

# Managerial Competence and Organizational Ambidexterity of Small and Medium Enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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**Abstract:** *The study investigates the correlation between managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity among small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The survey population comprises 1200 SMEs in Rivers State, Nigeria, with a sample size of 291. Simple random sampling was employed and data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Analysis was conducted using Spearman's correlation coefficient with SPSS version 25. The findings indicate a significant relationship between the dimensions of managerial competence (Team Leadership Competence, Strategic Skills Competence) with organizational ambidexterity in SMEs. Consequently, the study concludes that a correlation exists between managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity in Port Harcourt, Rivers. To enhance organizational ambidexterity, the study recommends focusing on enhancing leadership competence and strategic skills among SMEs in the region as such will help improve the ambidexterity of the organization.*

**Keywords:** *Exploration, Exploitation, Strategic Skills Competence, Team Leadership Competence.*

## 1.0 Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of business, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in driving economic growth and fostering innovation (Acs & Szerb, 2009; Davidsson & Wiklund, 1997). Within the Nigerian context, Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, stands as a hub of entrepreneurial activity, particularly within the SME sector (Ezenwoke et al., 2020). Understanding the intricacies of managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity within these enterprises is crucial for sustaining their competitiveness and ensuring their long-term success (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Organizational ambidexterity, refers to an organization's ability to effectively balance exploration and exploitation activities (March, 1991). Exploration involves venturing into new markets, products, or technologies, fostering innovation and adaptation to changing environments. Exploitation, on the contrary, entails leveraging existing resources and capabilities to maximize efficiency and productivity (Gupta et al., 2006). Achieving a balance between these two dimensions is essential for SMEs to remain competitive in today's rapidly evolving business environment (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009). Organizational ambidexterity holds paramount importance as it enables companies to simultaneously explore new opportunities while exploiting existing resources (Gibson &

Birkinshaw, 2004). This balance allows firms to adapt to changing market conditions, fostering innovation and sustainable growth (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009). By effectively managing ambidexterity, organizations can navigate uncertainties, capitalize on emerging trends, and maintain competitiveness in dynamic environments (Gupta et al., 2006). This strategic capability not only enhances performance but also ensures long-term viability in increasingly turbulent business landscapes (March, 1991).

Managerial competence encompasses a myriad of skills and capabilities possessed by managers, ranging from strategic planning and decision-making to leadership and interpersonal skills (Boyatzis, 1982; Mintzberg, 1973). In the context of SMEs, where resources are often constrained, the effective utilization of managerial competence becomes even more imperative (Amabile et al., 2004). Managers must navigate through various challenges, including limited financial resources, intense market competition, and regulatory complexities, while simultaneously driving innovation and growth (Naudé et al., 2013; Zahra & George, 2002). In the context of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, where SMEs constitute a significant portion of the business ecosystem, understanding the interplay between managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity is of paramount importance (Ezenwoke et al., 2020). By enhancing managerial capabilities, SMEs can better navigate the complexities of the market while simultaneously fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability (Barney, 1991). Moreover, by striking a balance between exploration and exploitation, these enterprises can capitalize on emerging opportunities while leveraging their existing strengths (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004).

This study aims to delve deeper into the dynamics of managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity within SMEs in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. By examining the strategies, practices, and challenges faced by these enterprises, valuable insights can be gleaned to inform policymakers, practitioners, and scholars alike (Ezenwoke et al., 2020). Ultimately, by enhancing our understanding of these critical dimensions, we can pave the way for the sustainable growth and development of SMEs, not only in Port Harcourt but across Nigeria as a whole.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Organizational ambidexterity poses a multifaceted challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), stemming from various factors inherent to their operational contexts. SMEs often face resource constraints, including limited financial capital, manpower, and technological infrastructure, which hinder their ability to invest in both exploration and exploitation activities concurrently (Gupta et al., 2006; Zahra & George, 2002). This limitation often leads to a prioritization of short-term goals and operational efficiency over long-term innovation and adaptation, thereby impeding their ability to stay competitive in dynamic markets (March, 1991). Likewise, the absence of a conducive organizational culture that fosters experimentation, learning, and knowledge sharing can impede SMEs' efforts towards achieving ambidexterity (Barney, 1991; Gupta et al., 2006).

In environments where failure is stigmatized and innovation is not incentivized, SMEs may shy away from exploring new opportunities or challenging the status quo, limiting their capacity for growth and evolution. SMEs frequently lack formalized organizational structures and processes, making it challenging to establish the necessary mechanisms for balancing exploration and

exploitation effectively (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009). Without clear delineation of responsibilities, decision-making processes, and communication channels, SMEs may struggle to integrate new initiatives with existing operations, resulting in inefficiencies and potential conflicts (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). Furthermore, the rapid pace of technological advancements and market disruptions exacerbates the challenge of organizational ambidexterity for SMEs. Keeping abreast of emerging trends and technologies while simultaneously leveraging existing capabilities requires SMEs to be agile and adaptive, traits that are often hindered by bureaucratic hurdles and risk aversion prevalent in small organizations (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Naudé et al., 2013).

In small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), achieving organizational ambidexterity and cultivating managerial competence presents a significant challenge. SMEs often operate in resource-constrained environments, where limited financial resources and managerial capabilities can hinder their ability to effectively balance exploration and exploitation activities (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Consequently, these enterprises may struggle to adapt to changing market dynamics, innovate effectively, and sustain competitive advantage (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Zahra & George, 2002). Additionally, the lack of comprehensive understanding and empirical research on the interplay between organizational ambidexterity and managerial competence within SMEs further exacerbates these challenges. Thus, investigating the factors inhibiting the development and implementation of ambidextrous strategies and managerial competencies in SMEs is imperative for addressing the unique needs of these enterprises and enhancing their long-term sustainability and success.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the association between team leadership competence and exploration of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State
2. To determine the relationship between team leadership competence and exploitation of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State
3. To assess the association between strategic skills competence and exploration of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State
4. To determine the relationship between strategic skills competence and exploitation of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the association between team leadership competence and exploration of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
2. How does team leadership competence correlate with exploitation of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between strategic skills competence and exploration of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
4. How does strategic skills competence relate with exploitation of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between team leadership competence and exploration of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between team leadership competence and exploitation of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between strategic skills competence and exploration of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State
- Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between strategic skills competence and exploitation of small and medium scales enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

### **2.0 Review of Related Literature**

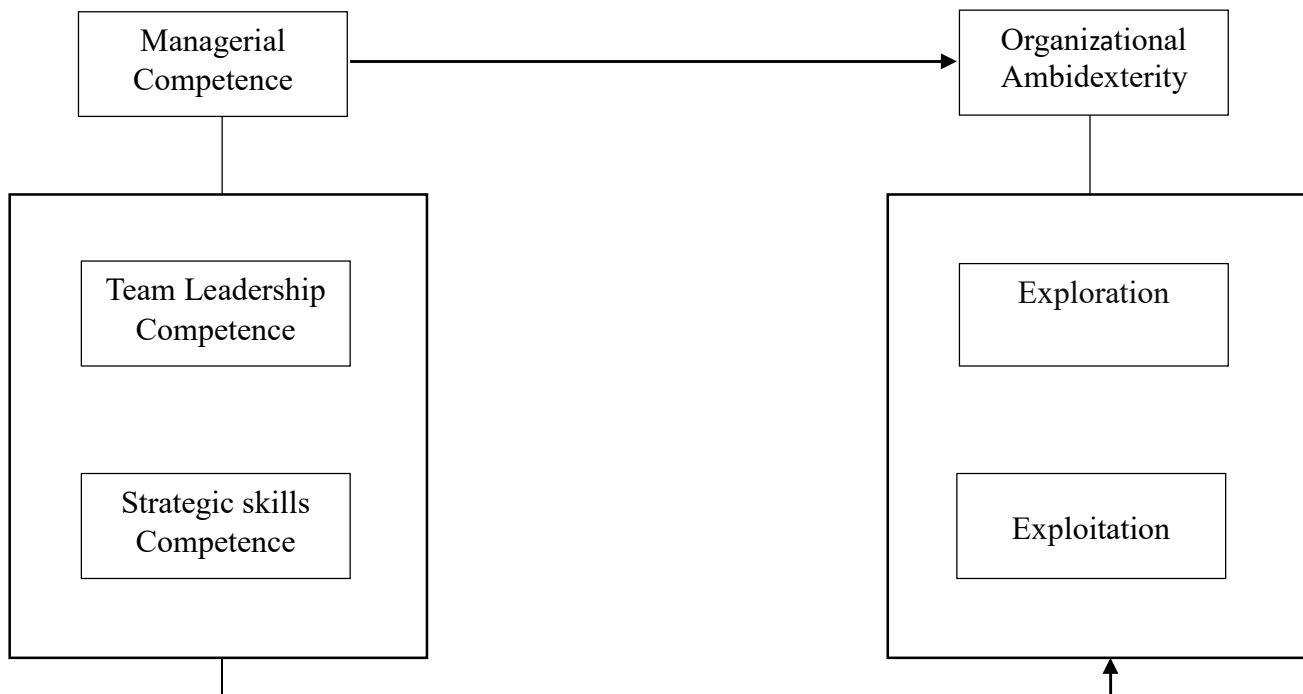


Figure 1: a conceptual framework showing the link between managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity.

### **Resource-Based View (RBV)**

Drawing upon the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which posits that sustained competitive advantage stems from a firm's unique bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources and capabilities, the discussion on managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gains theoretical grounding. Within this framework, managerial competence emerges as a critical resource, encompassing skills like

strategic planning, decision-making, leadership, and adaptability—all essential for achieving ambidexterity. Competent managers leverage the firm's strengths to exploit existing resources while fostering innovation and adaptation, thus creating value. Their rarity and inimitability confer a competitive advantage, as such talent is difficult to replicate. While technology and other resources are enablers, managerial acumen orchestrates their effective utilization towards ambidextrous activities, highlighting the indispensability of managerial competence in SMEs' pursuit of organizational ambidexterity.

### **Managerial Competence**

According to Krajcovicova, Caganova, and Cambal (2012), management competence is the process by which individuals' careers or operational events are fueled by their knowledge, abilities, and moral character in order to "get work done." The extraordinary collection of practices that results in the optimal functioning of SMEs is what Rosaline and Nadu (2013) define as management competences. It follows that enhanced SMEs' expansion and advancement are contingent upon managerial competencies being of utmost importance. A manager must have both general and specific managing competences in order to function successfully, competently, and effectively at any leadership position. This is necessary for every manager who hopes to be successful, efficient, and both. The technical know-how, technical proficiency, behavioural traits, and knowledge required for effective managerial performance are known as managerial competences. Managerial competency, according to Khalid and Bhatti (2015), is the capacity of management to effectively articulate the strategic ideas for arranging inter-firm matters. A company's ability to manage effectively might provide it a competitive edge over its competitors. The advancement of managerial competencies can also be understood as the realisation of all necessary tasks and accomplishments both inside and outside the organisation on schedule, without sacrificing standards or quality.

### **Team Leadership Competence**

According to Gruban (2003), competence is the capacity to apply knowledge and other abilities required for the effective completion of a task, a work transaction, the achievement of a goal, or the execution of a certain function within a business process. Competencies include information, experience, abilities, behavioural and personal traits, attitudes, and beliefs, among other things. They serve as behavioural logs of the tasks that employees complete during work operations. Specialised knowledge (such as target agreements), systematic competency (such as resolving issues competency), and in any event sufficient social competency (such as motivation) are all necessary for leadership (Avolio & Hannah, 2020). Leadership roles delineate the various settings in which management-level competency bundles are employed, whereas leadership competencies delineate trait-specific abilities that influence efficacy within leadership environments. In light of this, roles explain the "whats" of leadership while competences explain the "hows" (Appelbaum & Paese, 2022). The ability to lead a team effectively, cohesively, and successfully is an essential component of managerial competency. Strong team leaders are equipped with the abilities and traits needed to encourage, inspire, and mentor their team members as they work towards shared objectives.

## **Strategic skills Competence**

A crucial component of managerial competency is the ability to make strategic decisions and lead effectively within organisations. Critical thinking, spotting market trends, and creating long-term plans that support organisational objectives are all included in this competency. Strategic intent, according to Hamel and Prahalad (1996), is "the capacity to mobilise and direct resources on a compelling goal." It requires a blend of analytical reasoning, vision, ability to make sound decisions, and the ability to match actions to overall strategic goals. Proficient in strategic competence, managers can effectively handle ambiguities, seize chances, reduce dangers, and guide their companies towards long-term expansion.

## **Organizational Ambidexterity**

In organisations, ambidexterity refers to the mental balancing act of seizing emerging possibilities and utilising current capabilities. Many organisations have failed to seize advantages with all of their capabilities because they are fragile systematically in developing novel products and services and instead focus only on improving their current offerings (Reilly III and Tushman, 2004). Organisational ambidexterity is the ability to effectively accomplish demanding processes within an organisation (Atuahene-Gima, 2005; Brix, 2019) while also identifying new opportunities and utilising current knowledge (Simsek, 2009). The ability of an organisation to manage operations in the present while staying flexible enough to adjust to changing needs in the future is known as organisational ambidexterity.

Organizational ambidexterity requires the use of both exploitation and exploration tactics so as for the organisation to succeed. Thus, the concept of ambidexterity emphasises how crucial it is for businesses to strike a balance between taking advantage of their current possibilities and assets and investing enough time and energy in exploring new ones in order to maintain their competitiveness over the long run (Khan et al., 2020; March, 1991; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). While exploration encompasses new hunt, risk taking, variance, fresh discoveries, and innovation, exploitation is about improving operational efficiency, productivity, oversight, mitigation of risks, and ensuring certainties (March, 1991; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008). According to Christoph et al. (2021), exploration facilitates the adaptation and application of new ideas, technologies, and information by enterprises. These are seen as essential activities because, as stated by Wang, Senaratne, & Rafiq (2015), a success trap or inertia can result from solely concentrating on utilising current capabilities rather than exploring new ones, which can lead to subpar performance (Dranev, Izosimova, & Meissner, 2020; Senaratne & Wang, 2018).

## **Exploration**

According to March (1991), one of the key components of ambidexterity is exploration, or the ability of the business to seek out and test out new ideas, prospects, and concepts. In addition to having the guts to attempt something novel and come up with original answers to issues, exploration may be defined as searching for something or being able to locate it. Exploration is used as a barometer of organisational ambidexterity because it helps companies to continuously develop and adapt to changing conditions. Investigating novel approaches and identifying trends, disruptive technologies, and untapped markets before competitors can provide an organisation a

competitive advantage (Benner & Tushman, 2003). Businesses may expand their holdings and safeguard themselves against market volatility by engaging in exploration. By spreading resources among several attractive opportunities, businesses can reduce risks and improve their capacity to tolerate outside disturbances (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006). However, for exploration to be successful, control and flexibility must live in harmony. It is imperative for businesses to establish protocols and policies that ensure accountability and allocation of resources, as well as to foster an environment that encourages innovation and accepts mistakes (Garud & Karnøe, 2003).

## **Exploitation**

Baum, Li, and Usher (2000) suggested that the word "exploitation" refers to information obtained through careful observation, honed experience, and the selection and application of pre-existing practices. Innovations that improve the current technical trajectory while improving components already in place are considered exploitative, according to Benner and Tushman (2002). The distinction between exploratory and exploitative innovation was also made by He and Wong (2004), who described the latter as technological innovation aimed at entering uncharted territory for the product market and the former as efforts centred on improving already-established product market areas. Exploitation serves as a proxy for organisational ambidexterity in a variety of ways. It demonstrates that the business can maximise its current assets and abilities, which in the short term ensures its survival and viability. Second, it fosters discovery by providing the foundation and stability needed for creativity to thrive. Thirdly, by effectively balancing exploration and exploitation, businesses may adapt to changing market conditions and maintain their competitiveness in their primary business. In summary, exploitation serves as a crucial indicator of organisational ambidexterity, allowing for the effective use of readily available assets while also promoting adaptability and innovation.

## **Empirical Review**

Nwokah and Ahiauzu (2008) studied managerial competencies and marketing effectiveness in corporate organizations in Nigeria. The study was both quantitative and qualitative. Questionnaire was used to collect data. 84 corporate organizations in Nigeria were selected from the 2005 edition of the Nigerian stock exchange gazette as the sample of the study. Data were analyzed using non-parametric correlation through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 10. The study's findings supported the prior instruments and showed a significant correlation between corporate organisations in Nigeria's marketing efficacy and managerial competencies. The primary conclusion showed that in Nigerian corporate organisations, marketing efficacy is correlated with managerial competences.

Olofu (2018) studied the effect of managerial competencies and the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. The population of the study was 658 selected SMEs operators in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State, while 248 respondents were arbitrarily selected from the population as sample size. Data was gathered using a standardised questionnaire. The study demonstrated the significant and favourable impact conceptual skills have on the expansion of SMEs in Nigeria. The study also found a negative correlation between Nigerian SMEs' growth and their creative output. The study

concluded that in order for business partners to exchange ideas and information, it is imperative that small and medium-sized enterprise operators establish a network among themselves.

Anoke, Onu and Agagbo (2022) examined managerial competencies and growth of small and medium enterprise (SMEs) in Abuja metropolis, Nigeria. Survey research methodology was used in the study. The data was collected using a standardised questionnaire, and the data was analysed using regression. According to the study, conceptual skills had a negative and negligible impact on the expansion of SMEs in the Abuja Metropolis, whereas technical and personal competences had a favourable and big influence.

Yidawi, Alabi and Babaji (2023) examined the influence of managerial competencies of administrators on resource management in secondary schools in Fagge and Nasarawa Local Government Areas of Kano State. The study involved 79 principals from public secondary schools within Fagge and Nassarawa Local Government Area. Descriptive survey design was employed, structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in determining the reliability of the instrument, resulting in a coefficient of 0.69. The research findings indicated that secondary school administrators in Kano State's Fagge and Nasarawa Local Government Area lacked managerial competencies in areas like hiring qualified teachers, acclimating new hires and students, making sure classrooms are furnished, properly delegating financial matters, and putting cost-cutting measures in place for effective management of people and materials. In order to effectively manage financial resources, the study additionally found managerial competencies in administrators for creating detailed financial reports, keeping precise accounting records, and assigning priorities for financial allocation based on school needs. Department heads were also involved in budget preparation. According to the study, administrators of schools should actively seek out and often use managerial skills.

Okonkwo, et al., (2020) examined managerial Competencies-A Survey of Healthcare Managers in a Tertiary Hospital in Calabar, South-South Nigeria. The research employed a descriptive cross-sectional design while structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. A total of 266 managers were included in this study with a M: F ratio of 1.3:1. The knowledge rating of role of non-clinical professionals, regulatory agency standards, preparation of business communication, change process management and policy formulation and analysis varied significantly among the three levels of management ( $p < 0.05$ ). Less than 50% of operational and middle managers rated themselves as experts in all the competency domains while majority (80%) of strategic managers rated themselves as more than proficient in most of the competency items. According to the research, there is a lack of managerial expertise at all management levels in a typical Nigerian tertiary hospital, which could have a detrimental effect on the provision of high-quality healthcare.

Maimuna, Adeyinka and Eseoghene (2021) investigated the influence of managerial competencies on small and medium enterprise performance. Respondents of the study comprise proprietors/leaders of SMEs working in the FCT. A cross sectional survey design was employed. Questionnaires were used to collect data. PLS-SEM was utilized to analyze the data. The findings show that conceptual and general skills positively and significantly impact the performance of SMEs in the FCT. On the other hand, technical abilities have a negligible beneficial impact on SMEs' performance. The analysis therefore suggests that SME administrators should always promote positive relationships among representatives inside their organisations. The study



suggested that in order to enhance execution, supervisors should always set important goals that all association delegates would genuinely want to achieve.

### 3.0 Methodology

This survey study population comprises 1200 SMEs in Rivers State, Nigeria. A sample size of 291 was determined with Krejcie and Mangan (1970) table. The simple random sampling technique which is a type of the probability sampling technique was used in this study. The primary data for this study was collected mainly through a structured questionnaire, The Spearman’s correlation coefficient was used for the analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, in order to analyse the bivariate hypotheses so as to ascertain the relationship between managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity among small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

### 4.0 Result

291 questionnaires were distributed, but 270 (92.8%) copies were returned and constitute the valid questionnaire. The hypotheses test is undertaken at a 95% confidence interval and the decision rule is stated below.

Where  $P < 0.05$  = Reject the null hypotheses

Where  $P > 0.05$  = Accept the null hypotheses

**Table 1: Correlations between team leadership competence and measures of organizational ambidexterity**

			Team leadership competence	Exploration	Exploitation
Spearman's rho	Team leadership competence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.814**	.809*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	270	270	270
	Exploration	Correlation Coefficient	.814**	1.000	.712**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	270	270	270
	Exploitation	Correlation Coefficient	.809*	.712**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	270	270	270

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2023.

**Team leadership competence and Exploration:** The findings in column five of Table 1 indicate a significant positive relationship between team leadership competence and exploration. The rho value of 0.814\*\*, observed at a significance level of 0.000, falls below the alpha level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) is accepted. This suggests a strong positive association between team leadership competence and exploration.

**Team leadership competence and Exploitation:** The rho value in column six of Table 1, indicating the relationship between team leadership competence and exploitation, is 0.809\* with a significance level of 0.000, which is lower than the alpha level of 0.05 set for this analysis. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ), positing no significant relationship between team leadership competence and exploitation, is rejected. Conversely, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, suggesting a robust positive relationship between team leadership competence and exploitation.

**Table 2: Correlations between strategic skills competence and the measures of organizational ambidexterity**

			Strategic skills competence	Exploration	Exploitation
Spearman's rho	Strategic skills competence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.879**	.885**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	270	270	270
	Exploration	Correlation Coefficient	.879**	1.000	.695**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	270	270	270
	Exploitation	Correlation Coefficient	.885**	.695**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	270	270	270

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2023.

**Strategic skills competence and Exploration:** In Column 5 of Table 2, the rho value stands at 0.879\*\* with a significance level of 0.000, falling below the alpha level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a3}$ ) is accepted. This supports the notion that strategic skills competence exhibits a robust positive relationship with exploration. These findings align with those of Saxena et al. (2022), who similarly concluded that product, process, and marketing innovativeness significantly and positively impact organizational performance.

**Strategic skills competence and Exploitation:** In Column 6 of Table 2, the rho value is recorded as 0.885\*\* with a significance level of 0.000, which falls below the alpha level of 0.05 for the

hypothesis concerning strategic skills competence and exploitation. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H<sub>04</sub>), asserting no significant association between strategic skills competence and exploitation, is rejected. Conversely, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, indicating a highly significant positive relationship between strategic skills competence and exploitation.

## **5.0 Discussion of Findings**

According to the statistics above, managerial competence in terms of team leadership competence and strategic skills competence has a relationship with organizational ambidexterity. Each hypothesis is discussed in detail below.

### **Team leadership competence and Exploration**

The results of the data analysis in Table 1 showed a strong relationship between team leadership competence and exploration. The P-value of 0.000 demonstrates a strong positive relationship existence between team leadership competence and exploration, and the rho value of 0.814 demonstrates a strong positive connection between the variables. The results of this study support that of Anoke, Onu and Agagbo (2022) whose findings reveals that managerial competencies relates with the growth of small and medium enterprise (SMEs) in Abuja metropolis,

### **Team leadership competence and Exploitation**

The hypothesis 2 analysis in Table 1 showed a positive strong significant correlation between team leadership competence and exploitation. The P-value of 0.000, and the rho value of 0.724 demonstrates a strong positive link between Team leadership competence and exploitation. These findings align with those of Nwokah and Ahiauzu (2008), who similarly found a significant correlation between exploration, marketing efficacy, and managerial competencies.

### **Strategic skills competence and Exploration**

The results in Table 2 revealed that strategic skills competence relate significantly to exploration. The P-value of 0.000 shows that the strategic skills competence relates to exploration, while the rho value of 0.879 shows a strong positive correlational value between the variables. The correlation among the variables signifies that the strategic skills competence relates to the exploration. The findings agree with Olofu (2018) whose study showed a significant relationship between managerial competencies and the growth of SMEs in Nigeria

### **Strategic skills competence and Exploitation**

The analysis presented in Table 2 revealed that the strategic skills competence relates significantly to exploitation. The P-value of 0.000 shows that the strategic skills competence relates to exploitation, while the rho value of 0.885 shows a high positive correlational value among the variables. This finding agrees with Yidawiet al., (2023) that managerial competencies relates ambidexterity factors.

## **6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study examines managerial competence and organizational ambidexterity among SMEs in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Findings indicate a positive association between team leadership competence and both exploration and exploitation. SMEs with strong leadership are inclined to innovate and efficiently exploit resources. Additionally, strategic skills correlate positively with exploration and exploitation, enabling SMEs to adapt, anticipate trends, and optimize performance. In conclusion, effective team leadership competence and strategic skills competence is essential in boosting the organizational ambidexterity of SMEs. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The entrepreneurs should constantly attend leadership training programs aimed at enhancing team leadership competence as such will help enhance the exploration ability of the SMES.
2. The managers of the SMEs should constantly participate in workshops, seminars, and mentorship opportunities to develop essential leadership skills as such will help boost the exploitation capacity of the organization.
3. The management of the SMEs should strategically formulate and implement strategic choices as such will help improve the exploitation of the organization.
4. The entrepreneurs should always ensure critical thinking, spotting market trends, and creating long-term plans that support organizational objectives as such will help boost the ambidexterity of the organization.

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