

Structural Ambidexterity and Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examined the relationship between Structural Ambidexterity on Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was used and a population of 198 employees of manufacturing firms In Rivers State was covered. A sample size of 132 managers and supervisors were drawn as the sample size of the study. Copies of questionnaire was made to collect data and simple random sampling technique was utilized. The data was analyzed using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The result of the analysis revealed that the dimensions of structural ambidexterity (exploration and exploitation) have a significant positive relationship with productivity and goal attainment. It was concluded that structural ambidexterity play a key role in enhancing the level of organizational performance. It was recommended that managers or supervisors should embrace structural ambidexterity for the attainment of organization's goals and vision*

Key Words: *Exploration, Exploitation, Structural Ambidexterity, Productivity, Goal Attainment.*

1.0 Introduction

Organization always set out to perform different activities to achieve its set of objectives. Performance is key to enhance effectiveness of the organization. Performance is referred to the actual output measured against the intended output. A well performing organization can gain long-term profits, which will create employment opportunities which directly improve the income of individuals. Nur (2019) pointed out the impact of ambidexterity in incorporating supply chains on business performance following the results obtained by the entity in relation to resources used. Watkins (2007) defined performance as important outcome, achievement by employee/group or a firm, regardless of preferred or mandated processes. Enos (2007) defined performance as accomplishments of important, an exact, measurable, beneficial and individually significant objectives. Performance in organization is a subjective understanding actuality, explaining the different variety of a crucial examination of the idea and its instruments for measuring (Lebas, 1995; Wholey, 1996). Ambidexterity refers to the organization's ability to concurrently make use of explorative and exploitative new product development (Luzon & Pasola, 2011). "The concept of ambidexterity in management studies is used to describe various differences in organizational behavior and outcomes" (Kosasih & Saparuddin, 2019). Structural

ambidexterity which is an organization's capability to simultaneously explore and exploit (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Structural ambidexterity enhances an organization's performance due to exploitation and exploration complementing one another (Junni et al., 2013; Marín-Idárraga et al., 2020; O'Reilly and Tushman, 2013; Raisch et al., 2009).

Statement of problem

Researchers are increasingly in agreement that organisational ambidexterity is crucial for corporate sustainability, but it is difficult to achieve (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008). All organisations are there for a reason, furthermore, to accomplish that reason, elite management establishes objectives and goals that apply to the entire organisation. Every manufacturing firm, either large or small, struggles to acquire constant performance so as to achieve success and maintain a valuable image in this present world of organizational competitions. The challenge of performance still lingers despite several attempt to curb it. Based on this fact, this study therefore seek to examine how structural ambidexterity in terms of Exploration and Exploitation relates with performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers state.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are to examine the relationship between;

- i. Exploration and productivity of manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- ii. Exploration and goal attainment of manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- iii. Exploitation and productivity of manufacturing firms in Rivers State
- iv. Exploitation and goal attainment of manufacturing firms in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions served as a guide in this study;

- i. What is the relationship between Exploration and Productivity?
- ii. What is the relationship between Exploration and Goal Attainment?
- iii. What is the relationship between of Exploitation and Productivity?
- iv. What is the relationship between Exploitation and Goal Attainment?

Research hypotheses

The null hypotheses were formulated as a tentative answer to the research questions;

HO₁: There is no relationship between Exploration and Productivity of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers state

HO₂: There is no relationship between Exploration and Goal Attainment of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers state

HO₃: There is no relationship between Exploitation and Productivity of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers state

HO₄: There is no relationship between Exploitation and Goal Attainment of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers state.

2.0 Literature Review

The contingency theory was adopted in this work. The contingency theory of leadership was created by Fred Fiedler in the year 1958 during his research on leader effectiveness in team situations. Based on the open systems view, Donaldson (2001) the proposer of the theory made emphasis on the fact that no-one-fits-all-approach in designing organizational structures. Contingency theory can be regarded as the very important aspect of research in management accounting (Chenhall, 2006). Contingency theory has resolved to create a wide generalisations regarding the formal frameworks that are commonly distinctive with or absolutely appropriate for various technologies (Nohria & Khurana, 2010). Contingency theory regards “organizations as open systems and information is exchanged through this input-process-output process of open systems” (Schoonhoven, 1981). The notion, according to Donaldson (2001), focuses on how to match a leader's approach to the circumstances they find themselves in. The ability of the leaders of organization to know what to do at a particular time will help in enhancing their performance.

Conceptual Framework

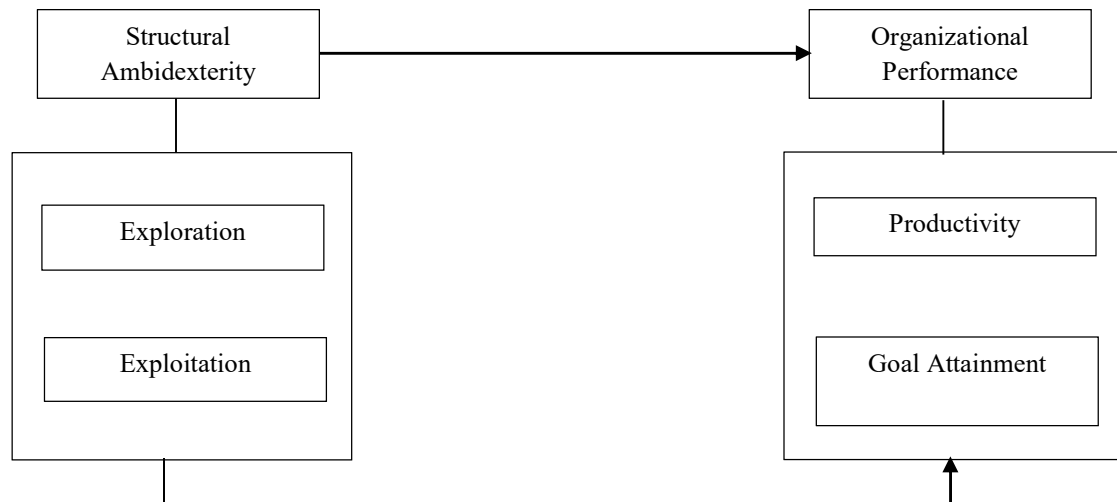


Figure 1: A conceptual framework showing the relationship between structural ambidexterity and organizational performance.

Source: The dimensions of structural ambidexterity were adapted from Zaidi and Othman (2015) while the measure of organizational performance were adapted from Issa and Akhigbe (2022).

Structural Ambidexterity

Ambidexterity can be explained as the ability of various organization to come together and efficiently manage the business, this also demands that the organization has to adjust to modifications in the environment and the ambidexterity helps organizations to be able to carry out exploration and exploitation together well (Carvalho & Sabino, 2019). Structural ambidexterity can be achieved when exploration and exploitation are followed in specialised structures or groups (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2011). Within the framework of this research, structural ambidexterity is defined as a companies' ability to concurrently search the existing products with knowledge existing, and exploit new product with knowledge unfamiliar (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009).

The existing articles on structural ambidexterity makes us believe that in order to handle the deep-rooted tension between exploration and exploitation, organizations should structurally separate them into different groups (O'Reilly and Tushman 2013; O Reilly & Tushman 2004; Tushman & Rosenkopf 1996). According to Birkinshaw and Gibson (2004), structural ambidexterity is the organization's ability to carry out exploration and exploitation activities in order to achieve values needed for the organization's long-term success. "It enables coordination to be carried out by top management while restricting discovery to some company divisions and localising development to others" (Chen, 2017). This specialization protects the activities carried out by the exploration teams from potentially harmful cultural and procedural torrent from the mainstream business (Benner & Tushman 2003; Gilbert 2006). "Structural ambidexterity enhance the creation of project processes that have competencies, with efficient processes and formidable cultures which are aligned internally and precisely customized so that they explore or exploit to achieve project success" (Komen, 2021).

Exploration

Exploration describes innovation activities created to develop new knowledge which allows companies to adapt and anticipate future challenges (Benner & Tushman, 2003). Exploration lays emphasis on what must be discovered and identical with low efficiency, research testing, ability to be flexible, tolerance for errors, high uncertainty and rates of success is low (Kedzierska, 2018). Tran (2015) explained in his study that "Exploration refers to radical innovations or innovations aimed for the purpose of emerging customers or markets". In the brief term, exploration uses up resources, while the benefits are unpredictable, far off, and prolonged (Arend & Chen, 2012).

Chaharmahali & Siadat, (2010) observed that "Exploration is rooted in variance increasing activities and focuses on learning by doing and trial and error". Exploration concentrates more on future that is searched to be quite different than organizations past (Smith & Tushman, 2005). Exploration concentrates on the belief that companies may have not yet reached their maximum capabilities, so they need to ensure that their existing capabilities are stretched (Wang & Chen, 2015). Ribau (2019) exploration seeks to respond to latent surroundings trends by creating technologies or products which are innovative that contrast with firms' current technologies in order to serve new markets. Exploration capabilities by organization are mostly long-term-oriented and are jointly to the creation

of new products, new kind of services, and procedures that are novel to the organization which have not been used in the past (Yalcinkaya, Calantone & Griffith, 2007).

Exploitation

Exploitation comes with being efficient and aligned in the existing business through “enhancement, proficiency, stability, and execution” (March, 1991). Exploitation allows existing partners within a business relationship to apply, share and integrate their existing knowledge (Lavikka et al., 2015; Sun & Lo, 2014). Tran (2015) exploitation involves “incremental innovations that are close to the current knowledge base of the firm and developments made to address the demands of current customers or markets”. The context exploitation innovation is used to describe regular behaviors that allows organization in refining their existing innovation capabilities, which are made with the target of enhancing the effectiveness of current regular procedures (Ribau, 2019 & March, 2021).

Exploitation comprises of the display of joined behaviors with knowledge already known to respond more efficiently to current demands (Benner & Tushman, 2003). Exploitation facilitates companies to make use of their existing knowledge and attain plenty of returns on their capacity (Sun and Lo, 2014). Chen (2017) an exploitative approach is predicated on the idea that the company is fully aware of all available prospects and internal resources. Chaharmahali & Siadat, (2010) observed that “Exploitation is more rooted in variance-decreasing activities and disciplined problem solving and learning before doing”. Exploitation lays much emphasis on the organizations past (Smith & Tushman, 2005). They do well for a short-term successes, which compel them to achieve reliable revenues and profits (Govindarajan & Trimble, 2010). Organizations carry out exploitative activities to acquire fresh information to improve their existing capabilities (Csaszar, 2013).

Organizational Performance

According to Didier (2002), completing the objectives that were assigned to you at the intersection of business perspectives constitutes performance. Organizations who control more of their resources have the most effect on the performance (Scott & Davis, 2015). Organizational performance shows the strength of an organization to realize the desires of the general shareholders and survive in the market (Griffin, 2003). “Organization performance becomes a significant indicator for organizations in the attainment of their objectives or goals in both developed and developing economies in small medium enterprises as well as in big organizations” (Rehman et al, 2019). Organizational performance can be regarded as an actual outcome or results gotten from the organization as compared against its intended outcome, goals and objective (Jon & Randy, 2009). Organizational performance basically can be explained as the output that highlights or show the efficiencies or inefficiencies of the organization if compared to structural image, proficiency and monetary performance (Khandekar & Sharma, 2006).

Also, organizational performance can be seen as the conclusions gotten from either actions or activeness, which employees of organizations carried out to ascertain how well the objectives are achieved by the organization (Chung & Lo, 2007; Ho, 2008). Organizational performance means the quick manner the organization use to achieve

their desired goals effectively (Henri, 2004). Meanwhile, organizational performance can be seen as a tool which measures how well an organization achieves and get its desired goals (Hamon, 2004; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1987). Chen, et al., (2006), organizational performance means the “transformation of inputs into outputs for achieving certain outcomes”. According to Richard et al. (2015), organizational performance is classified into the firm output specifically three: “Financial performance, Product market performance & Shareholder return”. According to Farlex (2012), performance is the actual outcome of any company gotten when put up against its planned or targeted outputs (goals and objectives).

Productivity

Tomal and Jones (2015) explains the productivity of any organization as the organization's desired outcomes or production when compared to its original results. “Productivity is about making the best possible use of all available resources, including people, money, knowledge, technology space, energy, and materials” (Ezenwaka & Okoro, 2020). According to Cho and Dansereau (2010), organizational productivity is seen as an organization’s productivity matching to its actual targets and achievement. According to Allen and Helms (2006), productivity is characterized as the rate at which a worker, companies, or country produces items compared to the amount put in to generate it. Calabrese, (2012) described productivity as a means to know how much work was put in and how well the employee produce from the resources allocation.

Monisola (2021) stated that “productivity, a relationship between input and output generated from a system is a ratio of the volume measure of output to a volume measure of input”. An organization planned success can be categorized by its organizational productivity, or the capacity to implement methods to meet institutional targets effectively (Randeree and Al Youha, 2009). Agarwal & Adjirackor (2016) “Productivity is about how well people combine resources such as raw materials, labour, skills, capital, machinery, land, intellectual properties, management skill, and financial resources to manufacture goods and services”. Additionally, capacity to put into production helps to understand the actual demand and inflationary pressures (Calabrese & Spadoni, 2013).

Goal Attainment

Goals have a common influence on the behavior of any worker efficiency in organisations and management techniques (Locke & Latham, 2002). Abassi and Hollman (2000) pointed out that the supervisor or top management must see and accept workers as a significant factor in the achievement of the organization’s goal attainment efficiently. Furthermore, Fried and Slowik opined that setting of a goal assists an individual’s goal attainment is the major reason and explanation for all major theories behind any work motivation.

Goal setting should be widely accepted by managers as a means to enhance and sustain performance (DuBrin, 2012). Research highlights that the exact goals help bring about other desirable organizational goals, such as absenteeism reduction, slowness, and turnover (Locke & Latham, 2002). Yang et al. (2015) is of the opinion that goals attainment tends to encourage more when a self-sufficient, self-construal is active. Lucky and

Onuoha (2021) explained goal attainment as a “goal specification that enables employees know what target to attain and allow them to measure their own progress”. Individuals need to evaluate the goal attainment for situational forces in the immediate environment that make goal achievement more/less challenging (Kanfer & Chen, 2016).

Empirical Review

Zaidi & Othman (2015) did an article on Structural Ambidexterity vs. Contextual Ambidexterity: Preliminary Evidence from Malaysia. They suggested that the critical views of this study is that although both Structural Ambidexterity & Contextual Ambidexterity are essential, the impacts on performance may be dissimilar. This study then examined this case in the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. The data was collected via a questionnaire survey targeting product/production managers, and processed with SPSS v.19 statistical technique. The study shows that structural ambidexterity and contextual ambidexterity have substantially distinct effects on NPD performance, they also work well together. Since this is a preliminary study, more empirical works need to be done to generalise the findings.

Nur (2019) carried a research on the Role of Ambidexterity, Strategic Orientation and Supply Chain Integration on Firm Performance. This study aims to analyze the strategies for developing traditional market performance in this disruptive and dynamic era by increasing ambidexterity and strategic orientation. In this study the sample size is 200. Empirical results are obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 126 traditional market managers in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The study conducted structural equation modeling to test the proposed relationships. The results gotten from this study may assist conventional marketing managers in integrating ambidexterity, strategic thinking, as well as supply chain collaboration to develop traditional market's performance.

Chaharmahali & Siadat, (2010) in their research on Achieving Organizational Ambidexterity (Understanding and explaining ambidextrous organizations) aimed to explore how firms can achieve ambidexterity to use their dynamic capacities in various market conditions to manage organisational paradoxes. They gathered their data through some interviews at two companies and will analyze them using our interpretation of the interviews' transcription. Comparative research design was used. The results shows that companies can enhance the likelihood of achieving ambidexterity using their dynamic capabilities.

Moreira, Navaia and Ribau (2022) did a research on the significance of discovery and exploitation innovation in developing nations thus the aim of this article is to evaluate the relationship between innovation capacities and export performance, as influenced by the discovery and utilisation of innovation. The sample size 400 exporting SMEs, the target of this study. For this study an online questionnaire was implemented surveying 250 Mozambican Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the agricultural, food-processing, and fishing industries. Statistical analysis of the data was used to test the relationship between the variables analyzed. Based on a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) relating innovation capabilities, exploitation, and exploration innovation

to export performance, it is possible to state that innovation capabilities influence the export performance of SMEs in this emerging country.

Oshogbunu, Amah and Okocha (2022) carried a study on management by Objective and Organizational Productivity. The purpose of this research is to look at Management by Objectives as a tool for raising organisational efficiency with the objective of this research is to look into the relationship between organisational output and quantitative management. This study was conducted using the qualitative approach framework which include the review of related literatures in regards to the topic using journals, textbooks and other related document. The scholar concluded that for any organizations to be productive and achieve sustained success, it must continuously encourage management by objective since it is very necessary for achieving and maintaining organisational productivity.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional survey and the population was 198 managers and supervisors of manufacturing firms in Rivers state. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for sample size determination. As a result, 132 questionnaires were distributed to managers and supervisors at the thirty firms chosen. In this study, a simple random sampling technique was used. This method was chosen because it provides a true representation of the entire population and reduces the possibility of researcher bias in the sample case selection. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 aided the analyses of the bivariate hypotheses using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement, 2 indicating disagreement, 3 indicating agreement, and 4 indicating strong agreement.

4.0 Result

A total of 132 questionnaires were distributed to respondent, however, only 125 (95%) copies were returned and used for the study. The hypotheses test was undertaken at a 95% confidence interval implying a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is set at a critical region of $p > 0.05$ for acceptance of the null hypothesis and $p < 0.05$ for rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 1 Exploration and Productivity

Correlations				
			Exploration	Productivity
Spearman's rho	Exploration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.801**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	125	125
	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.801**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Exploration and Productivity of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), $\rho = 0.801$ between Exploration and Productivity. This means that there is a significant relationship between Exploration and Productivity. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we restate that *there is a significant relationship between Exploration and Productivity*.

Table 2 Exploration and Goal Attainment

Correlations				
			Exploration	Goal Attainment
Spearman's rho	Exploration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.712**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	125	125
	Goal Attainment	Correlation Coefficient	.712**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Exploration and Goal Attainment of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State.

The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), $\rho = 0.712$ between Exploration and Goal Attainment. This means that there is a

significant relationship between Exploration and Goal Attainment. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we restate that *there is a significant relationship between Exploration and Goal Attainment.*

Table 3 Exploitation and Productivity

Correlations				
			Exploitation	Productivity
Spearman's rho	Exploitation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.731**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	125	125
	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.731**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between Exploitation and Productivity of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), $\rho = 0.731$ between Exploitation and Productivity. This means that there is a significant relationship between Exploitation and Productivity. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we restate that *there is a significant relationship between Exploitation and Productivity.*

Table 4 Exploitation and Goal Attainment

Correlations				
			Exploitation	Goal Attainment
Spearman's rho	Exploitation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.719**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	125	125
	Goal Attainment	Correlation Coefficient	.719**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	125	125
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between Exploitation and Goal Attainment of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State.

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), $\rho = 0.719$ between Exploitation and Goal Attainment. This means that there is a significant relationship between Exploitation and Goal Attainment. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we restate that *there is a significant relationship between Exploitation and Goal Attainment*.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

Exploration and Productivity

The bivariate hypotheses between Exploration and Productivity reveal a remarkable relationship between the two variables. The spearman correlation coefficient reveal that the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) which implies that Exploration has a significant relationship with Productivity. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The result of the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.801. This thus reveals Exploration accounts for 80.1% level of Productivity. The first objective of the study which sought to examine if Exploration relates with productivity was achieved. This findings agrees with Moreira, Navaia and Ribau (2022) which posited that the exploration effects productivity which is important in the relationship between innovation capabilities and export performance in manufacturing firms. Nur (2019) highlights the ability to carry out exploration is the key to the firm's sustainable development.

Exploration and Goal Attainment

The bivariate hypotheses between Exploration and Goal Attainment reveal a remarkable relationship between the two variables. The spearman correlation coefficient reveal that the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) which implies that Exploration has a significant relationship with Goal Attainment. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The result of the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.712. This thus reveals Exploration accounts for 71.2% level of Goal Attainment. The second objective of the study which sought to examine if Exploration relates with Goal Attainment was achieved. This findings agrees with Nur (2019) who highlights the ability to carry out exploration is the important to the firm's sustainable development and its performance. Chaharmahali and Siadat, (2010) discovered that the presence of a clear strategic intent that validates the importance of exploration activities increases the likelihood of goal attainment.

Exploitation and Productivity

The bivariate hypotheses between Exploitation and Productivity reveal a remarkable relationship between the two variables. The spearman correlation coefficient reveal that the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) which implies that Exploitation has a significant relationship with Productivity. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The result of the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.731.

This thus reveals Exploitation accounts for 73.1% level of Productivity. The third objective of the study which sought to examine if Exploitation relates with Productivity was achieved. This findings agrees with Zaidi and Othman (2015) who stated that exploitation of structural ambidexterity is actually works well under the conditions of productivity. Chaharmahali and Siadat, (2010) discovered that the presence of a clear strategic intent that validates the importance of exploitation activities increases the likelihood of productivity.

Exploitation and Goal Attainment

The bivariate hypotheses between Exploitation and Goal Attainment reveal a remarkable relationship between the two variables. The spearman correlation coefficient reveal that the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 ($p=0.000<0.05$) which implies that Exploitation has a significant relationship with Goal Attainment. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The result of the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.719. This thus reveals Exploitation accounts for 71.9% level of Goal Attainment. The fourth objective of the study which sought to examine if Exploitation relates with Goal Attainment was achieved. This findings agrees with Chaharmahali and Siadat, (2010) in ambidextrous organizations, the exploitation context is characterized as a highly supportive context that encourages individuals to push for goals attainment.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study shows the importance of structural ambidexterity and its factors exploration and exploitation to be important as performance (productivity & goal attainment) to the long-run survival and growth of any firm/organizations. The management of exploration and exploitation requires extraordinary skills and commitment, and the pursuit of structural ambidexterity may be a never-ending journey.

Companies, countries and employees need to constantly create new products and develop new ideas for their growth, but constant exploration might not be too realistic. These findings have answered the research question and achieved the objective of the study where the relationships and effects of structural ambidexterity and performance were compared and contrasted. The study concludes based on this result is that structural ambidexterity contributes to achieving organizational performance. The following recommendations are proffered;

- The managers or supervisors of the manufacturing firms should embrace structural ambidexterity for the attainment of organization's goals and vision.
- Managers should balance the amount of explorative as well as exploitative activities together with a good supportive organizational plan.
- Managers should engage in the exploitation of current organizational capabilities and exploration of future opportunities to create, maintain, and sustain an optimal performance.
- A key interest should be given to how to take advantage of opportunities as such will help enhance the firm's performance.

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