

## Assessing the influence of Strategic Agility on the Performance of Selected Manufacturing Firms in South-South Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of strategic agility on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-south Nigeria. Strategic agility was proxied into core competencies and strategic sensitivity. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Population for the study was 319 staff of selected quoted manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. 177 was arrived at as sample size, using Taro Yamene's formula for sample size determination. Primary and secondary sources of data were adopted for the study. Proportionate sampling technique was used to guarantee efficient representation of the selected firm while the research instrument was a structure questionnaire. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used in analyzing the study. Findings showed that core competencies revealed a high correlation value of  $R = 0.882$  with an Unstandardized Coefficient Beta  $\beta=0.766$ . While strategic sensitivity revealed an Unstandardized Coefficient Beta of  $\beta=0.530$ . From the findings, it was concluded that strategic agility has a positive significant influence on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-south Nigeria. As recommendations, the studied manufacturing firms should imbibe core competency as a policy if they are to attain competitive advantage, being that core competencies are the foundation upon which a company builds its business and drives its success. Also, management of the selected studied manufacturing firms should develop strategic sensitivity as this will actively help in scanning the environment, and engaging in scenario planning exercises.*

**Keywords:** Strategic agility, Core Competencies, Strategic Sensitivity, Firms' Performance.

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## Introduction

In today's world of high proliferation in technology coupled with the dynamism of the business world, it is not just the fittest organisations that last longer, but organisations with high pliability capacity. The global system is rapidly changing. New development has taken over the business world, competition among organisations is increasing. Turbulent and disastrous situations enforce need to anticipate, organize, adapt and respond to progressive changes and automatic disruptions in order to prosper and survive. Hence, the need for strategic agility. In organisations, strategic agility prepares organisations for changes, and restores vitality from shocks. Currently, organisations are increasingly subjected to unceasing change. The influence of various factors such as technology, innovation, industry trends and increased competition has led to a higher need for securing competitive advantage (Adamik, Nowicki, and Szymanska, 2018).

Strategic agility is seen as the ability of the organisations to identify and react to the changes of the business environment. It is defined by Tallon and Pinsonneault (2011) as the ability of a company to respond fast to the changes of the business environment, adapt to it and take actions to control uncertainty. Kumkale (2016) believes that strategic agility is a tool for creating competitive advantage for the organisation. It is the ability to be able to influence market conditions such as technology, sustainability and competition. To survive, one has to be responsive to the industry's dynamics.

Teece, Peteraf and Leih (2016) define agility as the capacity of an organisation to redirect resources to create value. Alahyari, Svensson and Gorschek (2017) consider that strategic agility is meant to be a value generating tool. By achieving it, organisations manage to make a difference in the market and achieve improved performance both internally and externally. Akhigbe (2019) posits that the measures of strategic agility are core competence, strategic sensitivity, flexibility, strategic leadership, accessibility, strategic insight, internal response orientation, external response orientation, human resource capability, and information technology capability. This paper is concerned with core competence and strategic sensitivity.

Core competence is often referred to by different names such as; distinctive capabilities, organisational competencies or dynamic capabilities. Strategic sensitivity is the organisation's ability to quickly identify changes, strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats. It also involves sensing emerging market trends, listening to customers and exchanging information with suppliers, monitoring demand and detecting imminent environmental disturbances.

According to Imagha and Ebieme (2024), performance is a widely used tool and metric in management. Nevertheless, organisations rarely address what it really is, which dimension it includes, and in which area of work it becomes important. According to Kasemsap (2017), job performance is defined as completing a task and comparing it to predetermined standards for speed, accuracy, completeness, and cost. It speaks to employees' capacity for effective job performance (Ahmad, 2011). It can also be defined as the activities related to work that are expected of an employee and the quality with which they are carried out. Performance is the ability of an organization to use its resources effectively and efficiently in order to accomplish its objectives (Al Karim, 2019). The objectives of an organization differ based on why they were founded. Businesses have three main goals, just like manufacturing companies: profit, growth, and

survival. Establishing Organisational goals, tracking progress toward those goals, and making necessary adjustments to meet those goals more effectively and efficiently are all part of Organisational performance (Adubasim, Unaam, and Ejo-Orusa, 2018).

With Nigeria's current economic abysmal performance, it is a fact that most firms find it difficult to constantly achieve targeted performance due to the open market competition and globalization which characterized the 21st-century industry. Firms in different industries around the world have experienced unstable performance, seemingly uncertain on strategies to employ in reacting to flexible policies and unstable performance arising from challenges in the local and international business context.

The poor performance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria has been attributed to issues with poor power supply and diesel costs, excessive taxes from various government agencies, inadequate physical infrastructure while the issue of strategic agility has always been ignored. To the researcher's knowledge, very few studies have considered poor strategic agility as a major challenge for declining manufacturing firms' performance. For the few studies that has considered strategic agility, none has been conducted in manufacturing firms in south-south Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to observe that most manufacturing firms in south-south Nigeria struggle to adapt to changes in customer preferences, emerging technologies and other market trends owing to lack of strategic sensitivity.

Moreover, owing to the seaming absence of strategic core competence and strategic sensitivity in most Nigerian firms, they tend to have inefficient operations that are not optimized for changing market conditions. They struggle to manage risk effectively, which sometimes could lead to unexpected disruptions in their supply chain, production processes, or other areas of their operations. Moreso, lack of core competencies and strategic sensitivity has made these manufacturing firms to make poor decisions that are not aligned with their long-term goals or the changing market conditions. These has led to missed opportunities, reduced profitability, higher costs, lower productivity, loss of competitive advantage, market share, and reduced profitability. The aforementioned challenges have encouraged this study which is designed to assess the influence of strategic agility on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of this study was to assess the influence of strategic agility on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-south Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

- i. examine the influence of core competencies on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria;
- ii. assess the effect of strategic sensitivity on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.

### **Research Question**

- i. What is the effect of core competencies on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria?
- ii. What is the influence of strategic sensitivity on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to aid the study

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Core competencies does not have significant effect on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Strategic sensitivity does not have significant influence on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria

### **Literature Review**

Strategic Agility (SA) is defined by TabeKhoshnood and Nematizadeh (2017) as a concept consisting of two components; responsiveness and knowledge management. They further interpret strategic agility as the ability of an organisation to detect changes through the opportunities and threats existing in the business environment, and to give rapid response through the recombination of resources, processes and strategies. Extensive review of the SA literature shows that an agile organisation can be successful in competitive environment through the abilities of responsiveness, competence, flexibility and speed so that it achieves competitive advantage in the market (Oyedijo, 2012). According to Doz and Kosonen (2008), strategic agility (SA) is a process by which organizations change, reinvent themselves, adapt, and ultimately survive. They define SA as the ability of a company to continuously modify and adapt its strategic direction in a core business to create value for the company. Sampath (2015) defined SA as the ability of a company to be flexible in response to changes in the business environment, recognize opportunities, threats, and risks, and quickly and repeatedly launch new strategic initiatives. Teece, Peteraf, and Leih (2016) defined SA as the ability of an organization to effectively redeploy and redirect its resources to value-creating and value-protecting (and capturing) higher-yield activities as necessary.

Ashrafi, Ravasan, and Trkman (2019) consider that strategic agility has a strong connection with transformation. The authors state that strategic agility plays an undeniable role in transforming a company and boost its performance. Doz and Kosonen (2020) define transformation as a pillar for strategic agility. The authors believe that strategic agility has three core capabilities that contribute to the renewal of an organisation: strategic sensitivity, leadership unity and resource fluidity. Guinan, Parise, and Langowitz (2019) argue that once a company embraces transformation within its organisational strategy, it will drive an impact on competition, politics and internal operations. Transformation and performance are acknowledged by Tan, Wang and Sedera. (2017) as components of strategic agility. The authors state that the strategic agility enhanced in IT is positively correlated with firm performance.

Ravichandran (2018) sustains the idea that strategic agility is a capability of an organisation. Strategic agility takes place through its IT competence and innovation capacity. The

author points out that companies with a focus on IT investments have an increased level of performance and are more agile. Kale (2019) view strategic agility as a mediator between absorptive capacity and firm performance. The authors prove that strategic agility is positively influencing the firm performance. Ashrafi *et al.* (2019) argue that strategic agility has a stronger impact on the organisation under a turbulent context, namely a changing business environment. Ahammad, Glaister, and Gomes (2019) offer a new perspective over strategic agility. They consider it is an ability to reshape and benefit from external dynamics. Shin *et al.* (2015) add that the response to the external changes can lead to new opportunities for the organisation. The authors argue in their paper that an organisation must be aware of both internal and external factors. Kumkale (2016) points out that a company needs to capture both internal and external perspectives, meaning it must constantly collect feedback and market insights. Păunescu *et al.*, (2018) add that in a business plan, one must adopt strategic planning and management. One of the key features of strategic agility is flexibility. Sherehiy, Karwowski, and Layer. (2007) mention that an organisation should adapt for example to the culture of the market they want to expand in and shape their strategy in a customized manner. Ahammad *et al.*, (2019) support the importance of flexibility in reaching strategic agility. The authors add that in the case of strategic agility, flexibility arises from the people involved in the business process. They bring into discussion the existence of a match between multinational corporations' strategy and human resources. According to the authors, for an increased impact, this match should take place at all organisational levels. One example shared can be from the CEO that adapts its leadership style to its executive team.

### **Core Competencies**

The concept of core competence often referred to by different names such as distinctive capabilities, organisational competencies or dynamic capabilities. These principal competencies are normally responsible for bringing about success in an organisation (Maniscalco, Gage, Teferi and Fisher, 2020). The resources, which an organisation has, access to forms its primary competencies (Murgor, 2014). These principal competencies provide firms with the enablement through both bad and good economic conditions and are regarded as the most valuable organisational assets for those firms, which possess them, which conversely serve as the frustrating challenges for competing firms who lack these competencies (Hou, 2014). Core competencies are conceptualized differently depending on the production, age of the firm and products it handles, Edgar and Lockwood (2011) generalized the core competencies as based on marketing, research and development, human resources and financial and other resource competencies.

### **Strategic Sensitivity**

According to Ekanem, Iko, Ekanem, and Ajibade, (2023). Strategic sensitivity involves recognition and monitoring of opportunities and threats from both the external and internal environment. Strategic sensitivity can be defined as the openness and reporting of a large capacity of information by maintaining relationships with a variety of individuals and organisations (Ekanem, Iko, Ekanem, and Ajibade, 2023). Doz and Kosonen (2020) sees strategic sensitivity as the sharpness of perception of, and the intensity of awareness and attention to, strategic developments. Strategic sensitivity means being open to as much information, intelligence and

innovations as possible by creating and maintaining relationships with a variety of different people and organisations (Doz and Kosonen, 2020). Strategic sensitivity is a combination of foresight, insight and simple probing, with the most importance on insight. Accordingly, Sull (2009) defines the same phenomenon as consistently identifying and seizing opportunities more quickly than the competitors. According to him, companies need to have shared real time market data that is detailed and reliable; small number of corporate priorities in order to focus efforts; clear performance goals for teams and individuals; and mechanisms to hold people accountable and to reward them. What it takes from the management is following the flow of information, sustaining a sense of urgency, maintaining focus on critical objectives, and recruiting entrepreneurial employees.

### **Strategic Agility and Firm Performance**

Strategic agility creates organisational ability to continuously, adequately adjust and adapt in appropriate time with the organisation's strategic direction in achieving overall firm performance (Weber and Tarba, 2014). In the 21st century business environment, embracing strategic agility will enhance continuous performance and adequate adjustment of the organisation towards dynamic business environment and adapt in appropriate time (Ofoegbu and Akanbi, 2012). The performance of an organisation depends on its strategic agility measures toward its competitors, customers, suppliers, partners and governments polices (Amniattalab and Ansari, 2016). Rohrbeck and Kum (2018) conceptually viewed strategic agility as a powerful predictor to guide against negative effect of business environmental changes and for future preparedness in order to outperform other competitors and attaining superior profitability. Studies have emphasized that strategic agility enhance operational productivity, product reliability, quality of service and speed and operational performance (Al-Romeedy, 2019). Most literatures on the link between strategic agility and firm performance in different industries have shown that strategic agility practices by organisations significantly improve firm competitive advantage and overall performance.

Lee (2004) highlighted that firms ought to be agile and be able to sense and respond to market changes quickly and smoothly to maintain and improve their operational performance. Firms that fail to be agile might find themselves losing market share and competitive advantage due to a lapse in their operational performances. Organisations have accepted the fact that turbulence in the marketplace is uncontrollable and unpredictable, limiting firms' ability to respond effectively in a pre-planned manner. Sambamurthy, Bharadwaj and Grover (2010) highlighted that there is increasing recognition that agility is an imperative for success of contemporary firms as they face intense rivalry, globalization, and time-to-market pressures. Through Organisational agility the firm is able operations with speed and surprise, without disrupting enhanced operational performance. Agile firms are resilient to shocks and upheavals in their business environments, adaptive to emerging opportunities, and entrepreneurial in creating new business models to ensure enhanced operational performance (Bharadwaj and Sambamurthy, 2012).

### **Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) by Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997)**

Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) was propounded by David Teece, Gary Pisano and Amy Shuen in 1997. The theory is concerned with the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments and it examines how firms address or bring about changes in their turbulent business environment through reconfiguration of their firm-specific competencies into new competencies. The concept of Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) explains the mechanism that links resources and product markets to competitive advantage and firm survival. The DCT further explains how firms gain sustainable competitive advantage, survive in competitive and turbulence business environment in several ways. The DCT framework is based on three fundamental presumptions. Firstly, the capacity to sense and shape opportunities. Secondly, to seize opportunities. Thirdly, to maintain competitiveness through reconfiguring the enterprise's assets (Teece, 2007).

Despite the popularity and insightful theoretical foundation, the DCT approach does not answer all questions of sustainable competitive advantage. Zahra, Sapienza and Davidson (2006) argue that there are some inconsistencies and ambiguities in the literature of DCT. Another criticism of the concept is that DCT are difficult to measure empirically. In the opinion of Ambrosini, Bowman and Collier (2009), to understand dynamic capabilities, the managerial perceptions of the need for change – functions of their perceptions of their firms' external and internal environments need to be considered. Thus, it is possible for a manager to misperceive the need for change and as a result fail to apply appropriate DCT. The DCT framework helps scholars to understand the foundations of long-run enterprise success while helping managers delineate relevant strategic considerations and the priorities they must adopt to enhance enterprise performance and escape the zero profit tendency associated with operating in markets open to global competition (Teece, 2007). The framework integrates the strategy and innovation literature and highlights the most important capabilities that the management needs in order to sustain superior long run business performance (Teece, 2007). Easterby-Smith, Lyles and Peteraf (2009) emphasized that DC are higher-level capabilities, which enable knowledge gathering, fast response, sharing, and continual updating of the operational processes, interaction with the environment and decision-making evaluations in order to achieve firm competitive advantages and performance. More recently, Esbach (2009) views DC as the capacity of an organisation to purposefully create and agilely modify firm resource base so as to gain competitive advantage.

### **Empirical Review**

Ekanem *et al.* (2023). The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between Strategic Sensitivity and Firm Competitiveness of Deposit Money Banks in Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 180 employees were adopted for this study and were assessed using the systematic sampling technique. The main data used were from primary sources gathered with the use of a Likert scaled questionnaire. Data gathered were analyzed with the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis at a 0.05 significant level. Findings showed that strategic sensitivity strongly correlated with firm competitiveness of deposit money banks in Akwa Ibom State. It was concluded that since the relationship of strategic sensitivity is significant, it is a good predictor of firm's competitiveness. As such, it was recommended that Deposit Money Banks in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State need to build strong

capabilities. Have the strategic foresight, proactivity and adaptability and flexibility to analyze the dynamic business environment and constantly in addition to mitigation strategies, carefully analyze opportunities and threats. Lower production costs than other competitors. The current study examines more than one dimension of strategic agility and it is conducted in manufacturing firms in south-south Nigeria.

Oyedijo (2019) conducted a study to examine the correlation between strategic agility and competitive performance in telecommunication industry in Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Population was made up of all the core staff in the telecommunication firms. Rating of respondents on the total strategic agility items were summed together and averaged as to get a strategic agility index for every participating organisation. Strategic agility data were gotten via questionnaire which was completed by staff in the Top Management Team of each firm using data on sales revenue, profit growth, financial strength, performance stability, and operating efficiency. The results of the analysis indicated a noteworthy correlation between strategic agility and competitive performance. It was concluded that strategic agility impacts the competitive performance of telecom firms in Nigeria. As recommendation, for telecom firms to perform maximally, strategic agility should be included in their policy statement. This study was conducted in telecom firms while the current study is conducted in manufacturing firms.

Alhadid (2016) conducted a study to explore the effect of organisation agility on organisation performance. The study was applied on the information technology organisation located in Jordan. The research design employed by this study was Survey. Population for the study was all the employees in the information technology organisation in Jordan. Primary source of data was employed for the study. The questionnaire was formulated and distributed to higher and middle management employees and simple regression analysis was used to analyze the impact of organisation agility on organisational performance. The result showed that there was a strong correlation between the organisation agility and organisational performance. It was concluded that strategic agility is a necessity for information technology organisation in Jordan. As recommendation, information technology organisations should as a matter of necessity imbibe strategic agility if they are to compete favorably in the industry in Jordan

Usman (2023) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between organisational Agility and Performance of SMEs in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Organisational Agility was conceptualized as the independent variable with Information Technology Adoption, Leadership and Resource Fluidity as dimensions. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary source of data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of this study was the entire SMEs registered under SMEDAN in Bauchi metropolis, totaling 364. The sample size for a given population was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. The table determined that our sample size should be 183 for our population. The simple random sampling technique will be applied in this study as the sample procedure. The research instrument was validated while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a



positive and significant relationship exist between organisational Agility and Performance of SMEs in Bauchi state, Nigeria. The study recommends that there should be constant utilization and reallocation of resources in the SMEs. Labor mobility and institutionalization of job rotations that ensure that knowledge is shared should be implemented by the firms. Also, the study recommends that flexible budgets should be used and a continuous change in environmental dynamics is maintained. This study was considered SMEs while the current study considered manufacturing firms.

### Methodology

The survey research design is use in this study. The choice of this design was influenced by the nature of the research problem. The target population for this study was three hundred and nineteen (319). This population size comprises all senior, middle and intermediate management staff of selected quoted manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. These firms were selected based on proximity and are quoted by the Nigerian Stock Exchange as Breweries in Nigeria. The distribution of the population is shown below:

**Table 1: Population Distribution Table**

Respondents	No of staff
Champion Breweries Plc. Uyo	88
Nigeria Bottling Company Port Harcourt	64
International Breweries plc Port Harcourt	74
Nestle Nigeria plc, Port Harcourt	93
Total	319

### Source: Human Resource Departments of Organisations under Study (2024).

Taro Yamani's formula was used to determine a sample size of 177 respondent from the selected Manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State and Rivers State.

$$\text{Formula } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

N = population

n = sample size

e = error term

From the formula above, the sample size is given as:

$$n = \frac{319}{1+319(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{319}{1+319(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{319}{1+0.7975}$$

$$n = \frac{319}{1.7975} = 177$$

$$n = 177$$

A sample size of 177 respondents was used for this study

Proportionate sampling technique was adopted for the study. For copies of questionnaire to be proportionally allotted to different cadre of employees in the study organisation, Bowley's formula for proportionate representation was used which as follows:

$$nh = nNH$$

$$\frac{\quad}{N}$$

Where: n = sample size  
 NH = population of a strata  
 N = population

Substituting;

$$\text{Champion Breweries Plc. Uyo} \\ = \frac{88 \times 177}{319} = 49$$

$$\text{Nigeria Bottling Company Port Harcourt} \\ = \frac{64 \times 177}{319} = 36$$

$$\text{International Breweries plc Port Harcourt} \\ = \frac{74 \times 177}{319} = 41$$

$$\text{Nestle Nigeria plc, Port Harcourt} \\ = \frac{93 \times 177}{319} = 51$$

**Table 2: Sample Distribution Table**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>No of staff</b>
Champion Breweries Plc. Uyo	49
Nigeria Bottling Company Port Harcourt	36
International Breweries plc Port Harcourt	41
Nestle Nigeria plc, Port Harcourt	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>

**Source: Researcher's Computation, (2024).**

Data for this research were obtained from primary. The primary source comprises relevant information to this study that were obtained through the use of structured copies of questionnaire. The questionnaire was Likert scale rating ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic part of the questionnaire. Simple Linear Regression in which SPSS package of version 25 was used in analyzing the data in order to ascertain the effect of the identified variables.

### **Specification of Model**

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the influence using the Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS version 25).

**Model Specification for Objective One**

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Whereby Y = dependent variable (Performance),

$\beta_0$  = Beta Coefficient

$X_1$  = Core competencies

$\beta_1$ , = coefficients of determination

$\varepsilon$  = error term.

**Model Specification for Objective Two**

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Whereby Y = dependent variable (Performance)

$\beta_0$  = Beta Coefficient

$X_1$  = Strategic sensitivity

$\beta_1$ , = coefficients of determination

$\varepsilon$  = error term.

**Data Presentation**

This section is basically designed to present, analyzed and interpret the primary data obtained via the questionnaire which was purposively administered to the respondents in media house. These are shown in the table below:

**Table 3: Copies of Questionnaire Administered and the Response Rate**

S/N			Copies of questionnaire distributed	Copies of questionnaire retrieved useable	Copies of questionnaire Not retrieved	Percentage (%)
1.	Champion Breweries Plc. Uyo		49	41	8	84.0
2.	Nigeria Bottling Company Harcourt Port		36	32	4	89.0
3.	International Breweries plc Harcourt Port		41	36	5	88.0
4.	Nestle Nigeria plc, Port Harcourt		51	41	10	80.0
<b>Total</b>			<b>177</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>85.0</b>

**Source: Compiled from questionnaire response, (2024).**

From table 3, Out of the 177 copies of the questionnaire that were sent, 150 had been correctly filled out and returned. This makes up 85.0% of the total copies of the questionnaire and was determined to be useful. 27 copies of the questionnaire were returned incompletely filled, so they were rejected, despite the researcher's best attempts to assure adequate and accurate completion of the questionnaire by self-administering.

**Table 4: Age distribution of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-25YEARS	12	8.0	8.0	8.0
26-30YEARS	25	16.7	16.7	24.7
31-35YEARS	57	38.0	38.0	62.7
Valid 36-40YEARS	25	16.7	16.7	79.4
41 AND ABOVE YEARS	31	20.6	20.6	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Fieldwork (2024)**

From table 4, 12 respondents representing 8% were between 20 – 25 years of age, 25 respondents representing 16.7% were between 26 -30 years of age. Those between 31 – 35 years were 57 representing 38.0%. Those between 36 – 40 years were 25 representing 16.7% and those above 41 years of age were 31 representing 20.6% of the respondents. The above analysis shows that the respondents were mature enough to understand the subject matter and respond accordingly.

**Table 5: Respondents' years of service in the organisation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-5years	21	14.0	14.0	14.0
6-10years	74	49.3	49.3	63.3
11-15years	55	36.7	36.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Fieldwork (2024)**

From table 5, 21 respondents representing 14.0% of the respondents have spent between 1 - 5 years working in the organisation, 74 representing 69.3% respondents have spent between 6 - 10 years, and 55 representing 36.7% respondents have spent between 11-15 years. The analysis shows that the respondents have spent some reasonable years working in the organisation to understand the intricacies and factors affecting the organisation.

**Table 6: Percentage analysis of Responses on Core Competency**

Core Competency	Extent of Agreement					Total
	SA	A	UD	SD	D	
We foster innovation and drive continuous improvement	62 (41%)	65 (43%)	2 (1%)	9 (6%)	12 (8%)	150 (100%)
We encourage innovation and creativity	57 (38%)	66 (44%)	6 (4%)	11 (7%)	10 (7%)	150 (100%)
There are effective communication skills within the organisations	66 (44%)	61 (41%)	2 (1%)	12 (8%)	9 (6%)	150 (100%)
There is team Collaboration towards goal attainment	58 (39%)	67 (45%)	5 (3%)	11 (7%)	9 (6%)	150 (100%)

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

Table 6 shows that 62 respondents representing 41% strongly agreed, 65 respondents representing 43% agreed, 2 respondents representing 1% were undecided, 9 respondent representing 6% strongly disagreed, 12 respondents representing 8% disagreed that they foster innovation and drive continuous improvement. Also, it was revealed that 57 respondents representing 38% strongly agreed, 66 representing 44% agreed, 6 respondents representing 4% were undecided, 11 respondents representing 7% strongly disagreed, and 10 representing 7% agreed that they encourage innovation and creativity. Equally, it shows that 66 respondents representing 44% strongly agreed, 61 respondents representing 41% agreed, 2 respondents representing 1% were undecided, 12 respondents representing 8% strongly disagreed and 9 respondents representing 6% disagreed that there are effective communication skills within the organisations. Moreso, it shows that 58 respondents representing 39% strongly agreed, 67 respondents representing 45% agreed, 5 representing 3% were undecided, 11 respondents representing 7% strongly disagreed, 9 respondents representing 6% disagreed that there is team collaboration towards goal attainment.

**Table 7: Percentage analysis of Responses on Strategic Sensitivity**

Strategic Sensitivity	Extent of Agreement					Total
	SA	A	UD	SD	D	
We focus on long-term goals and outcomes rather than short-term gains.	52 (35%)	71 (47%)	8 (5%)	4 (3%)	15 (10%)	150 (100%)
We actively scan the environment, engaging in scenario planning exercises,	66 (44%)	61 (41%)	2 (1%)	12 (8%)	9 (6%)	150 (100%)
We encourage a culture of open communication and feedback and fostering a mindset of curiosity and learning.	62 (41%)	65 (43%)	2 (1%)	9 (6%)	12 (8%)	150 (100%)
We comprehend, and interpret changes, trends, and opportunities in the internal and external business environment	57 (38%)	66 (44%)	6 (4%)	11 (7%)	10 (7%)	150 (100%)

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

Table 7 shows that 52 respondents representing 35% strongly agreed, 71 respondents representing 47% agreed, 8 respondents representing 5% were undecided, 4 respondents representing 3% strongly disagreed, 15 respondents representing 10% disagreed that they focus on long-term goals and outcomes rather than short-term gains. Also, it shows that 66 respondents representing 44% strongly agreed, 61 respondents representing 41% agreed, 2 respondents representing 1% were undecided, 12 respondents representing 8% strongly disagreed and 9 respondents representing 6% disagreed that they actively scan the environment, engaging in scenario planning exercises. Equally, it is revealed that 62 respondents representing 41% strongly agreed, 65 respondents representing 43% agreed, 2 respondents representing 1% were undecided,

9 respondents representing 6% strongly disagreed, 12 respondents representing 8% disagreed that they encourage a culture of open communication and feedback and fostering a mindset of curiosity and learning. Moreso, it shows that 57 respondents representing 38% strongly agreed, 66 representing 44% agreed, 6 respondents representing 4% were undecided, 11 respondents representing 7% strongly disagreed, and 10 representing 7% agreed that they comprehend, and interpret changes, trends, and opportunities in the internal and external business environment.

### Test of Hypotheses

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Core competencies does not have significant effect on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria

**Hi<sub>1</sub>:** Core competencies have significant effect on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria

**Table 8: Regression analysis showing result for core competencies on manufacturing firms' performance**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.882 <sup>a</sup>	.669	.664	.43220		
a. Predictors: (Constant), core competencies						
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1	Residual	50.576	149	.790		
	Total	100.021	150			
a. Dependent Variable: Firms' performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), core competencies						
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.570	.089		3.430	.000
1	core competencies	.766	.021	.972	17.127	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Firms' performance

The model summary in table 8 shows an R- value of 0.882. The result shows positive impact of core competencies on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria. The R square- value of 0.664 shows that 66.4% variation in core competencies was accounted for by variations in firms' performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies a positive impact of core competencies on firms'

performance. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in core competencies given a unit increase in organisational performance.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Strategic sensitivity does not have significant influence on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria

**Hi<sub>2</sub>:** Strategic sensitivity have significant influence on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria

**Table 9: Regression analysis showing result of strategic sensitivity on selected manufacturing firms' performance**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.761 <sup>a</sup>	.615	.611	.44520

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic sensitivity

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	50.576	149	.790		
	Total	100.021	150			

a. Dependent Variable: Firms' performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), strategic sensitivity

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.470	.089		6.430	.000
	strategic sensitivity	.530	.021	.861	10.117	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Firms' performance

The model summary in table 9 shows an R- value of 0.761. The result shows a positive correlation between strategic sensitivity and selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria. The R square- value of 0.611 shows that 61.1% variation in strategic sensitivity was accounted for by variations in firms' performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that strategic sensitivity positively influences firms' performance. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.666 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.530 units increase in strategic sensitivity given a unit increase in firms' performance.

## Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was to examine the effect of core competencies on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria. The result shows positive influence of core competencies on selected manufacturing firm's performance in South-South Nigeria. The  $R^2$  value of 0.664 shows that 66.4% variation in core competencies was accounted for by variations in selected manufacturing firms' performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies a positive impact of core competencies on selected manufacturing firms' performance. This study was in agreement with the findings of Tairas *et al*, (2016). In their study, it was found that core competencies can improve the competitive advantage of private universities in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The second objective of the study was to examine the effect of strategic sensitivity on selected manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria. The result showed that strategic sensitivity had positive influence on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria. The  $R^2$  value of 0.611 shows that 61.1% variation in strategic sensitivity was accounted for by variations in selected manufacturing firms' performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that strategic sensitivity has significant influence on selected manufacturing firms' performance in south-south Nigeria. This is in line with the study of Hamdan *et al.*, (2020). In their study, it was found that strategic sensitivity has impact on enhancing the creative behavior of Palestinian NGOs in Gaza Strip.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Strategic agility has been found to be a powerful predictor to guide against negative effect of business environmental changes and for future preparedness in order to outperform other competitors and attaining superior profitability. Studies have emphasized that strategic agility enhance operational productivity, product reliability, quality of service and speed and operational performance. Most literatures on the link between strategic agility and firm performance in different industries have shown that strategic agility practices by organisations significantly improve firm competitive advantage and overall performance. Developing strategic sensitivity actively help in scanning the environment, engaging in scenario planning exercises, encouraging a culture of open communication and feedback, and fostering a mindset of curiosity and learning. As recommendations, the studied manufacturing firms should imbibe core competency as a policy if they are to attain competitive advantage being that core competencies are the foundation upon which a company builds its business and drives its success. Equally, management of the selected studied manufacturing firms should develop strategic sensitivity as this will actively help in scanning the environment, engaging in scenario planning exercises, encouraging a culture of open communication and feedback, and fostering a mindset of curiosity and learning.



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