

# Impact of Organizational Ambidexterity on Organizational Conflict of Zain Telecommunication Company in Jordan

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** The present research was conducted to identify the impact of Organizational Ambidexterity on Organizational Conflict. **Methods/Statistical analysis:** The study population consisted of all of the managers of Zain Telecommunication Company in Jordan. The questionnaire comprised three parts covered the intended constructs, i.e., Organizational Ambidexterity on Organizational Conflict. The questionnaires, with instructions of how to complete them, were used, (260) questionnaires retrieved, to analyze hypothesis data, Smart Equal Partial Least Square and Structure Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) were used as an approach for analysis. **Findings:** The results of the study indicate that Organizational Ambidexterity had a significant effect on organizational conflict. Exploration has the highest impact on organizational conflict. **Application/Improvements:** Organization with exploitation constantly responds to environmental changes and strives to meet client requirements by working continuously on teaching knowledge, experience and new skills for employees.

**Keywords:** Jordan, Organizational Ambidexterity, Organizational Conflict, Telecommunication Company

## 1. Introduction

Environment has becoming more dynamic with high competition; organizations face rapid changes because of continuous technological development, disruptive innovations, and global competition. Organizational ambidexterity has been considered particularly relevant in such circumstances<sup>1</sup>. Firms need to renew themselves by both exploiting existing competencies and exploring ones in order to adapt successfully to rapidly changing external environment. Exploratory can be defined as getting and discovering new knowledge, talents and processes, while exploiting is defined as developing the current knowledge,

ability and processes need to become ambidextrous and develop firm quality performance simultaneously<sup>2</sup>.

However, exploitation and exploration are two different types of learning activities between which firms divide attention and resources<sup>3</sup>. Exploitation consist of such things as refinement, choice, production, efficiency and implementation while exploration includes things such as search, risk taking, variation, flexibility and discovery<sup>2</sup>. Researchers have referred to organization which is able to simultaneously achieve exploration and exploitation as being ambidextrous organization<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly; Ambidextrous capability allows adaptation to the changes in the markets' trends through exploiting its

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existing capabilities, while at the same time not neglecting the effort undertaken in developing new ones which allow firms staying competitive in international marketplace<sup>5</sup>, thus, managers may restructure what was created to build a new organization to meet new competition and technological progress<sup>6</sup>.

Many researchers assert that there must be a tradeoff between aligning exploiting existing competences and exploring new one<sup>7</sup>. According to March, both exploitation and exploration are important for the organizations although there is scarcity of resources<sup>2</sup>.<sup>8</sup> Referred that ambidexterity might explain the continued success of some organizations, while its absence – the failure of most organizations over time. In literature the concept of organization's ambidexterity is generally used to refer to an organization's ability to conduct two contradictory things at the same time, While views to ambidexterity vary between researchers; some discuss the relation between business performance and ambidexterity<sup>9-14</sup>, while others discuss the impact of multi managerial variables such as innovation<sup>15,16</sup>, fit in strategic management<sup>17</sup>, new product development<sup>18</sup>, distribution and innovation strategies<sup>15</sup>. From other side, researchers stressed the need for ambidexterity at small and medium business<sup>16</sup>. Communication Companies were the subject of<sup>19</sup> and others go to measure it in Malaysia<sup>20</sup>, some in Iraq<sup>19</sup>, and so on. Therefore, this study focuses on sides that have lack theory-driven researches such as: effect of ambidexterity on organizational conflict that will be illustrated in this study's model.

On the other hand, human resources are the mainstay on which modern organizations and management are based on to achieve objectives; since they are the source of thoughts and development. No organization can function efficiently and effectively without the continuous interaction between individuals and groups in different organizational parts and levels. Different individuals and groups rely on each other for various purposes such as information exchange, opinion, experience, cooperation, consultation, inquiry, etc. Such interdependence can lead to cooperation and cohesion or to conflict. Conflict has become a necessity in organizations, especially in

service organizations. This is due to the intensity of the competition and its characteristics and the scarcity of available resources. The concept and importance of conflict has crystallized on competition and competition methods. And that any service organization cannot be sustained and lasting even if it operates within deliberate and recognized plans, studies confirmed that solving the organizational conflict management effectively leads to stimulate the beneficial conflict and suppress harmful conflict, as well as to achieve psychological security of workers and increase productivity<sup>21</sup>.

Research and studies have contributed to a change in the view of organizational conflicts to a positive outlook that contributes to success and achievement of the organization's goals; bearing in mind that organizational conflict still sometimes be the cause of some organizational problems<sup>22</sup>. Also, organizational members activities that are incompatible or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization, have been known as organizational conflict<sup>23</sup>, so that it's may occur within individuals which known as intrapersonal conflicts, or between other individuals that known as interpersonal conflict, or between groups that are known as group conflicts<sup>24</sup>. Organizational conflict was measured at three conflict levels: 1-work conflict that can be defined as Ideas conflict, task conflict, or opinion conflict<sup>21</sup>. 2- Coworker conflict such as arguments that may happen between coworkers, yelling between coworkers at work, or being rude to each other, and 3- Supervisor conflict can be defined as the arguments may be held with supervisors, yelling at them or even being rude with them<sup>25</sup>.

Today, ambidexterity is essential and critical for an organization to be able to distinguish itself and to be able to solve conflicts effectively and efficiently especially in a global competitive environment with scarce resources.<sup>18</sup> Noted that Ambidexterity is a strategic decision-making approach which new ventures use to cope with conflicting needs or pursue paradoxical pairs of strategies. Telecommunication Companies, which are one of the most service providers, made a significant contribution in adding value for the community. As a result, this study will try to define what dimensions of organizational

ambidexterity affect organizational conflict.

Despite the growing number of researches, trying to find the possible answers to the question of: what is needed to build an ambidextrous organization? Significant ambiguity remains in literature regarding the conceptualization of organizational ambidexterity, because importance of an organizational ambidexterity is equal to the importance of survival and sustainability of organizations; especially through the introduction of new ideas and products where many organizations are being exposed to an organizational failure, which is one of the biggest fears that threaten the profit opportunities and achievement of organizational continuity and survival. This study will be a reference for researchers who are interested in strategic management topics especially; in organizational conflict and organizational ambidexterity. Therefore, this study is important for managers in different sectors in general and the telecommunications sector in particular where conflict is great and sometimes difficult to control. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the impact of organizational ambidexterity on organizational conflict of Zain- Jordan Company.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Organizational Conflict

Workplace is a social entity that individuals interact with each other in, especially as most of the work becomes implementing through teamwork; thus positive relations in terms of supporting others and collaboration becomes essential to lever the performance level. Consequently, organizational conflict is one of the inefficient relations that consume about 20% of the manager's time<sup>26</sup>.

Organizational conflict refers to organizational members' activities that are incompatible with others in the same organization or different ones, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization<sup>23</sup>. The researchers expanded their studies to find that conflict includes also incompatibility in preferences and goals and it recognized when the threshold level of intensity exceed between parties<sup>27</sup>.

At work, conflict may occur within individuals if they were unable to meet their expectations or targets which are known as intrapersonal conflicts, or between other individuals which is known as interpersonal conflict, or between groups that are known as group conflicts<sup>24</sup>.

Conflict occurs due to different causes such as personality clashes, ego clashes, differences of opinions, cultural differences, perceptions, miscommunication, ambiguity in roles and responsibilities, stress, and scarcity of resources. Therefore, conflict can be noticed to be specific in its nature that can be divided into task and relationship conflict. Task conflict means different perspectives and opinions about what has to be done, how it's to be done, what the goals and the best strategies for achievement are. It is less harmful and has positive results that motivate team work, integration, and best group decision, although it may be paired with negative emotions such as negative feelings<sup>28</sup>. Task conflict viewed as objective or cognitive conflict which considered as functional conflict that express diverse perspectives between decision makers that challenge them how best achieve goals and enhance decisions quality<sup>29</sup>.

While relationship or personal conflict refers to interpersonal incompatibilities in terms of emotions, values, norms and more personal issues such as frustration and stress<sup>22,30</sup>; therefore it is dysfunctional and may result from cognitive disagreements if it perceived as personal criticism. Both kinds of conflicts can be conceptualized to have three properties: negative emotions, disagreement and interference<sup>31</sup>. On the other hand; researchers received conflict as an important aspect in decision making<sup>32</sup>, and to consider the way they handle the conflict in decision making and to reflect the type they prefer in their judgment as either rational or intuitive<sup>33</sup>.

### 2.2 Organizational Ambidexterity

Management literature increase searching for full understanding how organizations with different sizes achieve ambidexterity<sup>34</sup>; since it is a dynamic capability that is adapted to rapidly changing nature of the business environment and it is a venture stage for organizational development. It has been seen as an absorptive capacity

to any new valuable external information, assimilate it and apply it internally<sup>35</sup>. Absorptive capacity is the ability of a firm to use exploratory; transformative; and exploitative learning to recognize, acquire, assimilate, transform and exploit knowledge from external sources<sup>36</sup>. On the other hand, ambidexterity can be viewed as an organizational competency that enable organization to operate successfully in both mature and emergent markets<sup>37</sup>. Organizational ambidexterity is defined as the interactive balanced relationship between exploitation and exploration.

In practice, attaining ambidexterity is tricky because the first challenge is to find an appropriate balance between exploration and exploitation since the balance between them is conflict<sup>38</sup>. Different studies have shown that a balance condition between exploration and exploitation can't be obtained without social inclusion from senior teams and different integration forms within different organizational units<sup>39</sup>. The second challenge was to see which approach was best to be followed in order to see whether it is best to work with sequential ambidexterity or simultaneous ambidexterity within the same

organizational unit . Likewise, there are different minds and considerations about whether it is best to work with integrated or separated ambidexterity<sup>40,41</sup>, thus achieving organizational ambidexterity required obtaining the “optimal mix” of exploration and exploitation that is achieved through explicit choices to what is to be focused on.

From another perspective, exploration and exploitation can be achieved by different ways; exploration is the result of the combination of knowledge through experiments and tests of new ideas and can be considered as knowledge performance<sup>42</sup>, while exploitation is more complicated and is created by refinement, efficiency, convergent thinking and continuous improvement of products, business performance<sup>2,43</sup>, thus exploratory learning directed toward the recognition and understanding of external valuable knowledge, transformative learning focuses on the assimilation of the newly found knowledge, and exploitative learning focuses on using the assimilated knowledge to create new knowledge and marketable outputs<sup>44</sup>.



**Figure 1.** Organizational Conflicts.

**Source:** researcher's contribution

Organizational ambidexterity becomes critical and urgent to have under turbulent conditions through building and implementing specific capabilities to be able to renew competencies<sup>45</sup>. Therefore; there are two types of ambidexterity: structural ambidexterity that lies in organizational structure which refers to the firm's ability to create separate structures for simultaneously exploiting and exploring new products, whereas the other is contextual ambidexterity that lies in behaviors that include behaviors and management of shifting backward and forward between exploitation and exploration<sup>46</sup>. Thus; conflict can be summarized as the following drawing.

### 3. Study Hypothesis

Based on the above literature the study hypotheses can be formulated as follow:

H0.1: There is no effect of organizational ambidexterity at a significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) on reducing organizational conflict in Zain- Jordan Company.

H0.1.1: *There is no effect of organizational exploration at a significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) on organizational conflict in Zain- Jordan Company.*

H0.1.2: *There is no effect of organizational exploitation at a significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) on reducing organizational conflict in Zain- Jordan Company.*

### 4. Research Model

Figure 2 illustrates how the organizational ambidexterity affects organizational conflict, where organizational

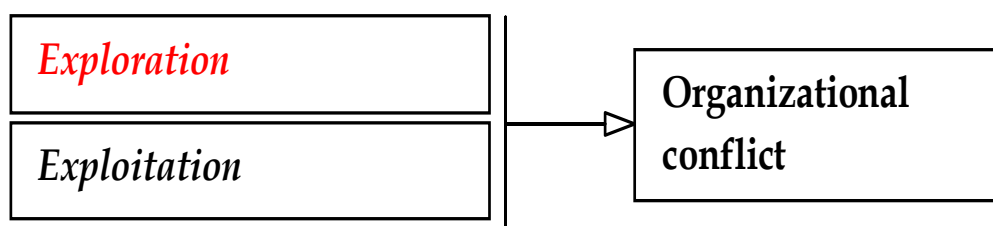
ambidexterity is the independent variable and is related to organizational conflict as the dependent variable.

## 5. Methodology

This study is both descriptive and quantitative in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data, thus a case study research approach was used. A questionnaire was designed according to the proposed model that was developed on literary reviews in order to gather the primary data about the independent research variables: ambidexterity in terms of exploration and exploitation; and dependent variable: conflict, taking into account the environment of the testing organization. In this section, we discuss the measures used, the sample as well as the statistical tests used to evaluate the hypothesis.

### 5.1 Measures

The constructs in this study were developed by using measurement scales adopted from prior studies. Modifications were made to the scale to fit the purpose of the study. All constructs were measured using five-point Likert scales with anchors strongly disagree (= 1) and strongly agree (= 5). All items were positively worded. The final questionnaire consisted of 12 items for ambidexterity in which respondents were asked to assess their firm's orientation. The first six items related to an exploratory orientation (EXR1-EXR6) Similarly, the next 6 items were about an exploitative orientation (EXI1-EXI6). These items were adapted from previous studies<sup>3,36,47</sup>. Organizational conflict the questionnaire has



**Figure 2.** Theoretical Model.

9 items in which respondents were asked to assess their firm's orientation. Three items around organizational conflict describes conflict at work level. The other three items describe the Coworker conflict level, finally the last three items describe Supervisor conflict level (CO1-CO9). These items were adapted from previous studies<sup>21,25</sup>.

## 5.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of all managers at different levels working at Zain telecommunication Company, which was chosen because it is the largest, leading telecommunication company in Jordan, and has a great growth in market. The questionnaires, with instructions of how to complete them, were distributed to respondents by an interviewer. Subjects were asked to assess their perceptions of various items of different constructs. Assessments were based on A Five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree (1) to "strongly agree (5) was used to measure the 21 items. In order to minimize possible response bias, instructions emphasized that the study focused only on their personal opinions. There was no right or wrong answers. After completion, the questionnaires were checked and collected by the interviewer. However, due to some invalid questionnaires those were removed from the sample. The total number was 260; Table 1 shows the characteristics of the population.

Females represent (75%) of the managers on the other hand Males respondents represent (25%) of the managers. The largest group of respondents (95%) was more than 10 years experience. The next respondents' group makes (5%) with an experience of 10 years and less. With regard to educational level, respondents with Postgraduate degrees were the largest group of respondents constituting (85%), while respondents with a Bachelor degrees representing (15%). All sample characteristics of the respondents represented are in Table 1.

## 5.3 Constructs Measurements Analysis

In order to analyze hypothesis data, Smart Equal Partial Least Square and Structure Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) were used as an approach for analysis.

### 5.3.1 Path Loadings for the Suggested Model

At the preliminary stage, the path loadings for all factors exceeded the value of (0.55), and therefore, all factors related to the research model were modified; Q20 loading is below the standards (0.44) so it is deleted<sup>48</sup>. Figure 2 represents the result of path loadings for all variables related to the proposed model in this paper. Figure 3 contains three elements, (exploration, exploitation, conflict). Tables (2 and 3) show the research constructs factor loading.

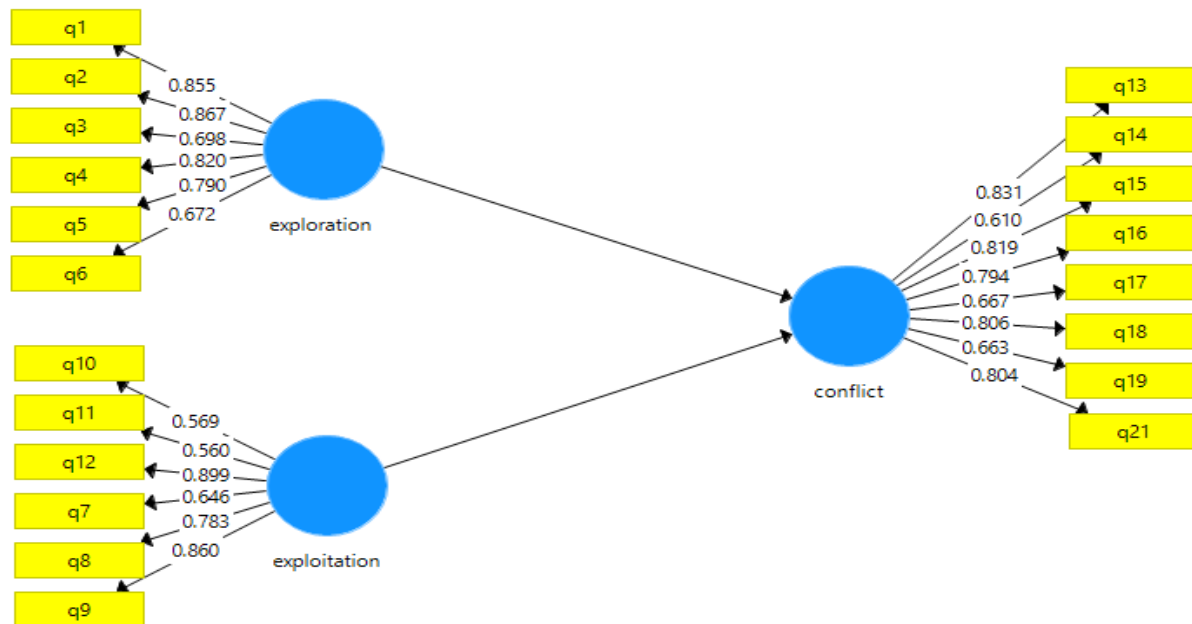
**Table 1.** Population characteristics

Variable		Frequency	%
Experience	10 years and less	5%	8
	More than 10 years	95%	152
Gender	Male	25%	40
	Female	75%	120
Educational level	Bachelor	15%	24
	Postgraduate degrees	85%	136



**Table 2.** Factor analysis of ambidexterity

Variables	Mean	Loadings	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Exploration	3.94		0.536	0.820	0.870
EXR1	3.92	0.855			
EXR2	3.90	0.867			
EXR3	4.04	0.698			
EXR4	4.00	0.820			
EXR5	3.84	0.790			
EXR6	3.91	0.672			
Exploitation	4.16		0.619	0.875	0.906
EXI1	4.05	0.831			
EXI2	4.16	0.610			
EXI3	3.96	0.819			
EXI4	4.29	0.794			
EXI5	4.51	0.667			
EXI6.	3.99	0.806			

**Figure 3.** Path loadings for the suggested framework

**Table 3.** Factor analysis of organizational conflict

Variables	Mean	Loadings	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Organizational conflict	3.001		0.568	0.889	0.912
OC1	3.89	0.621			
OC2	4.18	0.721			
OC3	4.28	0.783			
OC4	4.04	0.769			
OC5	4.41	0.632			
OC6	4.17	0.587			
OC7	4.21	0.575			
OC8	4.31	0.508			
OC8	3.91	0.674			

### 5.3.2 Reliability and Validity Test

A number of tests were applied to verify the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items, including Cronbach Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as shown in Table 1. In order to express internal consistency, the Cronbach Alpha analysis was performed as the minimum acceptable for internal consistency, with the CA and CR results to be at the minimum acceptable of 0.65<sup>49</sup>, which shows that all variables are reliable at the required limit. The value of AVE is calculated as the most relevant criterion in the measurement of convergent validity<sup>50</sup>. These values must be at least 0.50 to be at the acceptable level. This result indicates that the model justifies more than half its indicators variance, the values of AVE in Tables 1 and 2 clearly show that they ranged from 0.603 to 0.782, which means that all constructs correspond to the convergent

validity.

### 5.3.3 Discriminate Validity Test

Laten Variable correlations calculated to make sure of the value of discriminate validity and from these values, it is clear that the model needs more variation with its measurements than the other variables detailed in a specific model<sup>50</sup>. This can be seen in Table 4, and it is evident that all combinations have a greater degree of contrast between them and the model and its indices compared to other structures. As shown in Table 3, the results show an acceptable discrimination validity since there is no correlation coefficient greater than 1.00 in order to ensure that there is no multi-collinearity between the factors, since the presence of any correlation greater than 1.00 means that there is a condition called multi-collinearity<sup>51</sup>. After all the factors of the measurement



**Table 4.** Discriminate validity

	Conflict	Exploitation	Exploration
Conflict	1.00		
Exploitation	0.847	1.00	
Exploration	0.732	0.650	1.00

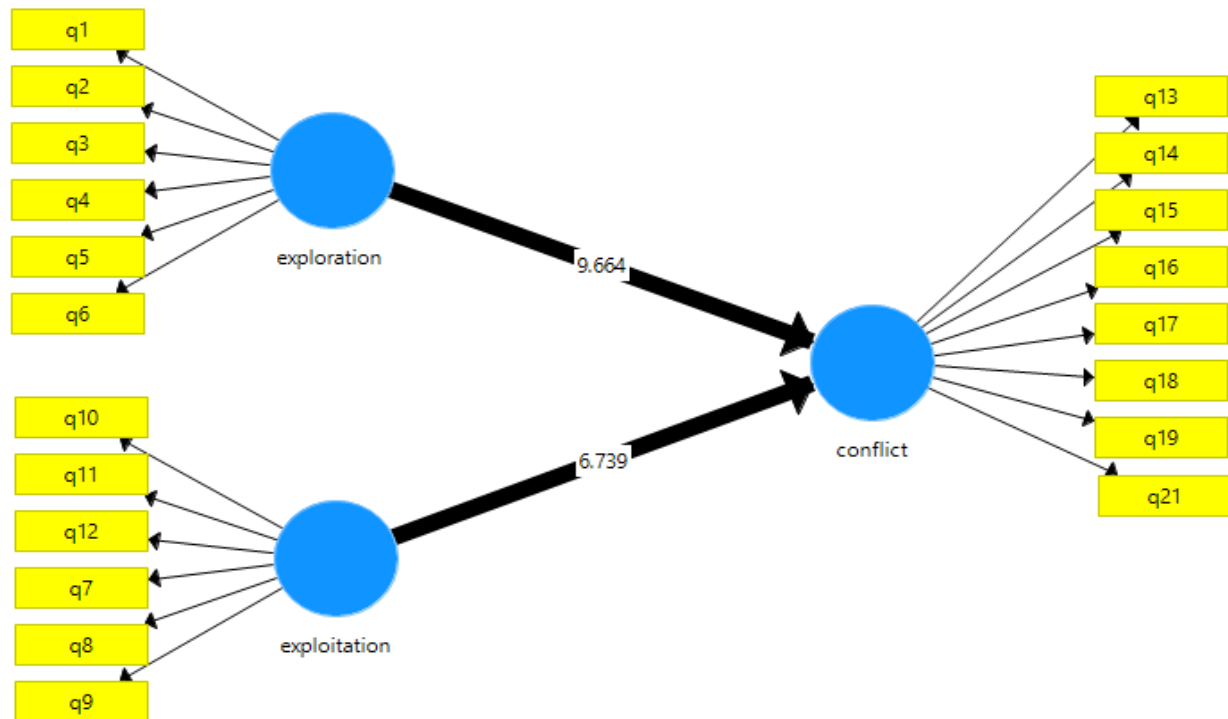
model have been tested with emphasis on all the measurements as detailed above, the framework can be judged to be valid and reliable.

## 6. Test of Hypothesis

The researchers applied a rational investigation. The path and value of the exploration and exploitation factors influence on the conflict was determined by using a detailed test of the proposed framework to obtain a

comprehensive conclusion of the hypothesis results using the Bootstrapping analysis in the Intelligent PLS program as shown in Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the t-value calculation, which focuses on the testing hypotheses, related to organizational ambidexterity with its two sub-dimensions, exploration and exploitation on conflict. Table 4 details these results and their values. As a first point, this report examines the direct effects of organizational ambidexterity on conflict, as shown in H1.

**Figure 4.** Bootstrapping (t-value) for exploration and exploitation factors on conflict.

**Table 5.** Test results of for exploration and exploitation factors on conflict relations

Relation (direct effect)	T value	Beta value	Sig
Exploration	9.664	-0.545	0.00
Exploitation	6.739	-0.408	0.00

Table (5) shows that exploration ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $\beta = -0.545$ ), and exploitation ( $\beta = -0.408$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), had a significant and negative effect on organizational conflict. This provides evidence to support H0.1.1, and H0.1.2. Based on the  $\beta$  values exploration has the highest impact on organizational conflict followed by exploitation.

## 7. Discussion

In this study, researchers aimed to find out how organizational ambidexterity affects organizational conflict. This study claims that exploration and exploitation can help the organization to deal with all conflicts types in the organization. Organizational ambidexterity has received considerable attention in the literature, but relatively little empirical examination. By identifying ambidexterity in telecommunication companies in this study; our findings contribute to the literature that concerns about organizational ambidexterity and conflict, although many researchers study ambidexterity in different domains. The finding was the nature of the ambidexterity engaged in by enterprises could vary, as was especially evident when taking a disaggregated sector perspective.

Implementing organizational ambidexterity has become a priority in many strategic planning departments. In order to meet the demands of modern technologically advanced society that characterized with rapid changing business environment; therefore, corporations must rethink what ambidexterity means and how the concepts

of developing, valuing, and managing a truly ambidextrous organization must go beyond traditional strategies.

Theoretical literature on organizational ambidexterity reflects that the process of applying ambidexterity isn't critical or complicated as some believe, since all it takes to have a manager with leadership, who stimulates more behavioral integration among employees in the organization.

As our study showed that the manager who has the greater capacity in organizational ambidexterity will create and restructure organizational units rely on exploration and exploitation at the same time in order to minimize potential conflict.

Nevertheless, the existence of conflict within an organization has not only benefits but also has challenges. That is why managers should consider it and they ought to deal effectively with challenges in order to retain the balance among people and jobs to avoid negative results within working environment. Human capital must be able to deal with two sets of responsibilities related to the capacities and activities that must be undertaken simultaneously in terms of adjustment and alignment of objectives. Therefore, human resource practices associated with organizational performance must be modified<sup>52</sup>. Which must take all this into account because high-quality human resources double the impact of performance in harmonizing the efforts between exploration and exploitation in a harmonious manner without any symptoms of conflict between proponents of exploitation and others supporters of exploration.

Although ambidexterity facing many difficulties when applied. According to<sup>53</sup>, large organizations that wealthy enough to apply exploitation and exploration may still cannot achieve both at the same time because of internal conflict and inertia they have, old organizations face great difficulties in reshaping their work environment and other difficulties of understanding with senior and middle managers. They also have difficulty in building a rational consensus among them on seeking to combine two sets of capabilities and activities at the same time. A senior management executive may be one of the supporters of one of the alternatives, causing resistance to reconciling all individual capabilities and even collective capacity in the business units. For example, supporters of exploration and modification may resist any attempts to increase discipline and administrative sequence, while exploitation advocates are unwilling to take on the stress and risk caused by change and instability.

## 8. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the organizational ambidexterity had a significant effect on the conflict in Zain Telecommunication Company in Jordan. The exploration dimension of ambidexterity had a statistically significant negative impact on organizational conflict since the organization environment is supporting the exploration. Exploration will make it easy for the organizations to deal with all organizational conflict types by using diverse' ideas and solutions, and be able to show better problem solving and decision making skills than other organizations because these organizations implement methods that attract experienced individuals.

Organization with exploitation, constantly responds to environmental changes and strives to meet client requirements by working continuously on teaching knowledge, experience and new skills for employees; thus, developing their skills in dealing with others that may achieve lower levels of organizational conflicts. Finally, in practice, the value of ambidexterity lays in the fact that it will help the cellular companies to exploit

employees' skills and to develop a positive climate between the managers and the employees. Thus, they will increase productivity and consequently their economic benefits.

## 9. Managerial Implications and Direction for Future Research

Based on the study results which showed a significant effect of the ambidexterity on the organizational conflict in Zain Telecommunication Company in Jordan, managers and decision makers have to create a strong ambidexterity plan that should be top priority of the business to do, which make them able to deal with diverse conflict levels at workplace. Also to do their best to invest new opportunities by spending enough money to improve employees activities and services in order to provide a high value service to meet their customers' needs which may be in result contribute in resolving the internal conflict problems.

Several researches discuss whether or not ambidexterity has positive or negative effects, depends on different aspects of the organization's strategies, culture and management practices. This indicates that ambidexterity may be beneficial under certain conditions and may fail to have any impact in others. Consequently, this study can be considered one-step in investigating what can affect organizational conflict in the presence of ambidexterity at Jordanian markets focused on telecommunication companies. Other researchers can continue the study considering mediators that may affect the relationship between ambidexterity and conflict. It could also be beneficial to explore ambidexterity as a dependent variable.

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