




## Ambidextrous Leadership in Bureaucratic Reform: A Case Study at Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya

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### Abstract

Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office won the title of Integrity Zone (ZI) in 2018, Corruption Free Zone (WBK) in 2019, and Clean and Serving Bureaucratic Area (WBBM) in 2020. This WBBM predicate has also been maintained twice. Problems arise with persistently maintaining the title amid current technological developments that require leaders to be creative and innovative while maintaining existing policies. For this reason, an alternative solution is to implement ambidextrous leadership. This research aims to identify the implementation of ambidextrous leadership in a case study at the Surabaya TPI Special Class I Immigration Office. The research method used is qualitative. Data was collected by semi-structured interviews with 50 respondents at the executive level in the general, analyst, and examiner sections. Data analysis used thematic techniques, such as classifying data into several sections and then generalizing to get a comprehensive picture. The results showed that ambidextrous leadership was identified in three areas of bureaucratic reform, namely (1) the management area, (2) the HR management system, and (3) the area of improving the quality of public services.

**Keywords** *Ambidextrous Leadership, Bureaucratic Reform, HR Management*

### INTRODUCTION

Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya has launched a motto: *NYALI WANI* (Real Care Must Serve). This motto is the foundation of the institution's ability to carry out bureaucratic reform. Along the way, the Surabaya TPI Special Class I Immigration Office has won the titles of Integrity Zone (2018), Corruption Free Zone (2019), and Clean and Serving Bureaucratic Zone (2020). This WBBM predicate has also been maintained twice. This achievement measures the success of bureaucratic reform in the institution. The problem arises when it comes to persistently maintaining the WBBM predicate; the times place high demands on implementing employees.

On the one hand, this has a positive effect because it provides high standardization; on the other hand, it has a negative impact because it overloads the workload of implementing employees and is not optimal when they have to provide services. A system that needs to be more rigidly structured makes room for innovation so narrow. Employees become trapped in stagnant and inflexible conditions. To overcome this problem, the concept of "ambidextrous leadership" emerged as one of the solution actions to bridge exploration and exploitation in public service transformation (Ma et al., 2019; Mana-Ay et al., 2020; Mueller et al., 2020; Oluwafemi et al., 2019; Suhariadi et al., 2023).

Ambidextrous leadership is a leadership style in which a leader supports followers during innovation, works flexibly and can switch between exploration and exploitation of innovation (Rosing et al., 2011; Zacher, 2016). As emphasized in social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), ambidextrous leaders influence followers' innovative behaviour by setting examples, demonstrating the importance of innovation, guiding followers to develop innovative behaviour, and motivating followers through experiments that encourage innovation and reward them based

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on achievements (Rosing et al., 2011). Ambidextrous leadership combines these two dimensions, balancing innovation and efficiency in public service.

Many situations in public service delivery are characterized by uncertainty regarding the potential negative consequences of decisions taken. These risky situations influence the behaviour of frontline professionals, as they make many decisions based on discretion (Tangsgaard, 2021). Risk is present in public service delivery (Suhariadi et al., 2023). Risk perception affects subsequent behaviour (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), but we lack knowledge about how organizational culture is essential to risk perception and behaviour in risky situations (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992; Uktutias et al., 2022).

Research on ambidextrous leadership has previously been conducted by Zuraik et al. (2020) who revealed that gender status has a relationship and impact on team leadership styles and their effects on team innovation outcomes, primarily through ambidextrous leadership theory. Maintaining the relationship between the leader and the led team regarding exploration and exploitation is more effective if they are of different genders. Male leaders are more effective in leading female subordinates, and vice versa. The difference between this research and the research conducted by Zuraik et al. (2020) is in the research object targeted. When Zuraik et al.'s (2020) study targeted public companies, this research focused on government agencies that perform public services. Its intersection with the public causes this government agency to be interested in public satisfaction, just like profit-oriented companies.

The main objective of this study is to identify the ambidextrous leadership model in the Surabaya TPI Special Class I Immigration Office. This research identifies the practices of implementing ambidextrous leadership in the context of public services and its impact on efficiency and innovation. In the context of bureaucratic reform of the Surabaya TPI Class I Immigration Office, the model can be mapped into several sub-areas of organizational management, namely (a) Governance, (b) HR Management System, and (c) Improving the Quality of Public Services. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for government and public service organizations, enabling them to improve community services.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study to understand the ambidextrous leadership model in bureaucratic reform at the Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office. A qualitative research method with case studies focuses on exploring a phenomenon in a real-life context by examining a case in depth to get a generalized view (Creswell & Clark, 2017). This study chose to use a qualitative approach because it aimed to conduct an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of executive staff and the factors that influence ambidextrous leadership practices.

Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews. The research subject in this study consisted of employees at the executive level at the Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office. Respondents totalled 50 people as a sample from a population of 236 employees at the institution. Respondents were drawn from executive staff level employees from several sections: the general section, examiners, and analysts. The distribution of gender, age, and tenure was taken as proportionally as possible, given the staff composition per section. This locus was chosen because it was derived from the hypothesis that the Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya has implemented an ambidextrous leadership model that positively impacts the persistence of bureaucratic reform. The informants were selected purposively to ensure that they have experiences relevant to the practice of ambidextrous leadership. The object of this research is the implementation and actual practice of ambidextrous leadership at the research locus, for example, at the level of policy formulation to policy implementation.

The data obtained from the interviews will be analyzed thematically and using a case study. Data analysis steps include coding, categorizing, and identifying thematic patterns that emerge in the data (Mishra & Alok, 2022). Case study analysis was also applied to delimit the research locus. So, the results of the interviews are centered on more than one case study, not comparing and mixing with other case studies (Rose, 2020). The results of the analysis will be used to identify the ambidextrous leadership model.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study interviewed 50 people as a research sample at the Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office's executive level. Respondents, such as generals, examiners, and analysts, are spread across sections. Respondents are employees with the level of executive staff who spearhead public services in their institutions. The distribution of data profiles of respondents in this study is as follows.

**Table 1.** Informant Profile Distribution Table

<b>Gender</b>	Male	25
	Female	25
<b>Age</b>	20—30	20
	30—40	20
	40—50	10
<b>Work experience in immigration</b>	< 5	14
	5—10	30
	11—20	5
	>20	1

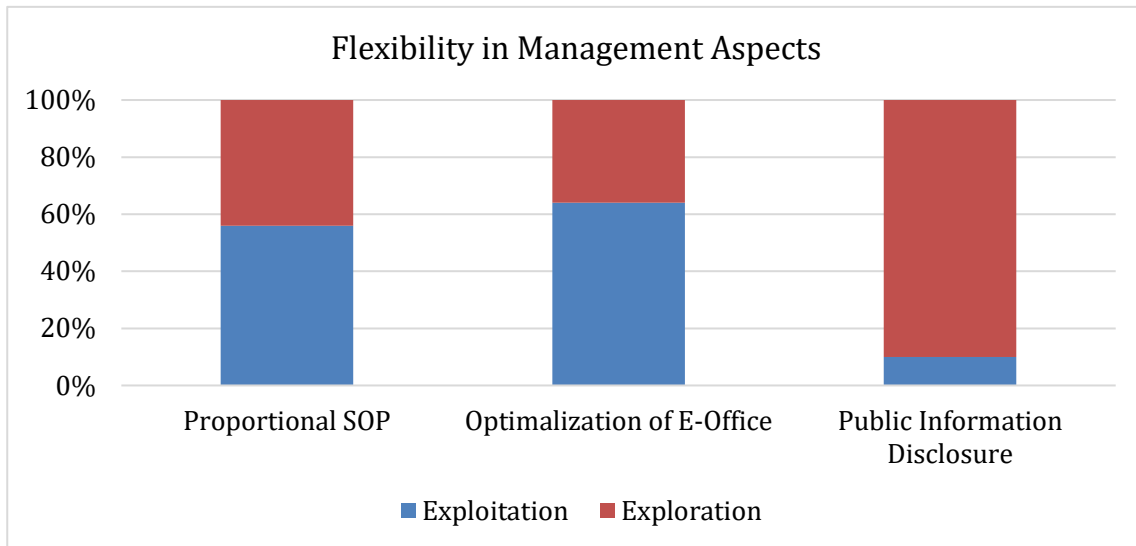
From the semi-structured interviews with 50 respondents, the researcher obtained a comprehensive picture of the ambidextrous leadership model at the research locus. The model can be mapped into several sub-areas of organizational management, namely (a) Management, (b) HR Management System, and (c) Improving the Quality of Public Services.

To identify the ambidextrous leadership model applied at the Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office, researchers previously interviewed six key informants. The data from the key informants were then juxtaposed with data from other informants as a form of affirmation.

The work system at the research site allows for flexibility in the three management areas of the organization. Exploitation in one management area is sometimes minimal in another. One management area may also fully encourage exploration. There are also management areas that apply exploitation in a measured manner. Further discussion follows.

**Management**

One area that is the focus of bureaucratic reform is management. It aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of clear, effective, efficient, and measurable work systems, processes, and procedures in WBBM agencies. From the results of interviews with respondents, the leadership level emphasizes ambidextrous leadership in the management area on three things, namely (a) proportional SOPs, (b) optimization of e-office, and (c) public information disclosure. These three aspects are emphasized in the ambidextrous leadership model. Flexibility in these three aspects can be observed from the following actions.



**Figure 1.** Respondent's Answers Related to the Management Aspect

Of the 50 respondents interviewed, implementing ambidextrous leadership from the management aspect has both exploration and exploitation sides. From aspect (a) proportional SOP, 56% of respondents mentioned the exploitative side of the leadership policy in enforcing existing and agreed rules, while 44% of respondents emphasized the exploitative side of the SOP. Aspect (b) of e-office optimization emphasizes exploitative policies on employees. This can be seen from the opinion of 62% of respondents. Meanwhile, these two exploitative sides can be balanced in public information disclosure, emphasizing exploratory leadership. This is based on 90% of respondents' opinions. The details of implementing exploitation-exploration in these three aspects are as follows.

**Table 2.** Explanation of Exploitation and Exploration in The Management Aspect

Aspect	Exploitation	Exploration
Proportional SOP	1. Employees at various structural and functional levels must adhere to the agreed SOPs.	1. Preparation of SOPs to accommodate input from task implementers (bottom-up)
	2. Implement a reward and punishment system	2. SOP is oriented toward community satisfaction

Aspect	Exploitation	Exploration
E-Office Optimization	1. Minimize correspondence outside E-Office	1. E-Office features are updated regularly
Openness of Public Information	1. Demands are responsive to community complaints 2. Restrictions on interaction on social media	1. Up-to-date public information

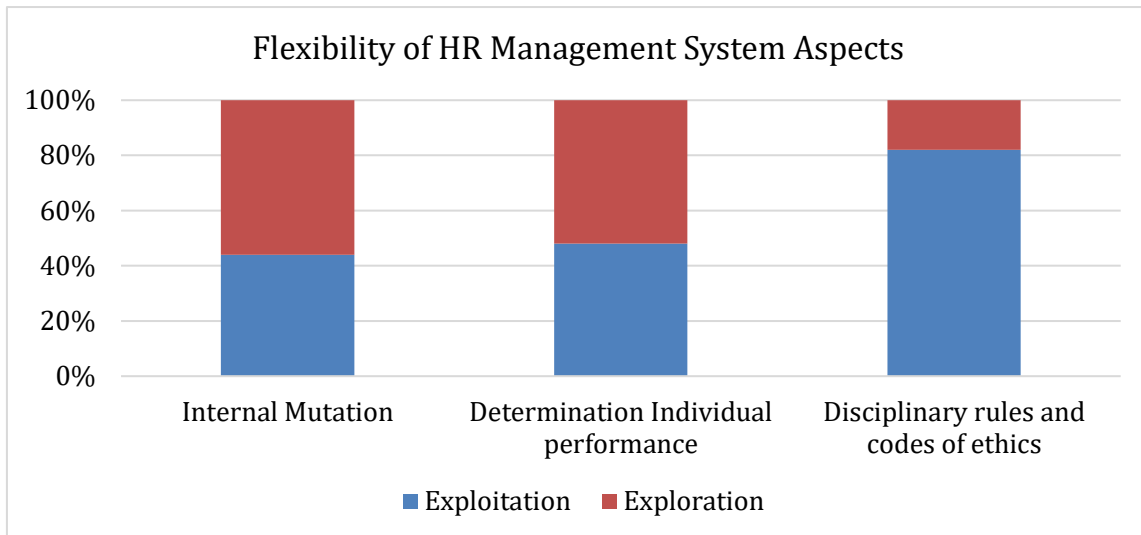
Respondents said implementers get the exploitation side from superiors in these three aspects. In the proportional implementation of SOPs, there is no excuse for SOP violations. This applies to all levels of employees, considering that the SOP has been compiled and agreed upon together. The reward and punishment system are also applied at all levels. However, this exploitation is balanced with exploring SOPs that accommodate proposals from implementers so that SOPs suit the needs and conditions in the field. In addition, innovation in preparing and implementing SOPs still prioritizes public satisfaction.

E-office is an essential tool in running the management system. This aspect is also the target of change management. Exploration from the e-office side is carried out by regularly updating its features according to the institution's needs and the operational constraints often faced. However, regarding exploitation, e-office results in all correspondence occurring in the information system, so the conveniences obtained when conducting informal coordination are not obtained when implementing the e-office system.

Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya upholds public information disclosure. This is certainly a positive goal, but on the one hand, it causes exploration because the diverse and varied community requests certainly cannot all be accommodated. Complaints from the public also become a periodic evaluation for the institution. As an institution that directly interacts with the public, employees of the Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office are vulnerable to conflict on social media. Restrictions on the use of social media become exploitative for employees.

### HR Management System

Furthermore, the HR management system is the next area of focus for bureaucratic reform. Structuring the HR management system aims to improve the professionalism of human resources at the Surabaya TPI Special Class I Immigration Office. From the results of interviews with respondents, the leadership level emphasizes ambidextrous leadership in the HR management system area on three things, namely (a) internal mutation patterns, (b) determination of individual performance, and (c) enforcement of disciplinary rules and codes of ethics. Flexibility in these three aspects can be observed from the following actions.



**Figure 2.** Respondents' answers related to HR Management System Aspects

The 50 respondents interviewed mentioned that the implementation of ambidextrous leadership from the aspect of the HR management system has both exploration and exploitation aspects. The most prominent exploration aspect is in (a) meritocracy-based competency development, which even reaches 100%. This is followed by (b) internal mutation patterns (56%) and (c) individual work assignments (52%). Although the exploitative figures are so prominent in enforcing discipline, a code of ethics still opens up small spaces for exploration, as a few respondents opined. The details of the implementation of exploitation-exploration in these three aspects are as follows.

**Table 3.** Explanation of Exploitation and Exploration in The HR Management System Aspects

Aspect	Exploitation	Exploration
Internal mutation pattern	Internal mutation pattern policy, especially mutation between positions, is a form of career development that considers the competence of the position.	1. There is an opportunity to refute and suggest the internal mutation pattern system
Individual Performance Setting	Individual performance measures align with the performance indicators of the above level.	1. Conduct periodic individual performance measurement 2. Providing rewards to immigration officers of Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya based on the results of individual performance assessments

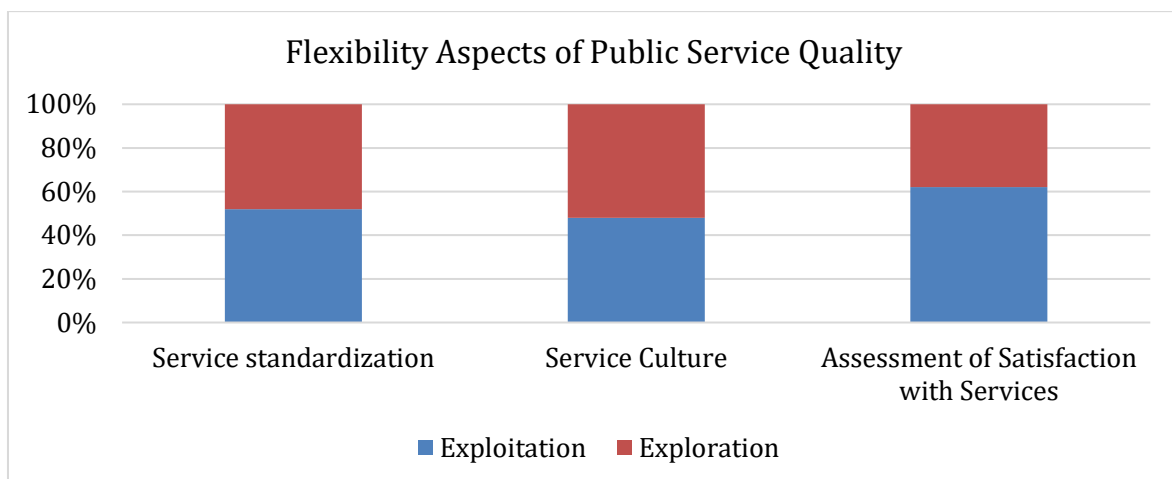
Aspect	Exploitation	Exploration
Enforcement of Disciplinary Rules and Code of Ethics	Implementation of all disciplinary rules/code of ethics/code of conduct indiscriminately	

Unlike management, the HRM system is less flexible between exploration and exploitation. Some aspects emphasize exploration, while others emphasize exploitation. However, overall, the three aspects of the HR management system show an ambidextrous leadership model. Respondents said that as implementers, they get exploited in internal mutation patterns and enforcement of disciplinary rules and codes of conduct. In these two areas, they have no room to innovate. However, these aspects serve as controls to control resources within the Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office. This is necessary to uphold the institution's dignity and provide boundaries for employees.

### Improving the Quality of Public Services

Finally, the next area of focus for bureaucratic reform is improving the quality of public services. Improving the quality of public services is an effort to improve the quality and innovation of public services in each work unit within the Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya periodically, according to the needs and expectations of the community. In addition, improving the quality of public services is carried out to build public trust in public service providers by improving the community's welfare by making public complaints to improve public services.

From the results of interviews with respondents, the leadership level emphasizes ambidextrous leadership in the area of improving the quality of public services on three things, namely (a) service standardization, (b) service culture, and (c) assessment of satisfaction with services. These three aspects are emphasized in the ambidextrous leadership model. Flexibility in these three aspects can be observed from the following actions.



**Figure 3.** Respondents' answers related to public service quality

Of the 50 respondents interviewed, they said that the implementation of ambidextrous leadership from the aspect of public service quality is very balanced regarding exploration and exploitation. From the aspect of (a) service standardization tends to highlight exploitative

leadership according to 52% of respondents, while (b) service culture shows the validation of explorative leadership according to 52% of respondents. Meanwhile, (c) the satisfaction index for 68% of respondents shows a more explorative leadership style towards employees. The details of implementing exploitation-exploration in these three aspects are as follows.

**Table 4.** Explanation of Exploitation and Exploration in The Flexibility Aspects of Public Service Quality

Aspect	Exploitation	Exploration
Service standardization	SOPs and policies for implementing service standards	1. Service standard innovation to support quality improvement of service standards
		2. Declare service standards and make innovative service standard information according to the characteristics of the work unit
Service Culture	Socialization/training in the form of codes of ethics, aesthetics, and capacity building to implement a culture of excellent service	Innovation of superior services for the community that have been adapted to the characteristics of the region
Assessment of Satisfaction with Services	1. Implementation of the satisfaction survey	Follow-up and recommendations on input received
	2. 24-hour complaint service	

Improving the quality of public services emphasizes innovation and exploration. However, in its implementation, as a form of flexibility, this aspect also has an exploratory side. For example, this aspect is always exploratory with the increased workload and service demands. Respondents said that as implementers, they are exploiting all three aspects of improving the quality of public services. Service standardization and a culture of excellent service require employees to provide high service quality standards. The public can also complain about service dissatisfaction through various media that can be accessed 24 hours a day. This is certainly an exploratory side because it increases the workload as well as employee preparedness.

On the other hand, improving the quality of public services is the aspect that is most open to innovation. Because the results directly impact the community, innovation is carried out continuously and comprehensively. Adjustment to the characteristics of the assignment area is also one of the considerations. Surabaya Class I Special TPI Immigration Office employees can innovate by adjusting standards, culture, and satisfaction assessments that are appropriate and do not burden service providers without reducing service quality.

## CONCLUSIONS

To maintain the persistence of the achievement as a Clean and Serving Bureaucratic Area,



the Immigration Office Class I Special TPI Surabaya applies an ambidextrous leadership model to bureaucratic reform in its institution. From the results of the respondents' interviews, the implementation model can be seen in three areas, namely (a) the management area, (b) the HR management system, and (c) the area of improving the quality of public services. The flexibility of these three areas can be further detailed in several aspects, as follows.

The management area consists of (a) proportional SOPs, (b) e-office optimization, and (c) public information disclosure. Then, the HR management system consists of (a) internal mutation patterns, (b) determination of individual performance, and (c) enforcement of disciplinary rules and codes of ethics. Finally, the area of improving the quality of public services consists of (a) service standardization, (b) service culture, and (c) service satisfaction assessment.

According to the interview results, these aspects show the ambidextrous leadership model at the Surabaya TPI Special Class I Immigration Office in bureaucratic reform. The aspects in the three areas of bureaucratic reform show flexibility in exploration and exploitation. The leadership level in the research locus can open employees' minds to new ideas that encourage exploration (open leadership behaviour) while directing employees to focus on realizing their goals efficiently to maximize exploitation (closed leadership behaviour).

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