resources, negotiate exchange, generate and disseminate knowledge and legitimate and optimize resource choice.

There are studies where organizational learning theory was used to improve TM practices in the context of LO (Latukha et al., 2022; Phillips & Roper, 2009) and EA (Jacob Brix, 2019; Hakan & Vural, 2013). The primary focus of this study is on adopting and
implementing the TM process in learning organizations. This research combined organizational learning theory and the social exchange theory with context-specific factors, giving strong prediction power instead of standard models. Additionally, this study’s analysis of a competing model that considers the direct effects of TM on EA has demonstrated that the proposed research model that considers the effects of a moderator LO is more effective than the competing model. The existing literature has benefitted significantly from this concept. According to some research, realizing the potential of learning organizations that could enhance the interaction between TM and EA has been challenging because of inadequate information about organizational resources and how and where to utilize them (Waters-Sobkowiak, Kowalski, & Smits, 2018). Hence, the top management teams should be properly acquainted with the TM process’s potential usage to improve EA. This study has considered the moderating effects of learning organizations that assist managers in capturing the advantages of LO dimensions to enhance TM for more outstanding ambidextrous behaviour in employees.

This study has highlighted the potential for TM processes in learning organizations to enhance ambidexterity among staff members. The TM method can be effectively combined with a learning organizational culture to enhance employees’ ambidextrous behaviour. The study has shown that understanding organizational culture can improve the bond between TM and EA. It further demonstrates how applying the TM process in a LO context enhances EA over time, leading to competitive advantage. Therefore, integrating TM processes with LO aspects requires adequate resource allocation. Senior management is crucial in ensuring sufficient funds are allocated to support TM initiatives within the LO framework (Al Jawali et al., 2022). These funds can be used for training and development programs, hiring and retaining top talent, mentoring and coaching initiatives and establishing supportive learning and knowledge-sharing infrastructure.

Managers can build company-specific competence training and development programmes for this organizations must do an “Organization Capability Assessment”. This enables the HR department to collaborate with the other departments every year and examine various workforce requirements (Ngo, Hwang, & Zhang, 2020; Maier, Moultrie, & Clarkson, 2011). This will provide organizations adequate lead time to respond to opportunities and problems identified through continuous, real-time monitoring of their high-potential employees. To foster development, firms should provide high-potential employees with enough opportunities for career growth. In addition, create clear career paths in partnership with employees and offer constant feedback on their progress (Böhmer & Schinnenburg, 2023). Managers can blend various financial and non-financial incentives to retain employees for extended periods (Faisal Ahammad et al., 2015; Marler & Boudreau, 2017). Also, transparentizing reward system will help build employees' trust in the TM Process (Tymon et al., 2010).

The present study’s findings confirm that improving the TM process impact employees’ behaviour and performance, encouraging them to display ambidexterity. Therefore, senior management must provide proper competency training, development and reward management to their high-potential employees. This will boost employees’ ambidexterity and motivate them to exploit and explore their skills simultaneously. In addition, managers must make sure the LO factors are applied within the organization to facilitate the efficient sharing and processing of knowledge.

6. Limitations and future research directions
The present study explores the TM Process and EA dimensions in the context of IT and ITeS employees in India. TM activities are generally considered sensitive company issues, and often, employees may not be forthcoming regarding genuine responses. Therefore, the
empirical survey results based on the opinion of the IT and ITes employees may suffer from usual response bias and the limitations of the sample-based study. As EA is nascent, the availability of published data and related information was limited. Additionally, the study’s single cross-sectional design indicates that it was used only once to test EA and the TM process. To develop a robust relationship between the TM process and EA, a longitudinal design is advisable as the relationship manifests with time. Analysis was conducted using the responses of 390 viable respondents. It cannot give a general impression. Our study’s findings are based on a review of employee responses from IT and ITes firms. The results might have been more generic if other kinds of organizations had been considered.

This study combined organizational learning theories and social exchange to create a model that illustrates how the successful application of the TM process in learning organizations may affect their employees’ ambidexterity and, eventually, their competitive advantage. The suggested model has been discovered to have better internal consistency, reliability and predictive power. Employees acknowledged as having “high potential” are likelier to demonstrate ambidextrous behaviour. Such behaviour eventually leads to work motivation and employee retention. These findings are similar to the ones observed by Latukha et al. (2022). Reward management encourages ambidextrous behaviour, and it potentially contributes towards organizational outcomes. Similar findings were observed by Faisal Ahammad et al. (2015). Attracting, motivating and keeping high-potential employees are major issues for many firms in a knowledge-based economy (Joo & Shim, 2010). Rapid technology breakthroughs and intense global rivalry have flattened companies, increased the importance of teams and increased the complexity and difficulty of occupations. Employees, therefore, require more empowerment and assistance from their managers and organizations. This study sought to determine how the TM process affected employees’ ambidexterity and the moderating effects of the LO. EA was found to be influenced by TM, and organizational learning culture played a moderating role in indirectly influencing ambidextrous behaviour. By adopting an efficient TM process and fostering a culture of learning inside the firm, HR professionals may and should assist employees in developing more ambidextrous behaviour. This study is anticipated to be valuable for top management employees in ensuring the competitive advantage brought on by successful TM deployment.

7. Conclusion
This study examined the relationship between TMP and EA among learning organizations in the Indian IT and ITes sector. The findings suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between TM and EA in the context of learning organizations in the IT sector. The findings highlighted that LO is the strong moderator for TM and EA. Specifically, the dimensions of continuous learning, embedded systems, empowerment and strategic leadership – had significant moderating effects on the association between the TM process and the degree of EA. This study also contributes to the existing literature on TMP and EA by analysing the complex relationships between these variables in a LO context. The findings of this study confirm that improving the TM process through identifying critical positions, competency training, development and reward management impacts employees’ behaviour and performance, encouraging them to display ambidextrous behaviour.

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Further reading


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