

**The Impact of Strategic Agility on Organisational Performance Moderated by Digital Transformation in Firms within the City of Johannesburg South Africa**

Student number: 24093832

A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy CS 2024/25

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this research project is my own work. The research project is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Corporate Strategy at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. This project has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to conduct this research.

## ABSTRACT

While there is an acknowledgement of the importance of strategic agility as a driver of superior organisational performance in volatile market environments, a significant contextual and empirical gap remains regarding how this relationship presents itself in emerging African economies such as the City of Johannesburg. In addition, the role of digital transformation in amplifying this relationship has predominantly been studied as a mediator rather than a moderator. As such, this study aimed to explore the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among firms operating within the City of Johannesburg and to determine the extent to which this relationship is moderated by digital transformation.

The study employed a deductive, quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design and was underpinned by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, drawn from a sample of 211 full-time employees across diverse private and public sector organisations operating in the City of Johannesburg in Gauteng, South Africa. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, correlation analysis, and moderated multiple linear regression modelling utilising SPSS to test the three hypotheses.

The study revealed that strategic agility ( $\beta=0.1962$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and digital transformation (digital adaptability) ( $\beta=0.5186$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) have a positive impact on organisational performance, together constituting 78.2% of the variance. Digital transformation (digital adaptability) emerged as the strongest predictor. However, the hypothesised moderating effect on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance was not statistically significant ( $p=0.602$ ).

The findings of this study suggest that in a highly volatile, competitive, and contextually constrained environment like the City of Johannesburg, strategic agility and digital transformation work as strong, independent drivers of organisational performance rather than synergistic, interactive capabilities. This finding requires management to intentionally focus on strategic digitisation and integration of digital systems into the core of strategic processes to close the gap between strategic responsiveness and digital adoption. From a theoretical perspective, the study expands the Dynamic Capabilities Theory by positioning digital transformation (digital adaptability) as a critical, independent capability that impacts organisational performance alongside strategic agility.

However, the primary limitation of this study is the cross-sectional design, which inhibits causal inference and the ability to capture the dynamic evolutionary effects that happen over time. Therefore, future research should adopt a longitudinal design that enables tracking of the evolution and alignment of these capabilities. Furthermore, mixed-method research is

recommended to enable the qualitative exploration of the influence of organisational mechanisms like leadership, culture and cross-functional integration in integrating strategic agility and digital transformation to enhance organisational performance in emerging economies.

Another critically important limitation of this study was the emergence of the unplanned construct 'overall employee perception', suggesting that the instrument used could have captured broader evaluative tendencies that transcended the study's scope and the initially defined theoretical constructs. Thus, this construct was excluded from the core of the investigation, despite its significant appearance in the results, as it would lead to theoretical and methodological ambiguity.

## **KEY WORDS**

Strategic agility, digital transformation, organisational performance, competitiveness, dynamic capabilities, City of Johannesburg.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

|       |                                                  |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| AI    | Artificial intelligence                          |
| DCT   | Dynamic Capabilities Theory                      |
| H     | Hypothesis                                       |
| IP    | Internet protocol                                |
| EC    | Emerging Construct (Overall employee perception) |
| IT    | Information technology                           |
| M     | Mean                                             |
| POPIA | Protection of Personal Information Act           |
| P     | P-value                                          |
| SD    | Standard Deviation                               |
| SEM   | Structural Equation Modelling                    |
| SPSS  | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences      |

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1: Background

The world of business today is increasingly characterised by uncertainty, volatility, complexity, and ambiguous conditions that demand agility, adaptability and digital readiness for survival. As noted by Deshati (2023), businesses today operate in a highly turbulent environment where their success is a function of their ability to rapidly sense, respond, and adapt to the ensuing market changes. This current lived reality has intensified the need for firms to embrace digital transformation as both a strategic imperative and a means for survival (Salem & Atheeb, 2024). Hence, in the context of this fast-changing business landscape, traditional business models cease to be adequate and effective. Firms that are slow to respond to digital transformation, as the new reality, and delay their strategic adaptation risk being outdated (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). Jackson and Ann (2024) propound that competitive advantage relies on how quickly a firm can align its structure, technology, and strategy in response to market disruptions. As such, a firm's strategic ability to anticipate change, make quick and timely decisions, and reconfigure resources effectively has become, as articulated by Elali (2021), a critical determinant of organisational performance. On the contrary, the prevailing discourse often does not acknowledge that digital transformation is a fundamental socio-technical undertaking, not merely another technological expenditure.

The City of Johannesburg, the economic hub, not only of the Gauteng Province or South Africa, but the powerhouse of the Sub-Saharan African region, offers a unique setting to examine this emerging dynamic. The city generates around 16.5% of the country's wealth, employing approximately 12% of the national labour force. More than 70% of companies in South Africa have their Headquarters in the city (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020). Thus, the City of Johannesburg represents a microcosm punctuated by both opportunity and disruptions. Businesses operating in such a highly competitive and digitally evolving market are, by design, compelled to demonstrate agility and technological sophistication to maintain superior performance and sustainability. As Khumalo and Moloi (2025) expound, firms doing business in the City of Johannesburg "have everything to lose" if they are slow in sensing, seizing, adapting, and responding to the fast-changing market and technological landscape.

According to Christofi et al. (2023), digital transformation using tools like big data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation has significantly changed and redefined the way organisations create value and assess their performance. Yet, despite the increasing recognition by firms of the importance of adapting to digital transformation and appreciating the urgent need for strategic agility, there is limited empirical evidence on how digital

transformation moderates the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance, particularly in the context of emerging economies like South Africa (Yogatama et al., 2024). Accordingly, this study examines the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance, with digital transformation as a moderator, among firms operating in the City of Johannesburg.

This Chapter outlines the problem statement, research aim, objectives, research questions and further outlines the significance of the study, research scope, delimitations, and definitions of key terms. It then concludes by setting out the structure of the report.

## **1.2: Problem Statement**

Despite the wide acknowledgement of strategic agility as a key driver of organisational performance (Alkandi & Helmi, 2024; Miruna, 2020; Karoney et al., 2024), current studies have primarily focused on developed economies, creating a significant contextual gap in understanding how this relationship manifests itself in the context of African business ecosystems such as the City of Johannesburg. In addition, while digital transformation is often studied as a mediator (that is being part of the causal pathway of the relationship between the strategic agility and performance) (Mhaibes et al., 2024), limited studies have empirically tested its role as a moderator (influences the strength and the direction of the relationship) between strategic agility and organisational performance.

The prevailing business environment in the City of Johannesburg, marked by continuous digital disruptions and stiff competition, presents an urgent need to investigate how best firms operating in this space harness digital technologies to strengthen their agility and bolster their performance. As such, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory underpins this study, affirming that organisations' ability to achieve superior performance is dependent on how quickly they can sense opportunities, seize them, and align their resources accordingly (Bleady et al., 2018). Yet the extent to which digital transformation strengthens the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance is underexplored. As a result, this study addresses the following gap:

Although there is a wide recognition of the value of strategic agility and digital transformation, there is inadequate empirical evidence on how digital transformation moderates the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance among the firms operating in a digitally evolving and intensely competitive business environment, such as the City of Johannesburg.

### **1.3: Research Aim**

This study aimed to explore the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among firms operating within the City of Johannesburg and to determine the extent to which digital transformation moderates the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance.

### **1.4: Research Objectives**

To determine the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among firms operating in the City of Johannesburg and to determine to what extent the moderating effect of the digital transformation strengthens this relationship.

### **1.5: Research Questions**

In line with the research aim and objectives, the main research questions for the study were as follows: What is the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance in firms operating within the City of Johannesburg, and to what extent is this relationship moderated by digital transformation?

### **1.6: Hypotheses**

The following three hypotheses were central to the study:

**H1:** Strategic agility has a significant impact on organisational performance.

**H2:** Digital transformation has an impact on organisational performance.

**H3:** The relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance is strengthened by digital transformation.

### **1.7: Research Significance and Contribution**

This study is significant for two main reasons. It contributes to both theory and managerial practice, as elaborated below.

#### **1.7.1: Theoretical Significance**

The study addresses a clear conceptual and empirical gap in the literature by testing the moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance in an African urban context (City of Johannesburg), a perspective that is underexplored in the existing management studies (Christofi et al., 2023; Alkandi & Helmi, 2024). Thus, this study's findings expand the Dynamic Capabilities Theory by demonstrating how digital transformation moderates the mechanisms through which strategic agility influences organisational performance.

### **1.7.2: Academic and Personal Significance**

For researchers, this study enriches the current body of knowledge. The study situates the analysis within the unique economic landscape of the City of Johannesburg; hence, it sets out a critical benchmark for future comparative research. Similarly, from a personal perspective, undertaking this research advances the researcher's own knowledge and expertise on strategic management, research methodologies, and empirical research, contributing positively to academic and professional development.

### **1.7.3: Practical Significance**

For those in business, the study offers evidence-based insights for managers looking to integrate agility and digital transformation capabilities. This informs their strategic decisions on technology adoption, resource configuration, and capability development in the face of fast-changing digital disruptions.

## **1.8: Scope and Delimitations**

This study focuses on investigating the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance with digital transformation as a moderating variable. The research is restricted to the context of firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. The choice of the City of Johannesburg is based on its role as the economic powerhouse in the country that is home to many diverse industries subjected to daily digital pressure. Hence, the central idea is to develop insights that are relevant and speak not only to the urban business environment but also provide a reference point for other businesses in other contexts.

The study follows a quantitative approach. It relies on numerical data to test the hypothesised relationships between strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. Qualitative research instruments such as focus groups, case studies, and in-depth interviews were not relevant for the scope of this study. The study does not assess individual characteristics of employees and managers.

Moreover, the research only focuses on firms within the boundaries of the City of Johannesburg. This means firms that are operating in other cities, no matter how similar they are to those in the City of Joburg, were not considered. This, admittedly, limits generalisability in other settings. Moreover, the research focuses on digital transformation as a moderator, and other moderators, such as organisational culture, market dynamics, and leadership style, were not investigated. The study is cross-sectional, which is limited to the data collected during the period of study, and that does not capture longitudinal trends. Limiting the focus of this research this way would improve resource efficiency, manageability, clarity, and precision, but at the same time indicate that the findings have geographical and contextual limitations.

## **1.9: Definition of Key Constructs**

The three key constructs for investigation in this study are strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. These key constructs are deliberated hereunder:

### **1.9.1: Strategic Agility**

Strategic agility refers to the capability of an organisation to anticipate, adapt, and quickly respond to changes in the market while at the same time remaining competitive and alert to the need for long-term sustainability (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). It includes dimensions such as flexibility in resource allocation, speed of decision-making processes, and the ability to innovate.

### **1.9.2: Organisational Performance**

Organisational performance indicates the extent to which an organisation achieves its strategic and operational objectives (Nneji & Asikhia, 2021). Organisational performance encompasses both financial and non-financial outcomes. The financial outcomes include, but are not limited to, profitability, return on investment, and market share, whereas the non-financial outcomes entail, again not limited to, customer satisfaction, internal efficiency, and employee engagement.

### **1.9.3: Digital Transformation**

According to Kokot et al. (2023), digital transformation is defined as the organisational extent of adoption, integration, and effective use of digital platforms, systems, and tools to improve organisational performance. This construct is measured in terms of digital capability, usage intensity, and its role in enhancing strategic agility to improve organisational performance. Nevertheless, this definition is conceptually insufficient as it emphasises technological implementation over successful integration. Contextually, digital transformation is critically conceptualised as a multi-dimensional moderating variable measured not only by digital capability, but also by employee engagement with the process of digital transformation. Therefore, this third construct critically evaluates the employees' collective attitudes, resistance levels, acceptance of the new digital environment, and perceived utility, which influence an organisation's capacity to sustain transformation that translates into superior performance outcomes.

## **1.10: Structure of the Report**

This research report comprises seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduces the study, outlines the background, the research problem, aim, objectives, questions and hypotheses, and elaborates on the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Reviews both theoretical and empirical literature and presents the theoretical lens (Dynamic Capabilities Theory) that underpins the study. The analysis identifies the research gap and rationale for the research.

Chapter 3: Discusses the research questions and the hypotheses derived from the reviewed literature.

Chapter 4: Sets out the research methodology. It discusses the research paradigm, research design, research approach, and the research methods that were employed in the study. It further discusses the sampled population and sampling method used, data collection, data analysis, and concludes with the ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Reports the findings of the study.

Chapter 6: Discusses the research findings. This chapter focuses on the specific findings of the study.

Chapter 7: Presents the conclusions of the study, provides recommendations, suggests areas for future research, and acknowledges the study's limitations that the readers of the report must be aware of.

### **1.11: Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided the contextual background of the study, identified the research problem, and articulated the research aim, questions, hypotheses as well as the significance and contribution of the study. It highlighted the urgency and the importance of exploring strategic agility and digital transformation in the dynamic, turbulent business environment of the City of Johannesburg. The next chapter presents the literature review to provide a theoretical lens for the study and to unpack the relevance and the position of this research in the current body of knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1: Introduction**

The unpredictability and volatility of today's business environment evoke the need for businesses to demonstrate strategic agility in the quest to sustain long-term success. Strategic agility, defined as the ability of the organisation to quickly sense, seize, and respond to changes in the market, has been identified as a critical driver of organisational performance (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020). Firms that are agile and can quickly sense and adapt to the changes in the market have a greater chance of survival in the current turbulent market environment. According to Shahsavari (2024), agile firms can reconfigure their resources and processes to meet emerging market demands, thereby enhancing innovation, efficiency, and their competitiveness.

Similarly, digital transformation adds a layer of complexity to the relationship. Schiliro (2024) defines digital transformation as the integration of technologies across all business functions to drive organisational change and agility, and responsiveness. Digital transformation is therefore positioned as a moderator that could either strengthen or weaken the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among firms operating in the city of Johannesburg and explores how digital transformation moderates this relationship. This chapter reviews the literature that underpins this study. It begins by discussing the theoretical framework that underpins the study, followed by a discussion of the key constructs, strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation, and concludes with the identification of the research gap.

### **2.2: Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by the dynamic capabilities theory (DCT). Dynamic Capabilities Theory emphasises the organisation's ability to sense, seize, and transform to respond to the changes in the market (Cavusgil & Deligonul, 2024). According to Zurina and Ismail (2019), competitiveness stems from an organisation's ability to integrate, reconfigure, combine, and rearrange their internal and external capabilities in response to changing market conditions. Firms that are reluctant to adapt to changes, Moradi et al. (2021) argue, face diminished survival prospects. Hence, it is critical, as expounded by Miruna (2020), that firms become agile and stay on the lookout for changes in the dynamics of the market. As such, agility manifests through continuous sensing, seizing, and transforming, which concurs with the principles of Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Deshati, 2023).

Dynamic Capabilities Theory can therefore be characterised as the foundation upon which strategic agility is built. Dynamic capabilities represent a firm's behavioural orientation to constantly reconfigure, reconstruct, integrate, and upgrade its resources in response to the market turbulence (Mavengere, 2013). In this context, DCT presents the analytical lens for identifying the mechanisms, such as strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity, which bolster agility and performance.

Bleady et al. (2018) describe Dynamic Capabilities as constituting their interrelated functions. These functions include sensing opportunities and threats, seizing them through the implementation of effective resource deployment, and transforming by aligning the structures and culture. However, Domniku and Ahmeti (2024) caution that the interaction between dynamic capabilities and agility is increasingly driven by digital transformation, which has become a real disruptive force in the modern world of business.

The City of Johannesburg, South Africa's economic hub, is in a highly competitive business environment and is technologically evolving. Lamidi and Juta (2024) noted that firms operating in this geographical space face tremendous challenges such as limited infrastructure, funding constraints, and rapid digital disruptions. As a result, boosting a firm's information technology (IT) capabilities, like real-time analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and cyber-security systems, becomes a must for sustaining organisational performance (Cavusgil & Deligonul, 2024). Together, these IT capabilities optimise resource use, protect sensitive proprietary data, improve sustainable production and distribution, increase operational efficiency and support evidence-based decision making, reinforcing the relevance of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory in articulating how agility and technology jointly enhance performance outcomes.

Figure 2.1 below shows the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which entails the interdependent processes of sensing, seizing, and transforming. Sensing constitutes the ability to identify emerging opportunities and threats (Teece, 2018). Seizing involves mobilising resources and reconfiguring business models to make the best out of the opportunities that present themselves, and finally, transforming refers to the ability of the organisation to realign the structure and culture of the organisation to sustain competitiveness. Operationally, these processes encompass strategic agility as they influence the ability of an organisation to anticipate and respond to the ever-changing market environment. As such, within this framework, digital transformation acts as a moderating mechanism that enhances the speed, precision, and integration of these dynamic capabilities. Hence, organisations that effectively capitalise on digital capabilities in their sensing, seizing, and transforming processes are more likely to translate strategic agility into superior organisational performance.

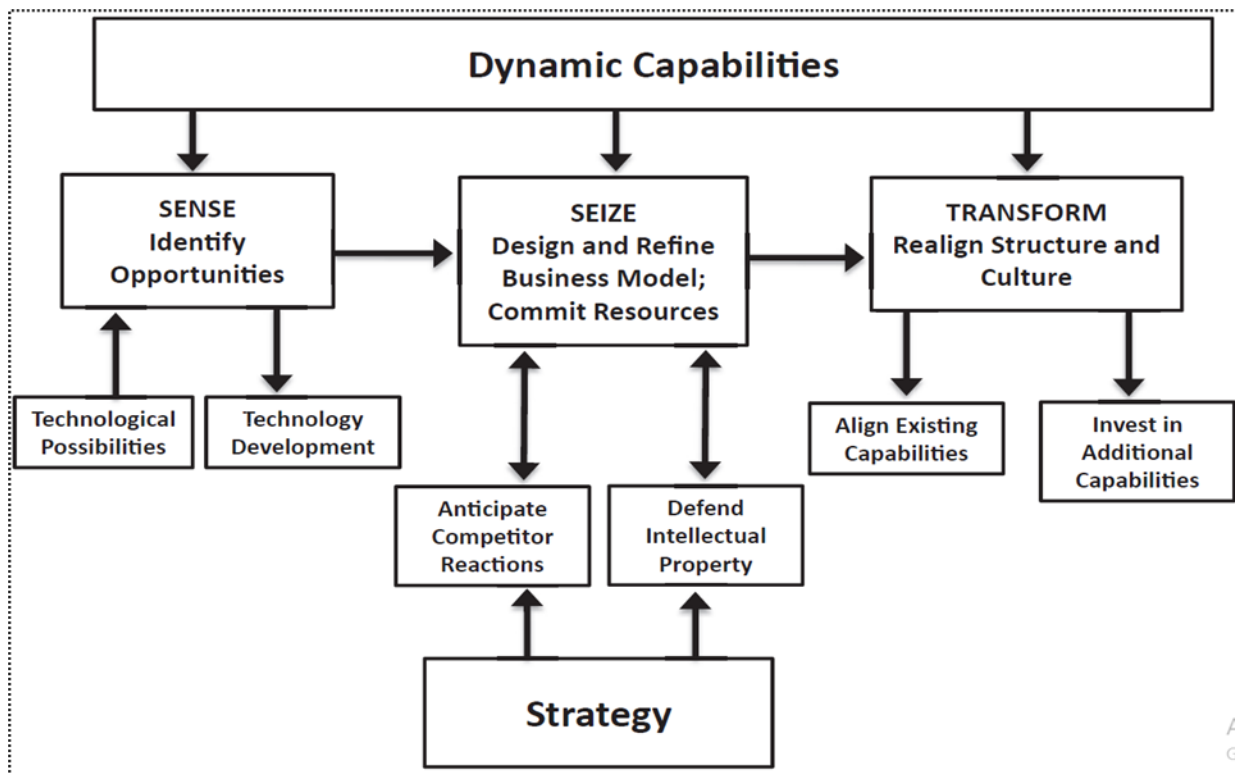


**Figure 2.1: Dynamic Capabilities and Their Interaction with Strategy**

Source: (Teece, 2018)

While Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) presents a robust theoretical foundation, its applicability is punctuated by conceptual inconsistencies (Arndt et al., 2022; Steininger et al., 2022), comprising overlapping definitions with the resources-based view and limited empirical measurability. However, its emphasis on the adaptive capability remains critical for understanding how strategic agility, amplified by digital technologies, drives organisational performance in turbulent market environments like the City of Johannesburg. The following section deliberates on the empirical literature for the study.

### 2.3: Empirical Literature

The effect of strategic agility on organisational performance has been a subject of growing debate. Many studies affirm the existence of a positive relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance (Deshati, 2023; Christofi et al., 2023; Elali, 2021; Jackson & Ann, 2024). Organisations that can sense opportunities and quickly configure their resources to suit the prevailing market conditions tend to outperform those that are unresponsive and less agile (Ali et al., 2025). However, many existing studies conceptualise and view digital transformation as an enabler of strategic agility, rather than as a moderating variable in the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance (Miruna, 2020; Domniku & Ahmeti, 2024).

For example, Shahsavar (2024) indicates that organisational agility bolsters performance in turbulent and uncertain market conditions, whereas Mhaibes et al. (2024) and Jackson and Ann (2024) identify IT capabilities as amplifiers of strategic agility. Yet, limited research has explicitly explored the extent to which the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance is either strengthened or weakened by digital transformation. This omission alludes to a critical empirical gap that this study seeks to address.

## **2.4: Strategic Agility**

The term strategic agility is defined by Elali (2021) as the ability of the leadership and top management of an organisation to anticipate trends, redefine the strategy, and reallocate the resources quickly to maintain a competitive advantage. Sampath and Krishnamoorthy (2017) described strategic agility as a holistic concept that entails flexibility and adaptability. Strategic agility is sometimes used interchangeably with the term organisational agility. This is true where the users do not pay attention to the technical differences between the two, maybe because the difference does not actually take them far from the intended meaning. Jackson and Ann (2024), define organisational agility as the overall ability of an organisation to sense changes in the environment and be able to respond swiftly and effectively. Similarly, the definition given by Arokodare and Asikhia (2020), on strategic agility, contains the element of sensing and quick response to changes in the business environment, technically making the two terms interchangeable.

According to Elali (2021), strategic agility reflects the ability of the leadership to anticipate trends, redefine strategy, and quickly redeploy resources to maintain competitiveness. It consists of three primary dimensions, namely, strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity. These primary dimensions collectively determine the extent to which an organisation can quickly and effectively adapt to the changes in the market environment (Christofi et al., 2023). Figure 2.2 below shows the relationship between strategic agility and its components and how they collectively lead to superior performance within an organisation. This is an indication, as argued by Mhaibes et al. (2024), that the effectiveness of these components is dependent on their complementary effect. Hence, organisations that need to enhance their agility need to do so from all three fronts. None is more important than the other. The following figure sets out the conceptual framework for strategic agility.

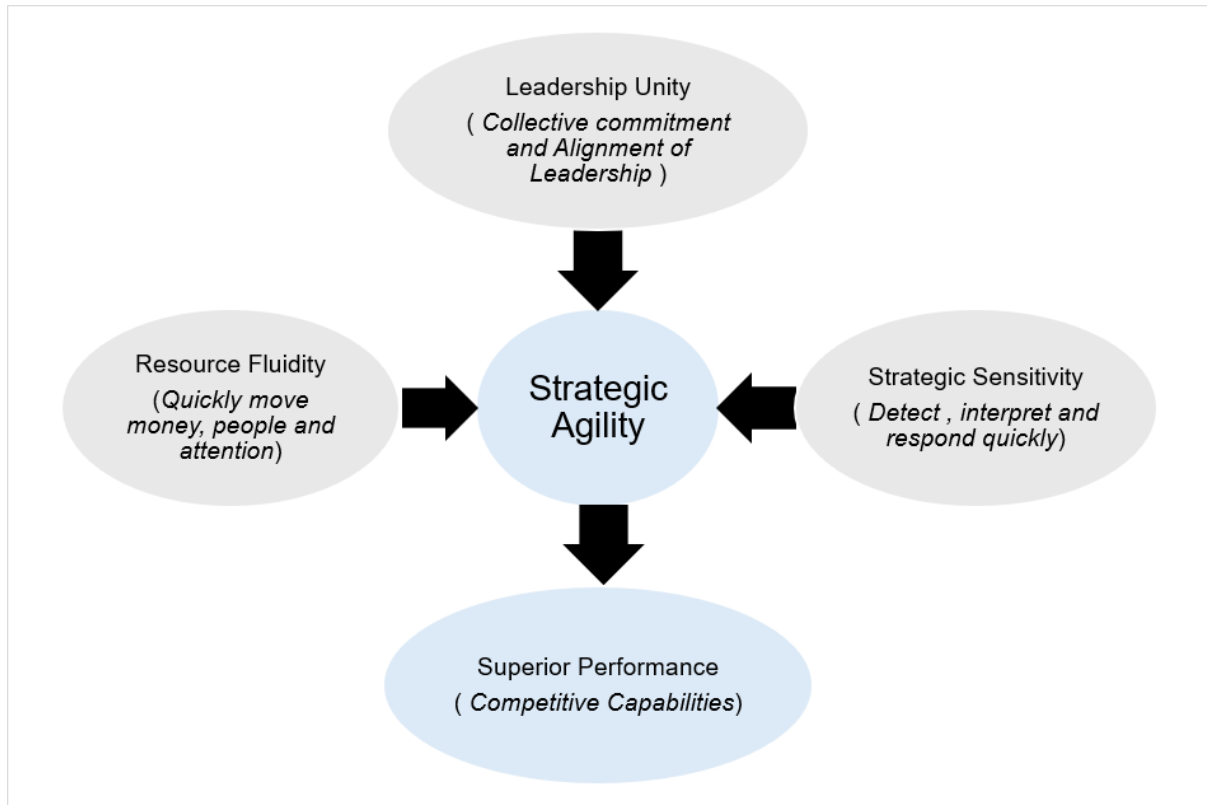


**Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework for Strategic Agility**

Source: Adapted from Elali (2021)

Figure 2.2, as briefly alluded to above, gives, though not exhaustive, an outline of how resource fluidity, leadership unity, and strategic sensitivity feed into strategic agility, translating into superior performance. Elali (2021) does not, in this conceptual framework, specifically mention organisational performance, but for the sake of this study, the term “superior performance” is used interchangeably with organisational performance. Hence, Figure 2.2 conceptualises what Mhaibes et al. (2024) described as “a complementary effect” of the three primary dimensions of strategic agility. As such, Bleadly et al. (2018) indicated that for a firm to be agile, it does not only need the shared vision of the leadership but also requires the ability to quickly sense the available opportunities and threats so that resources can be swiftly redeployed to areas where they are needed the most to achieve superior performance. This type of response is indispensable considering the volatile markets of the City of Johannesburg.

#### **2.4.1: Strategic Sensitivity**

Strategic sensitivity is defined by Adil (2023) as the ability of an organisation to detect, interpret, and swiftly respond to emerging opportunities and threats in its environment. The environment, in this context, refers to both internal (the environment that an organisation can influence) and external (that which the organisation cannot influence). Detecting, interpreting, and quickly responding to change involves the continuous monitoring of external trends in

technology, markets, and the political landscape (Ali et al., 2025). This process helps the organisation anticipate both opportunities and threats and respond appropriately. Strategic sensitivity promotes open strategic dialogue, market awareness, and decentralised information flow (Ali et al., 2025). This component encourages input from all stakeholders and helps identify emerging issues and insights, enabling the organisation to stay attuned to its environment and respond effectively.

#### **2.4.2: Leadership unity**

Leadership unity components are also known as leadership and collective commitment. Diete-Spiff and Olori (2021) defined leadership unity as a collective alignment, cohesion, and shared responsibility and commitment, having one vision towards achieving a common goal. Leadership unity plays a crucial role in fostering a shared strategic intent, trust, collaboration, and cultural support for change (Al-Ganabi et al., 2024). As mentioned by Chowdhury and Shil (2022), leadership unity is the power behind effective mobilisation of resources. When the management speaks with one voice and has a shared vision, it becomes easy to dispel the scourge of resistance to change, which tends to be a barrier in volatile environments.

Strategic agility demands that the management get out of their comfort zones and face the realities presented by the market (Shahsavari, 2024). Hence, it goes without saying that leadership unity is indispensable. However, it is essential to note that unity alone is insufficient without the ability to detect, interpret, and respond to the market changes. In this regard, strategic sensitivity becomes critical. This shows how these components reinforce each other in building strong strategic agility that strengthens an organisation's responsiveness to the uncertainty in its environment.

#### **2.4.3: Resource Fluidity**

Resource fluidity is described by Karoney et al. (2024) as the ability of an organisation to reconfigure, move, and redeploy its resources quickly and efficiently. These resources include, but not limited to, people, finances, and technology. The appearance of technology among the resources that firms should move around as they respond to turbulence in the market affirms its catalytic influence on strategic agility. This component aligns closely with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasises the need to sense, seize, and transform.

According to Christofi et al. (2023), resource fluidity promotes flexible resource allocation, enhanced cross-functional capabilities, and adaptable processes and systems that foster fast execution, decentralised decision-making, rapid prototyping and testing, and responsive operations.

To enhance these capabilities effectively requires a strong culture of learning and investment in digital tools (Halmaghi & Elida-Tomița, 2023). Setiawati et al. (2022) affirm this by describing digital transformation as a key driver of strategic agility. This assertion reinforces the link between digital transformation and the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), which is crucial in establishing its influence on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance.

## 2.5: Organisational Performance

Organisational performance is described by Hamann and Schiemann (2021) as the degree to which an organisation achieves its objectives efficiently and effectively. It comprises financial and non-financial outcomes. These include revenue growth, innovation, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction (Mashilo & Kgobe, 2024). Ali et al. (2025) argue that strategic agility influences these outcomes by enhancing the ability of firms to anticipate and quickly adapt to changing market disruptions. However, as Vrontis et al. (2022) explicates, the strength of this relationship may differ depending on the effect of moderating variables such as organisational size, culture, and digital transformation. The components of the organisational performance are shown in Figure 2.3 below:



**Figure 2.3: Components of Organisational Performance**

Author's Illustration

### **2.5.1: Financial Performance**

As defined by Ngozi Evangeline Nneji (2021), financial performance represents the measurable economic outcomes that show whether a firm is achieving its strategic and operational objectives. These measurable economic outcomes entail profitability, revenue growth, cost efficiency, market share and return on investment. A study by Chourasia and Bahuguna (2024) suggests that strategic agility has an influence on improved financial outcomes by enabling organisations to quickly respond to the prevailing competitive pressures and take advantage of the emerging market opportunities. Additionally, firms that have the capacity to swiftly reallocate resources, cut decision cycles and reconfigure business models have a greater chance to maintain and enhance profitability during turbulent periods of uncertainty. Nevertheless, it is critical to note that the magnitude of this impact varies in different organisations.

Thus, financial performance is said by Arokodare and Asikhia (2020) to be closely linked to digital transformation. Digital transformation enhances the relationship between organisational performance and strategic agility by strengthening the ability of agile firms to capitalise on digital capabilities such as data analytics, automation, and digital platforms to achieve superior financial decisions. Hence, firms with advanced digital maturity, as articulated by Miruna (2020), tend to translate strategic agility into financial gains more effectively than those that lack or have insufficient technological capabilities. Therefore, though Arokodare and Asikhia (2020) do not categorically mention digital transformation as a moderator, the research acknowledges that strategic agility improves financial performance, while digital transformation determines the extent of the improvement.

### **2.5.2: Non-Financial Performance**

The non-financial performance aspect of organisational performance is described by Ngozi Evangeline Nneji (2021) as all the qualitative and intangible indicators such as innovation capacity, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, service quality and organisational learning. These elements, though difficult to quantify, are critical for sustaining long-term competitiveness. That said, Mashilo & Kgobe (2024) argue that strategic agility contributes to non-financial performance by nurturing a culture of responsiveness, experimentation and continuous improvement. As such, organisations are better positioned to sense environmental changes, integrate stakeholder's contributions and innovation. However, Miruna (2020), propounds that this relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance is shaped by digital transformation, which also has a direct relationship to organisational performance. For example, digital tools enhance communication, knowledge sharing, and

data-driven decision-making, which in turn enhances the positive effects of strategic agility on customer experience, internal collaboration and innovation endeavours.

On the contrary, firms that have limited digital capabilities may struggle to translate strategic agility into meaningful non-financial outcomes, hampering the overall organisational performance. Henceforth, while strategic agility is an indispensable driver of non-financial performance, digital capabilities dictate the consistency and effectiveness with which these benefits are achieved.

### **2.5.3: Strategic Performance**

Empirical evidence on strategic performance emphasises outcomes as being tied to value creation, competitive advantage, market share, innovation capacity and alignment of organisational vision. Miruna (2020), argued that strategic agility is an antecedent, meaning that strategic agility is a factor that comes before and contributes significantly towards organisational performance. Agile organisations sense market shifts and quickly reconfigure strategy, which improves their strategic performance. However, some studies indicate the existence of some boundary conditions articulating that strategic agility without coherent strategy provides fragmented initiatives and diluted strategic focus. Hence, when digital investments improve sensing and enable swift strategic pivots, they strengthen strategic agility. Hence, reinforcing the strategic performance by increasing precision and speeding up the response time.

On the contrary, poorly integrated digital programmes may yield unnecessary information overload and silos that degrade strategic coherence. Thus, research needs to measure strategic performance holistically, considering both financial and non-financial indicators. Additionally, empirical work needs to test interaction effects, demonstrating not only whether agility matters, but also indicating the digital conditions under which it translates into sustainable strategic advantage.

### **2.5.4: Operational Performance**

Operational performance is described by Battesini et al. (2021), as comprising the daily efficiency, process quality, capacity utilisation and the error rates. This is, according to Arokodare and Asikhia (2020), the engine that transforms the strategy into the required results. As such, strategic agility improves operations by creating a conducive environment for quicker reallocation of resources, flexible workflows and swift problem resolutions, which in turn increases productivity and cost efficiency.

However, studies have cautioned that strategic agility initiatives may, in the short run, disrupt operations during technology rollout, creating a short-term reduction in operational outcomes.

These disruptions cannot be viewed as an impediment, as they are necessary for the organisation to achieve its operational performance. Thus, digital transformation is key to these dynamics. When technology is aligned with the process needs like automation, integrated IT systems, and real-time dashboards, it enhances the positive effects of strategic agility on throughput, quality, and organisational responsiveness.

On the other hand, if the digital transformation adoption is done on a piecemeal basis, it can create complexity and new failure modes, which eventually hamper operational performance. Therefore, research must incorporate operational key performance indicators with strategic outcomes and examine timing, implementation, and employee capabilities as critical variables that help understand how strategic agility and digital transformation shape operational performance.

However, this study did not incorporate all four components of organisational performance as deliberated in the preceding sections. The focus was on the first two components, which are financial and non-financial outcomes. This was critical to make the study feasible and to avoid ambiguity. Moreso, the financial and non-financial outcomes were relevant in the sense that they are relatable to the customers, who are central to the success of any business, especially those operating in the turbulent business environment of Johannesburg. The other two components relate to the internal environment of the firms, the effect of which may not be easily felt by the customers outside. Hence, minimizing the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance with digital transformation as a moderator, it then became critical that components that affect the clientele base are prioritised. This concurs with the argument by Arokodare and Asikhia (2020), that businesses need to quickly sense and seize opportunities as they avail themselves in the ever-changing market environment. In this context, the market environment encompasses the customers.

## **2.6: Digital Transformation**

Digital transformation is defined as the use of digital technology to improve customer experience, decision-making, and company processes (Schilirò, 2024). Digital transformation is not only about technological adoption, but also cultural and structural change (Iganga, 2025). It involves the use of digital tools like data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation to enhance strategic sensitivity by enabling real-time insights and quicker decision-making (Cavusgil & Deligonul, 2024). As such, digital transformation can reasonably be said to moderate how effectively agility can drive organisational performance.

In the context of the City of Johannesburg, which is characterised by rapid urbanisation, infrastructural constraints, and digital competition, understanding the moderating role of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance

becomes an urgent issue. As Adil (2023) alludes, firms operating under such environments need to genuinely balance agility with technological preparedness for them to remain relevant and competitive. The following subsections deliberate on components of digital transformation that anchor this study.

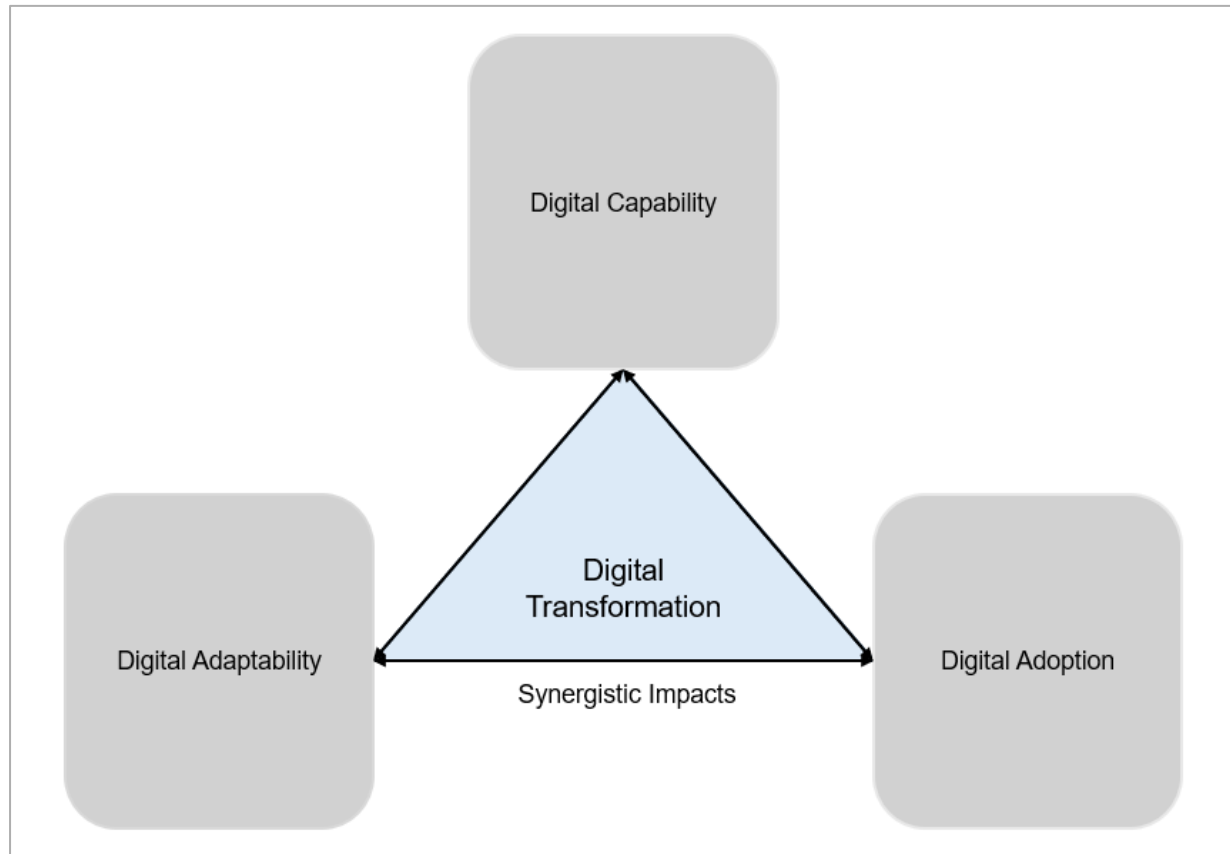


**Figure 2.4: Components of Digital Transformation**

Author's Illustration

The figure above shows digital transformation and its components and its relationship with the components. The arrows illustrate the synergistical relationship that exist among digital adaptability, digital capability and digital adoption and how together they reinforce digital transformation. The following subsections discuss the different components of digital transformation.

### **2.6.1: Digital adaptability**

Digital adaptability can be defined as the firm's capacity to continuously reconfigure its strategies, structures, and processes in response to changes in technology (Yap et al., 2023). In the context of this study, digital adaptability is critical for enhancing an organisation's ability to sense and quickly respond to the turbulent market environment by facilitating a quicker alignment between the changes in the market and the organisational actions to neutralise

them. Several researchers argue that firms with weak digital adaptability find it difficult to convert strategic agility into superior organisational performance as their decision-making processes tend to be fragmented and sluggish.

On the other hand, when a firm has strong digital adaptability, real-time information flows, flexible work systems, and responsive digital infrastructure, it enables it to quickly respond to changes in the markets. As such, in the context of the City of Johannesburg's complex business environment, digital adaptability becomes imperative as businesses in this space need to keep abreast with technology to be able to meet customer expectations. Thus, Miruna (2020) argues that there is some synergistic relationship between digital adaptability and strategic agility, making both very vital in enhancing organisational performance in the ever-evolving market like the City of Johannesburg.

### **2.6.2: Digital capability**

This concept is vital in the overall process of digital transformation. Hence, it is an integral part of digital transformation. Li et al. (2022), describe digital capability, in the context of digital transformation, as the collective technological skills, systems, and organisational resources that enable it to leverage digital tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), analytics, and automation.

While strategic agility offers the conditions for quick strategic changes, digital capabilities act as a yardstick to determine whether the changes occurring in the markets can be responded to using the available technology. Without these digital capabilities, all agile strategies may remain conceptual and have nothing to contribute towards organisational performance. Scholars such as Li et al. (2022), and Dimoso and Utonga (2024), argue that firms that lack digital expertise encounter challenges in process automation, digital usage, and innovation. This weakens the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance.

In the context of the City of Johannesburg, where infrastructure constraints and service delivery pressures demand accuracy and speed, digital capabilities become indispensable in enhancing operational precision, customer experiences, and resource allocation. Hence, as Li et al. (2022) argued, digital capabilities become very key in strengthening the extent to which strategic agility drives organisational performance, through efficient executions and technologically-powered value creation.

### **2.6.3: Digital adoption**

Digital adoption is described by Dimoso and Utonga (2024) as the extent to which digital technologies are meaningfully integrated into a firm's routines, human systems, and service delivery models. In this context, digital adoption focuses on the practical use of the digital tools

that enhance agile decision-making processes and improve organisational performance. This is contrary to digital transformation, which entails a broader structural change with reference to the use of digital tools.

Essentially, Dimoso and Utonga (2024) argued that high levels of digital adoption give employees an opportunity to use digital platforms more frequently, leading to a seamless flow of data across systems and more investment in technology. In the same vein, when the digital adoption is minimal, even firms with strong strategic agility may find it difficult to achieve superior performance gains as their technology is not fully utilised.

In the case of the City of Johannesburg, promoting digital adoption is vital to curb the prevailing service inefficiencies and meet the aspirations of the urban population. In this respect, digital adoption can be viewed to have a significant impact on both strategic agility and organisational performance. Hence, determining whether agile strategies can be operationalised using digital technology is vital to organisations, as they need to invest in technology, and once they have the digital capabilities, they need to adopt them so that they can obtain meaningful performance outcomes.

## **2.7: The impact of Strategic Agility on Organisational Performance**

Several studies reviewed seem to consistently point to a positive relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. (Alkandi & Helmi, 2024; Deshati, 2023; Ali et al., 2025). Firms that are agile and are adaptive to the changes in the market environment achieve better resource utilisation, customer satisfaction, and innovation. Conversely, as Al-Ganabi et al. (2024) note, those firms that are reluctant and slow to adapt to market conditions face the risk of being competed out of the market. However, the extent to which digital transformation strengthens or weakens the agility-performance relationship is underexplored, particularly within the dynamic urban markets such as the City of Johannesburg.

## **2.8: Research Gap**

While there is significant empirical evidence recognising that strategic agility enhances organisational performance and that digital transformation reinforces both constructs, few studies explicitly test the moderating effect of digital transformation on the agility-performance relationship. Most of the studies reviewed for this study (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020; Miruna, 2020; Schilirò, 2024) posit digital transformation as an antecedent or mediator, not as a moderator.

Furthermore, most of the studies reviewed have been carried out in developed countries (Christofi et al., 2023; Salem & Atheeb, 2024), thus overlooking emerging markets such as the City of Johannesburg, where the difference is significantly pronounced in terms of

infrastructure, resource availability, and digital maturity levels. This inconsistency limits the generalisability of findings from extant literature.

Given the unique contextual characteristics of the City of Johannesburg, which is punctuated by rapid technological advancements, infrastructure challenges, and evolving market demands, understanding how digital transformation moderates the agility-performance relationship becomes both theoretically significant and managerially imperative and urgent. This research, henceforth, addresses the following gaps:

### **2.8.1: The Empirical Gap**

Empirical evidence affirms that there are limited studies that test digital transformation as a moderator between strategic agility and organisational performance. Hence, it is critical that this study bridges this gap by investigating the moderating role of digital transformation on the agility-performance relationship.

While previous research has indeed deliberated extensively on the direct effects of strategic agility on organisational performance, the rapid evolution of digital technologies experienced by organisations has created new dynamics that may significantly strengthen the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. Existing research tends to focus on the independent impact of digital transformation and strategic agility on organisational performance. This creates a fragmented understanding of how these seemingly related constructs interact in the business environment.

Furthermore, several studies are sector-specific or conceptual in nature, demonstrating a significant absence of a robust empirical model that speaks to the relationship and interaction between digital transformation and strategic agility across different market environments. Essentially, this gap is more pronounced in developing economies, where digital maturity is still not sufficiently evident, which then affects the extent to which strategic agility improves organisational performance. Thus, this study sought to examine the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance and to determine the extent to which this relationship is strengthened by digital transformation. The following subsections deliberate on specific research gaps that this study sought to address.

### **2.8.2: The Contextual Gap**

Most studies were conducted in developed countries. As such, they do not represent and articulate the dynamics of the urbanised African contexts, such as the City of Johannesburg. This study closes this gap by exploring the impact of agility on performance, looking specifically at the African-urban contexts.

### **2.8.3: The Practical Gap**

There is limited guidance for managers, particularly those in developing economies such as South Africa, on how to simultaneously enhance both strategic agility and organisational performance in a digital era. Findings from this study will therefore provide practical insights to assist both managers and organisations broadly.

### **2.9: Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the theoretical and empirical foundations underpinning this study as the study explored the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance with digital transformation as the moderator for firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. The chapter started by deliberating on the growing significance of strategic agility as an enabler for businesses to forge through the current dynamic, volatile business environments. The emphasis was on the need for organisations to continuously adapt their strategies, structures, and capabilities to retain their competitive edge. This is relevant to the City of Johannesburg, as firms in this space are faced with numerous challenges, including, but not limited to, technological advancements, economic volatility, and socio-structural diversity, which require a high level of agility.

The theoretical framework was drawn from the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which states that firms can achieve superior performance through sensing and responding swiftly to the changes in the environment. Similarly, strategic agility was conceptualised as an indispensable dynamic capability that enables flexibility, quick decision-making, and innovation. This theoretical lens offered the basis for understanding how strategic agility influences organisational performance and how digital transformation may either strengthen or weaken this relationship.

Moreover, the empirical literature reviewed confirmed a positive relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. Studies also indicated that digital transformation strengthens strategic agility by fostering decision-making processes, innovation, and data-driven strategic alignment. However, the review did reveal that most existing studies explored digital transformation as an enabler of strategic agility rather than as a moderator of the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. Strategic agility came as a vital organisational capability that determines a firm's survival in a turbulent environment.

Organisational performance was defined from both financial and non-financial perspectives. This included revenue growth, efficiency, innovation, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the review revealed consistent evidence of the existence of a positive relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance but could not explicitly establish the moderating role of digital transformation on the agility-performance relationship. This gap is clearly relevant in the City of Johannesburg, which is characterised by a rapidly changing digital and competitive market. As such, this study, therefore, sought to empirically test how digital transformation either strengthens or weakens the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance in the unique context of the City of Johannesburg.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

### **3.1: Introduction**

This chapter sets out the research questions and hypotheses that underpin the empirical investigation into the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance with digital transformation as a moderator within firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. These questions and hypotheses were formulated based on the theoretical perspectives and empirical insights discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this study.

In the context of a quantitative study, research questions and hypotheses present a structured foundation for statistical analysis, shaping the scope and the direction of the research (Ghanad, 2023). As such, this chapter discusses the main research questions, identifies sub-research questions, and formulates testable research hypotheses that are consistent with the objectives of this study as articulated in Chapter 1.

### **3.2: Research Questions**

This subsection presents the research questions designed to examine the relationship between strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. The study sought to establish if there is a relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance, and if so, how the relationship is moderated by digital transformation in the context of firms operating within the City of Johannesburg.

#### **3.2.1: Main Research Question**

As informed by the reviewed literature and the problem statement, the main research questions for the study are: What is the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance in firms operating within the City of Johannesburg, and to what extent is the relationship moderated by digital transformation?

#### **3.2.2: Sub-research Questions**

To operationalise the main research questions, the study addresses three sub-research questions. The sub-questions, which are outlined below, provide a logical framework necessary to examine the independent and dependent relationships between the underpinning variables for this study.

1. How does strategic agility influence organisational performance among firms in the City of Johannesburg?
2. Does digital transformation affect organisational performance?
3. Does digital transformation strengthen the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance, and if so, to what extent?

### **3.3: Hypotheses**

This subsection presents the study's hypotheses. Hypotheses transform the research questions into empirically verifiable statements. Thus, each of the hypotheses reflects the theoretical expectations drawn from existing literature and is designed to enhance statistical evaluation. These hypotheses are:

**H1:** Strategic agility has a significant impact on organisational performance.

**H2:** Digital transformation has an impact on organisational performance.

**H3:** The relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance is strengthened by digital transformation.

From the above, hypotheses one suggests that firms possessing a high level of agility tend to achieve superior organisational performance, which concurs with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory. Hypothesis two posits that digital transformation has an impact on organisational performance, while hypothesis three characterises digital transformation as a moderating variable, indicating that digital transformation strengthens the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance.

### **3.4: Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented the main research questions that are informed by the aim of the study and the problem statement, formulated the sub-research questions, and developed hypotheses to guide the focus of the study and empirical data collection. The alignment between the research questions and the hypotheses enhanced conceptual and methodological consistency and created a clear foundation for the subsequent chapter. The following chapter outlines the research methodology, including the research paradigm, research design, population and sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and the analytical methods used to test the specified hypotheses.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1: Introduction**

This section discusses the research methodology. Khawar et al. (2022) defined a research methodology as a systematically structured approach used when undertaking research. Similarly, Swarooprani (2022) defined research methodology as the overall strategy and methods that a researcher uses in investigating a designated research problem. These include data collection, data analysis, and drawing of conclusions from research findings.

This study adopted a quantitative research method. While qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies, provide a rich understanding of the research problem, they tend to lack generalisability across a large population. Mixed methods, as a hybrid research methodology, fall outside the purview of this study as it is strictly quantitative. A quantitative approach allows for a specific statistical analysis of numerical data. This approach was deemed appropriate for testing the relationships dictated by the hypotheses about the impact of strategic agility and the moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance.

The following sections elaborate on the research paradigm, research approach, research design, research methods, population and sample, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations that were employed to explore the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance and the extent of the moderating effect of digital transformation on this relationship within the context of businesses operating in Johannesburg.

### **4.2: Research Philosophy/Paradigm**

This study was premised on the positivist research paradigm, which posits that reality is independent of human perceptions and can be objectively quantified and explained through empirical observation. In this sense, a research paradigm is described by Keong et al. (2023) as an underlying belief system that guides how researchers conceptualise and explore phenomena. Positivism regards knowledge as that which can be verified by observation and statistical analysis. This makes the positivist paradigm suitable for quantitative research such as this study.

The positivism paradigm in this study was influenced by the aim of the study, which was to measure the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance and to test the extent to which digital transformation moderated this relationship. Positivism emphasises objectivity, measurement, and hypotheses testing, which was critical for the analysis of numerical data drawn from structured questionnaires. Other paradigms, such as pragmatism and interpretivism, were not chosen because the study aimed to quantitatively measure the

relationship between the variables rather than to explore the lived experiences of the participants.

The positivist stance guided all the subsequent methodological decisions such as the use of a deductive approach, cross-sectional quantitative design, and the use of statistical techniques, correlation, and moderated multiple regression. This consistency brought about coherence between methodological design, research philosophy, and analytical procedures and results presented in Chapter 5.

### **4.3: Research Approach**

A research approach was described by Ghanad (2023) as a logical plan that links philosophical assumptions to specific research methods and procedures. In the same vein, Pandey et al. (2023) referred to a research approach as a systematic strategy that is used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to address a particular research problem. There are two recognised research approaches: the inductive and the deductive approaches. The inductive approach starts from the observations and develops a theory from the presently emerging patterns. On the other hand, the deductive approach begins from the existing theory to formulate hypotheses that are then tested empirically.

This study adopted a deductive research approach. The choice of a deductive approach was informed by its consistency with the objective of the study of testing the pre-formulated hypothesis on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance, and how this relationship is moderated by digital transformation. The deductive approach allowed the researcher to start from the existing theoretical frameworks, in principle, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory by Teece (2018), and the application of these to the context of firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. Based on this logic, the study transitioned from theory to data, using statistical analysis either to confirm or to refute the hypothesised relationships.

The deductive approach was justified because it supports objectivity, replicability, and concurs with the positivist paradigm, which underpins this study. The approach allowed the use of quantifiable tools such as correlation and the moderated multiple regression analysis to assess the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 3. This logical rationale provided a well-structured and rigorous pathway from the theoretical assumptions to empirical findings, which reinforces the internal validity and coherence of the study.

### **4.4: Research Design**

Research design is the blueprint of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). It details how the research is conducted and operationalises the research approach. The design provides specifics about data collection procedures, data analysis, and the sampling strategy (Ngulube,

2022). This study employed a cross-sectional research design. A cross-sectional design entails the collection of data at a single point in time. A longitudinal design involves the tracking of changes over time. This makes it more resource-intensive, hence not suitable for the limited period allowed to complete this study. Moreover, a cross-sectional design allows for an assessment of the relationships. The design made it feasible to examine the relationship between strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation at a specific point in time, while at the same time, saving time and resources.

#### **4.5: Research Methods**

Research method refers to the specific tools, techniques, and procedures used to collect and analyse data (Ghanad, An Overview of Quantitative Research Methods, 2023). This study followed a quantitative research approach. Data was collected using structured questionnaires which were given to relevant full-time employees from both private and public businesses operating in the City of Johannesburg. The industry was not a factor in this regard. The participants were strictly full-time employees from all operational levels of companies that operate within the City of Johannesburg. Choosing full-time employees as participants in this research allowed the researcher to obtain comprehensive information from the people who have been in the companies for a prolonged period. The study argues that the amount of time that the person has been with the organisation enables them to understand, from experience, how the use of digital tools has evolved and how the degree of strategic agility in their respective organisation has impacted organisational performance. The researcher ensured that all participants received a standardised structured questionnaire. This guaranteed consistency in the data collection process. It also fostered the reliability of comparisons made across respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

#### **4.6: Population and Sample**

Hossan et al. (2023) defined a population as a complete set of elements of individuals that have similar characteristics relevant to the study in question. As Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2024) expound, a research population encompasses the entire group from which data is expected to be drawn to make generalisable conclusions. Conversely, sampling is described by Khawar et al. (2022) as the process of selecting a subset of the population to represent the group, allowing the researcher to make statistically valid inferences without interviewing every member of the target population.

As alluded to under the research methods section, the target population for this study constituted full-time employees working in both private and public sectors within the City of Johannesburg. The rationale for the choice of the population lay in the need to investigate the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance and the moderating influence of the

digital transformation practices within an urban, competitive, and digitally evolving environment. The full-time employees were chosen as they are likely to have adequate knowledge about the organisations they work for regarding strategic, operational, and technological processes that make their respective organisations stay competitive.

Being cognisant of the difficulty of accessing organisational databases and constraints imposed by the South African Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), a non-probability sampling strategy was used. As such, the purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed. First, the purposive sampling allowed the researcher to target employees in positions related to strategy, operations, and digital transformation. Second, snowball sampling enabled a wide access to data through professional networks and referrals by other participants.

An aggregate of 222 questionnaires was distributed via email, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. Of these, 211 valid responses were kept for data analysis after data screening. Eleven questionnaires were excluded because the respondents were not employed by firms within the City of Johannesburg. The study received a 95% usage rate. This exceeded the minimum thresholds considered acceptable for social science research (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The sample size was also in line with prior studies on strategic agility and organisational performance (Ali et al., 2025; Alkandi & Helmi, 2024), giving statistical power to the regression and moderation analyses carried out.

The chosen sampling design was suitable because of its ability to balance methodological rigour with practical feasibility in organisational environments where data is often inaccessible. Through targeting employees with adequate experience and using professional networks to boost participation, the approach brought about contextually focused data that is consistent with the objectives of this research.

#### **4.7: Data Collection**

Taherdoost (2021) defined data collection as a systematic process followed by researchers to gather information from selected participants to address the research objectives. As Ghanad (2023) propounds, the effectiveness of research outcomes is a function of how well the data collection strategy is consistent with the research design and the instruments deployed. In that case, in quantitative research, this process entails the use of structured tools that support and enhance the measurement and statistical analysis of the relationships between the variable under investigation.

In the present research, data was collected using a structured questionnaire, distributed to full-time employees working in organisations across the City of Johannesburg. Data collection,

in this case sought to capture employees' perceptions of strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. The data formed a foundational empirical basis for the statistical analyses and hypotheses testing outlined in Chapter 5. The justification of this approach was premised on the notion that structured questionnaires provide standardisation, objectivity, and efficiency, hence fostering reliability and comparability of the responses. The approach also supports positivism and the deductive stance of the study by producing quantifiable data that is necessary for statistical analyses and testing.

#### **4.7.1: Data Collection Instrument**

As mentioned in the previous section, the study used a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), questionnaires are widely used in quantitative research to collect standardised data from large samples within limited time frames. The instrument was specifically designed to measure strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation by utilising relevant validated scales drawn from prior research and adapted to the context of the current study.

The questionnaire was made up of four sections as outlined below:

- **Section A:** Demographic information, which included position, tenure, sector, and organisation size.
- **Section B:** Items measuring strategic agility, focusing on strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity.
- **Section C:** This section included financial and non-financial dimensions that measure organisational performance.
- **Section D:** This section entailed items that assess digital transformation, with emphasis on adaptability, technology integration and overall employee perception.

All measured variables were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. Using an established scale, in this case, the Likert scale, enhanced internal consistency and comparability with existing research (Tanujaya et al., 2023). The instrument used was first tested for conformity of clarity, logical flow, and reliability before it was fully deployed. The use of the instrument was justified by the ability of structured questionnaires to enhance reliability and minimise the researcher's bias. Similarly, the Likert scale format offered adequate sensitivity to articulate differences in perceptions from different participants, while at the same time maintaining logical interpretation of the data for statistical modelling.

#### **4.7.2: Data Collection Procedures**

All data collection was conducted online to ensure efficiency, accessibility, and compliance with data protection regulations. The questionnaire was developed and hosted on Google Forms. This enhanced respondents' convenience as it allowed respondents to complete using their mobile devices or computers at any time compatible with their schedules. Moreover, the online format promoted rapid distribution, real-time monitoring of responses, and automatic data capturing, thereby reducing possible error entries.

The distribution of the link through the Google Form was conducted through professional and digital communication platforms such as LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and email. This enabled the questionnaire to reach a broader audience of employees working in both private and public organisations in the City of Johannesburg. Likewise, the choice of these channels was informed by their professional relevance and high engagement rates among working professionals. All invitation messages included an information section where the purpose of the study, the voluntariness of participation, and the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality were explicitly explained.

Furthermore, the form stated that "by completing the form, the participants confirm that their participation was voluntary". The online platform was systematically configured to reject multiple submissions from the same respondent, email account, or device. This enhanced data reliability. When the submission period ended, all responses were exported into Microsoft Excel for data cleaning and preparation for data analysis.

At the time of the data-cleaning process, eleven responses were excluded due to the respondents not being employed in institutions that are based in the City of Johannesburg, which brought the valid responses down to 211 cases. This process enhanced the quality of data and representativeness of the data set, while at the same time maintaining total adherence to ethical and data management standards.

The online data collection method was justifiable because it reduced logistical costs and enhanced convenience for geographically distant participants and bolstered efficiency while simultaneously keeping the quantitative rigour and ethical integrity of the study.

#### **4.8: Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of examining, transforming, and modelling data to ascertain patterns and relationships that address the study objectives. According to Mitra (2019), the primary purpose of quantitative data analysis entails converting raw numerical data into interpretable information that either confirms or refutes the given hypotheses. Consistent with positivism and the deductive orientation of this research, statistical analysis was employed to

test the hypothesised relationship between strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation.

In addition to the above, in the current study, data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Data analysis thus entailed numerous stages. At first, the data was cleaned and coded for consistency and accuracy. This was followed by the generation of descriptive statistics to summarise the demographic profiles of the participants. This was necessary to provide an overview of the central tendencies and the variability of the key constructs. The validity and reliability of the measurement scale used were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis. This was critical to confirm the internal consistency and construct rigour.

Subsequently, inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses. Similarly, correlation analysis was carried out to ascertain the strength and direction of the relationship between strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. Afterwards, the moderated multiple linear regression model was employed to examine both the direct and indirect moderating influence of digital transformation on the agility-performance relationship. Subsequently, the statistical significance of the regression coefficients was assessed at a 95% confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

This analytical procedure offered an objective and methodical way of testing hypotheses drawn from the theoretical framework. It supported the quantifiable assessment of the relationship presented in Chapter 3 and, ensured that the empirical findings displayed in Chapter 5 were derived from valid and reliable statistical evidence.

#### **4.9: Research Quality, Reliability and Validity**

Research quality is defined as the degree to which the research methods and findings are trustworthy, consistent, and applicable to other contexts. According to Mellinger and Hanson (2020), in the context of quantitative research, research quality is achieved when the study demonstrates reliability, generalisability, and validity. In this case, reliability fosters consistency of measurement, validity assesses the extent to which the instrument measures the intended constructs, and generalisability speaks to the extent to which the findings may be applied to other populations or contexts.

Reliability in the current study was assessed through internal consistency testing employing the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The values that lay outside the defined threshold of 0.7 confirmed that the questionnaire items properly and consistently measured their specific constructs, which are strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. Validity was investigated through content and construct evaluation. In the same vein, content

validity was assessed by adapting the measurement items from the existing instruments used in previous studies, whereas construct validity was corroborated using factor analysis, which affirmed the underlying structure of each dimension. As such, the results presented in Chapter 5 indicate that all constructs measured showed strong internal reliability and sound construct validity.

The study also deliberated on generalisability. The comparably large sample size of (n= 211) and the incorporation of participants from both public and private sector organisations ensured the applicability of the findings to a broader organisational context in the City of Johannesburg. Moreover, the use of standardised questionnaires and standardised administration of these questionnaires reduced the researcher's bias and enhanced consistency in the data collection process. Specifically, the procedures followed ensured credibility, transferability, and dependability of the study findings. As a result, it supported the robustness of the conclusions drawn in Chapter 7.

#### **4.10: Unanticipated Emerging Constructs During Factor Analysis**

The factor analysis revealed an additional construct (overall employee perception) that was not part of the study's original conceptual framework. This additional construct emerged from the way the survey questionnaire was formulated, producing a coherently relevant construct which was not part of the study's theoretically defined constructs of strategic agility, organisational performance and digital transformation.

Thus, as the construct was not part of the initial theoretical foundation guiding the development of the instrument, it was necessary to discard it from further analysis. Keeping it as part of the main analytical framework would have produced conceptual ambiguity and misled the readers regarding the scope of the investigation. That said, the study aimed to examine the relationship among the predefined constructs; hence, including an incidental factor would compromise methodological alignment and conceptual clarity.

However, the emergence of this construct (employee perception), was reported in the results section (Chapter 5). This inclusion helps in maintaining transparency and strengthening the study's methodological rigour. As such, although the construct did not form part of the initial hypothesis testing, its appearance is critical as it gives meaningful context for understanding the respondent's broader evaluative tendencies. Even so, its exclusion is vital as it ensures that the core findings remain in line with the objectives of the study while at the same time acknowledging the existence of the construct in a way that does not distort the main objective of the study.

#### **4.11: Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are critical in ensuring that the study upholds the principles of respect, integrity, and responsibility towards the participants. Research ethics govern the way data is collected, stored, and reported, making sure that participants are protected throughout the research process and that findings are credible (Mirza et al., 2023). Ethical compliance is not only paramount in ensuring the credibility of findings but also enhances the legitimacy and acceptability of the research with the professional and academic fraternity.

In view of the above, this research adhered to the ethical guidelines as presented in the university's research policy. Thus, ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the institutional review committee before the commencement of the data collection process. The researcher emphasised to the participants that their participation was entirely voluntary. The information sheet attached to the survey clearly detailed the purpose of the study, the procedures, and the rights of the participants. This included the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

The other principles that were strictly adhered to were confidentiality and anonymity. These principles were stringently maintained throughout the research process. Participants were encouraged, always, not to use any identifying information such as names, email addresses, and organisational details. The settings of the Google Form were configured in such a way that no Internet Protocol (IP) addresses could be stored. This ensures that the responses remain anonymous. Data collected was stored in password-protected files, and that was used only for academic purposes. Consistent with the University's Research Data Management Policy, the anonymised dataset will be kept for 10 years in the secure research repository of the university.

Furthermore, the study complied with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), by ensuring that the collection and processing of data was legal, transparent, and legitimate for research purposes. These measures, altogether, affirmed that the research was carried out with professionalism, respect for the rights of participants, and compliance with relevant ethical standards.

#### **4.12: Limitations and Delimitations of the Methodology**

The term limitations in this context refers to the potential constraints in the study that may impact the interpretation or generalisability of the findings, whereas delimitations stipulate the intentional boundaries put in place by the researchers to focus the scope of the research

(Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Being cognisant of these aspects is critical for contextualising the outcomes of the research and ensuring transparency in methodological reporting.

The study was marred by numerous limitations. These were primarily related to the sampling strategy and the data collection process. For example, the use of the non-probability purposive and snowball sampling techniques constrained the generalisability of the findings since participation was dependent on professional networks and voluntary response. While these techniques ensured feasibility, they were subjected to potential self-selection bias; participants who were more interested in digital transformation-related issues were more likely to participate. Additionally, dependence on self-reported data could have led to social desirability bias, as participants could have provided assessments that favour the digital maturity of their respective organisations.

Similarly, the delimitations of the study were intentionally designed to maintain focus and manage the scope. The study was strictly confined to full-time employees working within the public and private sector organisations in the City of Johannesburg. Other employees, such as the part-time staff, consultants, and firms outside the City of Johannesburg were excluded. The sole focus of the study was on three constructs, which are strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. This focus overlooked other moderating variables like organisational culture and leadership style.

Despite these limitations, the methodological choices were justified by the study's objectives and practical considerations. The online survey enhanced efficiency data collection and achieved a high response rate while simultaneously remaining compliant with ethical and data protection standards. These limitations and delimitations were observed in the interpretation of the results, making sure that the conclusions made remain balanced, realistic, and contextually sound.

#### **4.13: Chapter Summary**

In summary, this Chapter set out the research methodology that guided the inquiry into the impact of strategy on organisational performance and the extent to which this relationship is moderated by digital transformation among firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. It deliberated on the philosophical premise, research approach, and design that shaped the study, together with the target population, sampling procedures, and methods used for data collection to obtain empirical evidence. Also, the Chapter presented the statistical techniques employed during data analysis. These included reliability and validity testing, correlation analysis, and the moderated multiple regression modelling. Additionally, ethical considerations, research quality, and methodological limitations were discussed. This ensured transparency and academic rigour. Furthermore, the methodological framework employed in

this research ensured consistency between theory and practice. Thus, the study aligned the positivist philosophy with a deductive, cross-sectional, and quantitative design. This enabled the research to generate credible and generalisable findings.

The next Chapter displays the results of these analyses, demonstrating how strategic agility influenced organisational performance with digital transformation as a moderator in the sampled organisations.

## **CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1: Introduction**

This chapter presents and interprets the empirical findings of the study. The purpose of the analysis is to examine the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among firms operating within the City of Johannesburg, and to determine the extent to which digital transformation moderates this relationship. The findings are organised and presented in alignment with the study's objectives and hypotheses as formulated in Chapter 3.

The chapter begins by outlining the demographic characteristics of respondents, which provide contextual background on the study sample. It then presents the descriptive statistics for the main constructs, strategic agility, digital transformation, and organisational performance, to establish the general patterns and tendencies within the dataset. Thereafter, the chapter reports the outcomes of reliability and validity tests used to confirm the internal consistency and appropriateness of the measurement scales.

Subsequent sections detail the correlation analysis, which examines the linear associations among the study variables, followed by the structural equation modelling (SEM) and moderation analysis, which test the hypothesised relationships and determine whether digital transformation significantly influences the strength or direction of the strategic agility–performance link.

The report concludes with a summary of hypothesis testing results and a brief synthesis of the main findings, setting the stage for Chapter 6, which discusses these results in relation to existing literature and theoretical frameworks.

### **5.2: Response Rate**

A total of 222 responses were received from the distributed questionnaires. However, 11 responses were discarded during the data screening process because the participants were not working within the City of Johannesburg. Consequently, 211 valid responses were retained for analysis, representing a usable response rate of 95.0% (211 out of 222).

This response rate is considered highly satisfactory for quantitative research of this nature. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), a response rate above 70% is acceptable for ensuring representativeness and reliability in social science surveys. The high response rate also reflects the effectiveness of the digital distribution approach (email, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Google Forms) and the professional interest of participants in the subject matter.

### 5.3: Section A: Demographic Information

#### 5.3.1: Place/Area of Employment.

The study sought to ensure that all respondents were employed within the City of Johannesburg, in line with the study's defined population scope. This verification was important to maintain contextual validity and to ensure that the analysis accurately reflects firms operating within the city's economic environment. As shown in Figure 5.1, 95.0% of the respondents met the criterion for inclusion into the study.

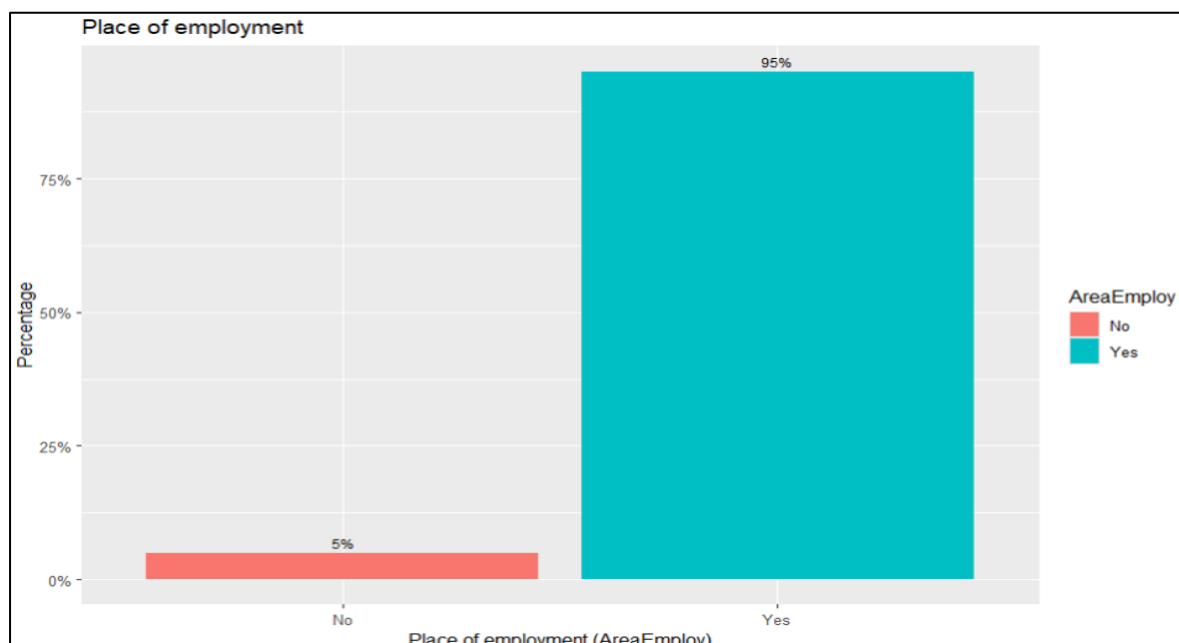


**Figure 5.1:Place/Area of Employment**

As shown in Table 5.1 below, after data cleaning, eleven respondents were removed because they did not work in organisations that are located within the City of Johannesburg, leaving a final valid sample of 211.

**Table 5.1:Place/Area of Employment**

| Area of employment | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Johannesburg – Yes | 211       | 95         |
| Johannesburg – No  | 11        | 5          |

The high percentage of valid responses confirms that the dataset can be relied upon because it represents organisations within the City of Johannesburg and is consistent with the study's geographical focus as defined in Chapters 1 and 4.

### 5.3.2: Type of Employment

Given that the study targeted full-time employees, as they are better positioned to assess organisational agility and performance over time, it was essential to confirm the employment status of participants during data screening. Figure 5.3 below shows that all participants were full-time employees.

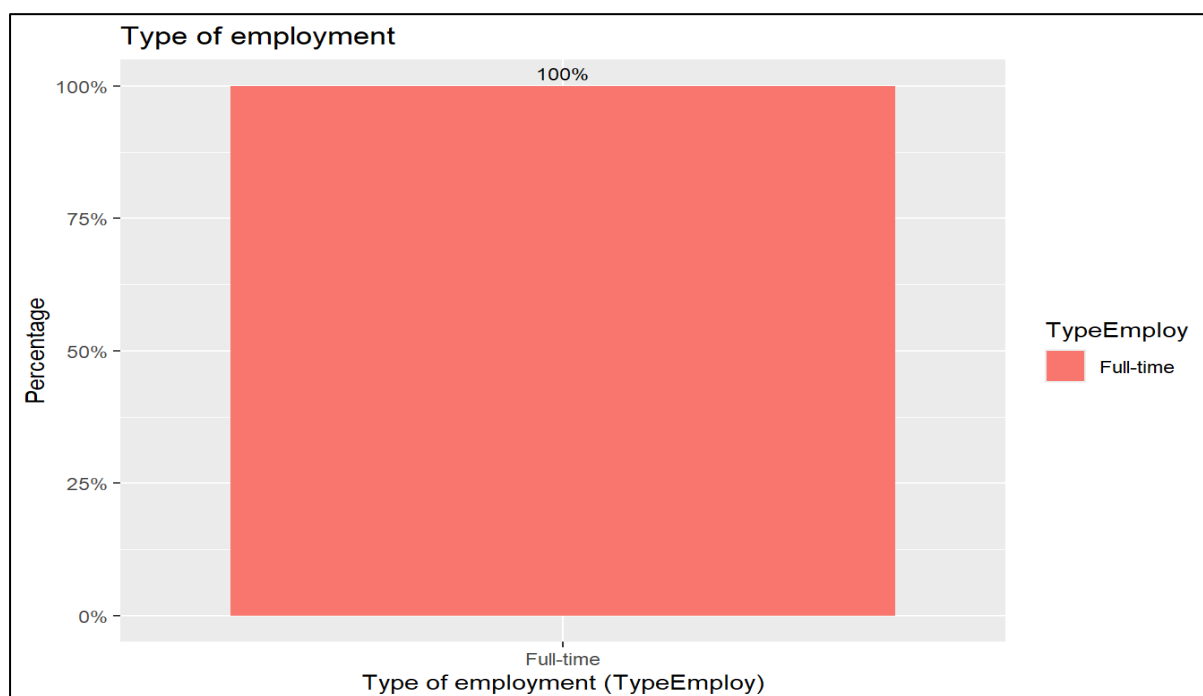


**Figure 5.2: Type of Employment**

The findings presented in Figure 5.2 and Table 5.2 show that 100 percent of participants were full-time employees. This aligns with the sampling criteria outlined in Chapter 4, which specified the inclusion of only full-time employees to enhance the reliability of insights on strategic agility and organisational performance.

**Table 5.2: Type of Employment**

| Type of employment | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Full time          | 211       | 100        |

### 5.3.3: Ownership Structure of a Business

Understanding the ownership structure of respondents' organisations helps contextualise the analysis of agility and digital transformation, as private and public entities often differ in flexibility, decision-making, and technology adoption. The results in Figure 5.3 show that 61% of the participants were employed in private sector organisations and 39% were employed in public sector organisations.

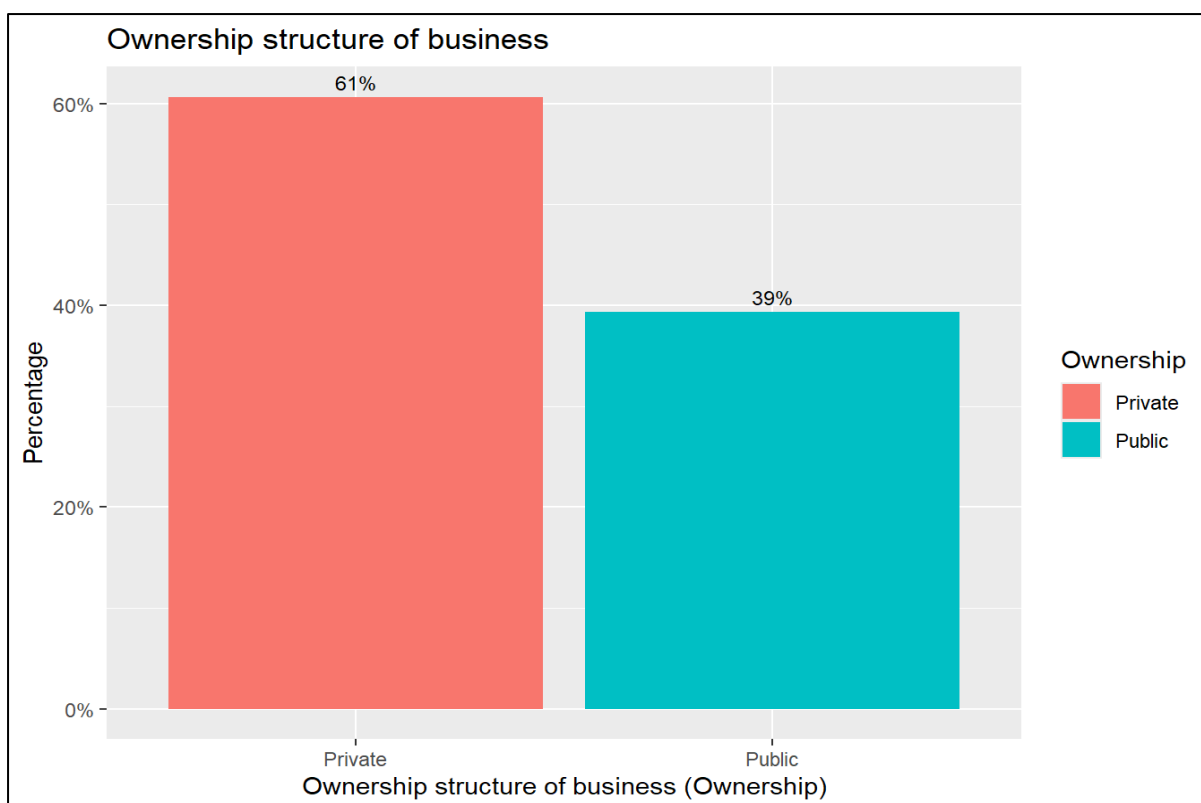


**Figure 5.3:Ownership Structure of Business**

The data, as shown in Table 5.3, confirm that the majority (that is 128 or 61%) of respondents were employed in private sector organisations, while 39% (that is 83) were from public sector institutions. This distribution ensures balanced representation across ownership types, allowing comparative insights between private and public entities in terms of their strategic agility, digital transformation efforts, and resultant performance outcomes.

**Table 5.3:Ownership Structure of Business**

| Ownership of business | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Private               | 128       | 61         |
| Public                | 83        | 39         |

### 5.3.4: Organisational Sector or Industry

This demographic indicator relates to the organisational sectors from which respondents were drawn. Understanding sectoral spread is important because the degree of agility and digital transformation may differ across industries. As shown in Figure 5.4, the participants came from different sectors of the economy.

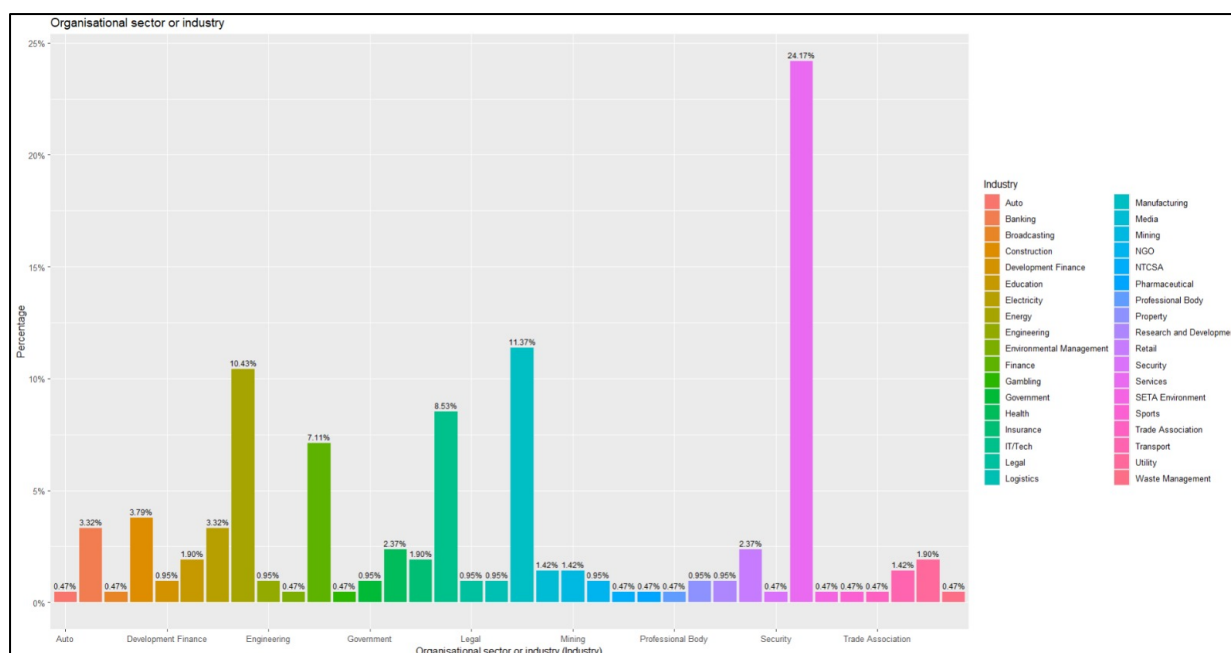


**Figure 5.4:Organisational Sector or Industry**

While the respondents were drawn from organisations across multiple sectors, including manufacturing, financial services, ICT, public administration, and retail, Table 5.4 shows that a significant number of participants were from the services, manufacturing, energy, IT and finance organisational sectors. The results of the distribution are consistent with the study’s purposive and snowball sampling approach as described in Chapter 4. Despite the unevenness in the representation of organisational sectors, the sectors reflected in Table 5.4 are all relevant for the study because they are impacted by digital transformation, The composition ensures that findings reflect perspectives from diverse operational contexts within the City of Johannesburg.

**Table 5.4:Organisational Sector/Industry**

| Organisational sector    | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Auto                     | 1         | 0.5        |
| Banking                  | 7         | 3.3        |
| Broadcasting             | 1         | 0.5        |
| Construction             | 8         | 3.8        |
| Development Finance      | 2         | 0.9        |
| Education                | 4         | 2          |
| Electricity              | 7         | 3.3        |
| Energy                   | 22        | 10         |
| Engineering              | 2         | 0.9        |
| Environmental Management | 1         | 0.5        |

|                          |    |     |
|--------------------------|----|-----|
| Finance                  | 15 | 7   |
| Gambling                 | 1  | 0.5 |
| Government               | 2  | 0.9 |
| Health                   | 5  | 2   |
| Insurance                | 4  | 2   |
| IT/Tech                  | 18 | 9   |
| Legal                    | 2  | 0.9 |
| Logistics                | 2  | 0.9 |
| Manufacturing            | 24 | 11  |
| Media                    | 3  | 1.4 |
| Mining                   | 3  | 1.4 |
| NGO                      | 2  | 0.9 |
| NTCSA                    | 1  | 0.5 |
| Pharmaceutical           | 1  | 0.5 |
| Professional Body        | 1  | 0.5 |
| Property                 | 2  | 0.9 |
| Research and Development | 2  | 0.9 |
| Retail                   | 5  | 2   |
| Security                 | 1  | 0.5 |
| Services                 | 51 | 24  |
| SETA Environment         | 1  | 0.5 |
| Sports                   | 1  | 0.5 |
| Trade Association        | 1  | 0.5 |
| Transport                | 3  | 1.4 |
| Utility                  | 4  | 4   |
| Waste Management         | 1  | 0.5 |

### 5.3.5: Organisational Size

Organizational operations, resource capabilities, and decision-making processes are all significantly impacted by business size. Verifying the size of the company during data screening guarantees that respondents are accurately categorized, allowing for valid cross-organizational comparisons. This verification strengthened the validity of the statistical conclusions shown below by confirming that observed differences represent actual differences in organizational size rather than data errors.

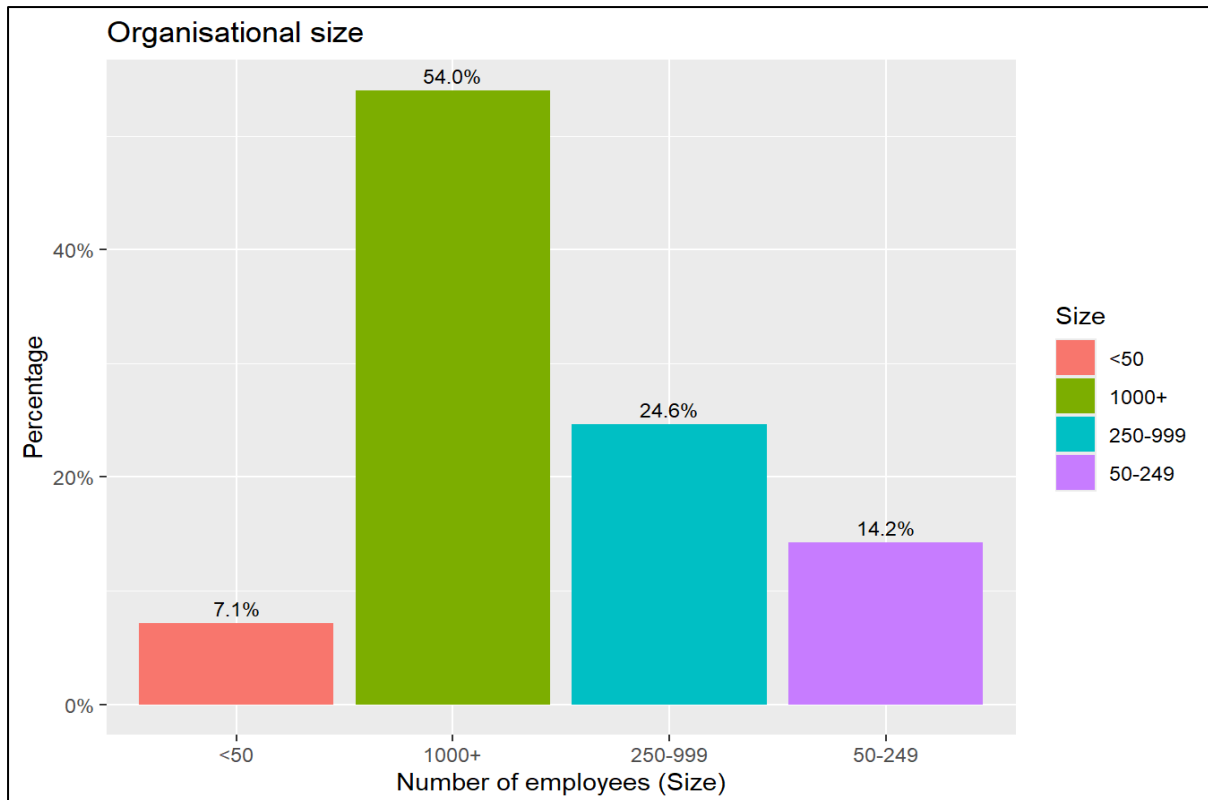


**Figure 5.5:Organisational Size**

Figure 5.5 and Table 5.5 illustrate the distribution of businesses by size according to the number of employees. Large companies dominate in the sample, as seen by most enterprises (54%) having more than 1000 employees. 24.6% of businesses are medium-sized, with 250–999 employees, while 14.2% are between 50 and 249. Small businesses make up the smallest percentage of the sample, with just 7.1% of corporations having fewer than 50 employees.

**Table 5.5:Organisational Size**

| Organisational size | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| <50                 | 15        | 7.1        |
| 50-249              | 30        | 14.2       |
| 250-999             | 52        | 24.6       |
| 1000+               | 114       | 54.0       |

### 5.3.6: Position in the Organisation

This demographic dimension relates to the position held by respondents within their organisations. The inclusion of varied functional levels enhances the validity of perceptions regarding agility and performance.

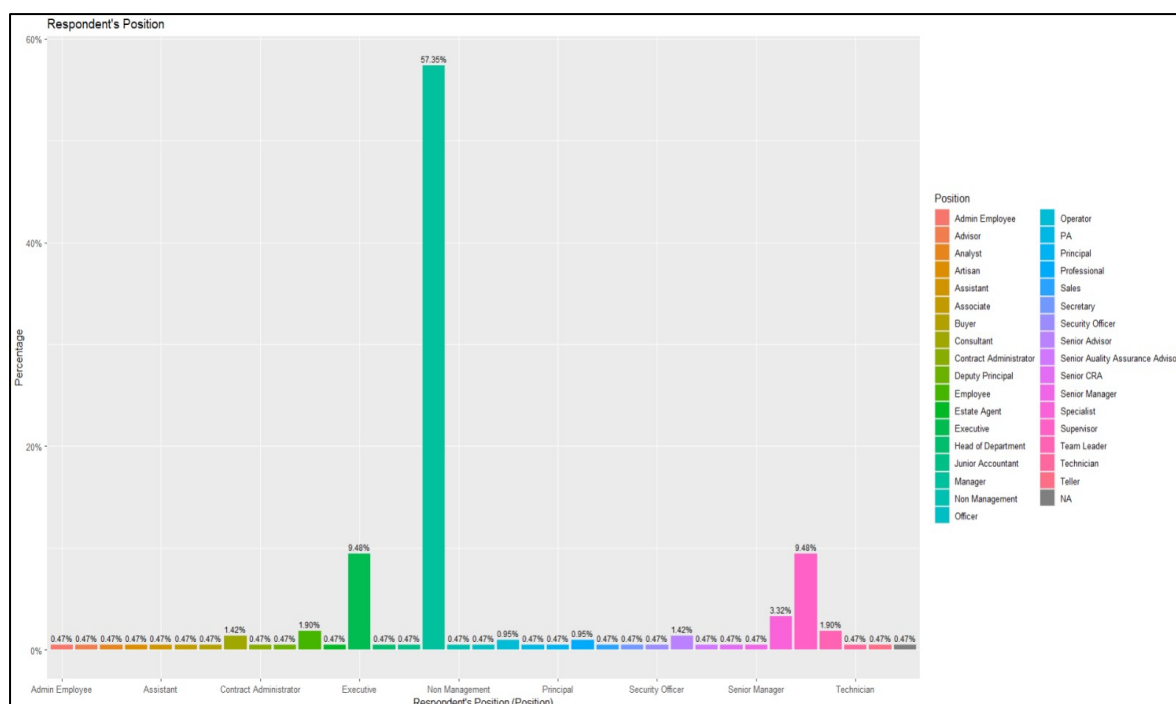


**Figure 5.6:Position in the Organisation**

The results in Figure 5.6 above and Table 5.6 below indicate that approximately 40 percent of respondents occupied strategic or managerial roles, 35 percent were in operational positions, and 25 percent were engaged in digital transformation or technology functions. This mix ensured that the data captured insights from employees directly involved in strategic decision-making, day-to-day operations, and digital implementation. Such diversity strengthens the reliability of conclusions drawn about the interrelationship between strategic agility, digital transformation, and organisational performance.

**Table 5.6:Position in the Organisation**

| Position               | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Admin Employee         | 1         | 0.5        |
| Advisor                | 1         | 0.5        |
| Analyst                | 1         | 0.5        |
| Artisan                | 1         | 0.5        |
| Assistant              | 1         | 0.5        |
| Associate              | 1         | 0.5        |
| Buyer                  | 1         | 0.5        |
| Consultant             | 3         | 1.4        |
| Contract Administrator | 1         | 0.5        |
| Deputy Principal       | 1         | 0.5        |
| Employee               | 4         | 2          |

|                                  |     |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Estate Agent                     | 1   | 0.5 |
| Executive                        | 20  | 10  |
| Head of Department               | 1   | 0.5 |
| Junior Accountant                | 1   | 0.5 |
| Manager                          | 121 | 58  |
| Non-Management                   | 1   | 0.5 |
| Officer                          | 1   | 0.5 |
| Operator                         | 2   | 0.9 |
| PA                               | 1   | 0.5 |
| Principal                        | 1   | 0.5 |
| Professional                     | 2   | 0.9 |
| Sales                            | 1   | 0.5 |
| Secretary                        | 1   | 0.5 |
| Security Officer                 | 1   | 0.5 |
| Senior Advisor                   | 3   | 1.4 |
| Senior Quality Assurance Advisor | 1   | 0.5 |
| Senior CRA                       | 1   | 0.5 |
| Senior Manager                   | 1   | 0.5 |
| Specialist                       | 7   | 3   |
| Supervisor                       | 20  | 10  |
| Team Leader                      | 4   | 2   |
| Technician                       | 1   | 0.5 |
| Teller                           | 1   | 0.5 |

### 5.3.7: Years of Experience

Work experience indicates respondents' familiarity with organisational processes and strategic initiatives. Employees with longer tenure are more likely to have witnessed the evolution of digital tools and agility practices within their organisations. As shown in Figure 5.7, 64.9% of respondents had eight or more work experience in their organisations, while 19.0% had between four and seven years of work experience.

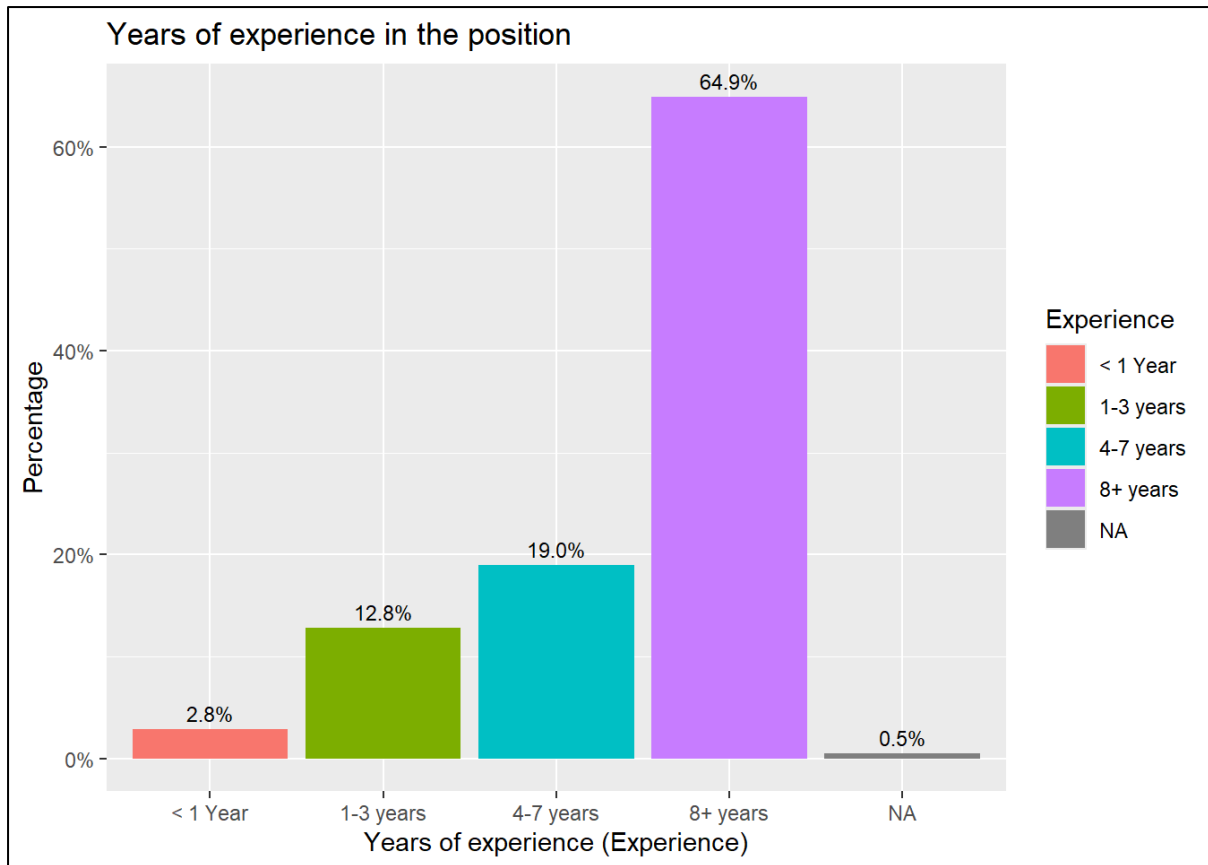


**Figure 5.7: Years of Experience**

Analysis of the data presented in Figure 5.7 and Table 5.8 shows that over 80 percent of respondents had been with their organisations for more than three years, while the remainder had shorter tenures. This profile meets the methodological expectation outlined in Chapter 4 that participants should be full-time employees with sufficient exposure to their organisations' strategic and digital transformation activities. Consequently, the responses can be considered credible reflections of actual organisational realities.

**Table 5.7: Years of Experience**

| Years of experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| < 1 Year            | 6         | 2.8        |
| 1-3 years           | 27        | 12.8       |
| 4-7 years           | 40        | 19.0       |
| 8+ years            | 137       | 64.9       |
| N/A                 | 1         | 0.5        |

#### 5.4: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis results are shown in these sections. The respondents to the study were asked to complete the questionnaire using the Likert-type scale shown below:

1= Strongly Disagree

2= Disagree

3= Neutral

4= Agree

5= Strongly Agree

#### 5.4.1: Section B: Strategic Agility

##### 5.4.1.1: Dimension 1: Strategic sensitivity

This dimension assesses the extent to which organisations demonstrate awareness of changes in their external environment and respond proactively to opportunities and threats. It captures how effectively firms monitor market dynamics, customer feedback, and competitive movements as part of their strategic agility. Table 5.8 below presents the descriptive statistics and reliability results for the items measuring strategic sensitivity, including their mean values, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

**Table 5.8: Strategic Sensitivity**

|             | Variables                                                                              | Cronbach's alpha | Mean       | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Dimension 1 | <b>Strategic sensitivity</b>                                                           | <b>0.80</b>      | <b>3.9</b> | <b>0.77</b>        |
|             | We regularly collect and analyse customer feedback to adapt our strategy.              |                  | 3.93       | 0.86               |
|             | Our leadership team quickly recognises potential threats in the competitive landscape. |                  | 3.71       | 0.98               |
|             | My organisation continuously monitors market trends to identify opportunities.         |                  | 3.93       | 0.89               |

The results show a reasonably high level of strategic sensitivity in most companies with an average mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 0.77. This indicates that respondents' opinions are largely in agreement and that employees believe their companies are proactive and adaptable to changes in the business environment. The high degree of internal reliability indicated by the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.80 indicates that the questions accurately assessed the concept of strategic sensitivity. The two statements with the highest ratings at the item level were "my organization continuously monitors market trends to identify opportunities" (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.89) and "we regularly collect and analyse customer

feedback to adapt our strategy" (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.86), both of which demonstrated excellent processes for obtaining and acting upon market information. The rating for the statement "Our leadership team quickly recognises potential threats in the competitive landscape" was slightly lower (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.98), indicating that although leaders are responsive, threat recognition might be improved to be quicker and frequent. The overall results show that the companies are highly responsive and strategically aware, although the strategic agility might be improved by further strengthening the company's ability to recognize competitive threats.

#### 5.4.1.2: Dimension 2: Resource Fluidity

This dimension evaluates the organisation's ability to reconfigure and redeploy resources swiftly in response to shifting priorities or emerging opportunities. It reflects how effectively departments collaborate to move financial, technological, and human resources where they are most needed, ensuring operational flexibility. Table 5.9 presents the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficient for the items measuring resource fluidity, including mean scores, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha values for the construct.

**Table 5.9: Resource Fluidity**

|             | <b>Variables</b>                                                                                         | <b>Cronbach's alpha</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard Deviation</b> |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Dimension 2 | <b>Resource fluidity</b>                                                                                 | <b>0.83</b>             | <b>3.6</b>  | <b>0.86</b>               |
|             | Departments collaborate effectively to share resources when priorities change.                           |                         | 3.93        | 0.86                      |
|             | My organisation can rapidly shift resources such as budget, people, and technology to priority projects. |                         | 3.61        | 1.04                      |
|             | We are able to quickly scale up or scale down initiatives as needed.                                     |                         | 3.60        | 0.97                      |

The overall results show a moderate degree of resource mobility within companies, with a mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.86. Despite minor variations in perception, this shows that most employees believe their companies can adjust and reallocate resources as a priority change. The items used to assess this dimension have a high degree of internal consistency and reliability, as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha rating of 0.83.

The statement "departments work well together to share resources when priorities shift" received the highest rating at the item level (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.86), indicating good

interdepartmental collaboration. The statements "we are able to quickly scale up or scale down initiatives as needed" (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.97) and "my organization can rapidly shift resources such as budget, people, and technology to priority projects" (Mean = 3.61, SD = 1.04) both received moderately positive ratings, but they also displayed slightly higher standard deviations, indicating greater variability in responses. Overall, the findings indicate that although there is a high level of collaboration, organisations can improve their flexibility in allocating and increasing resources around teams more equally.

#### 5.4.1.3: Dimension 3: Leadership Unity

This dimension captures the degree of alignment, cohesion, and shared strategic intent among management within an organisation. Leadership unity reflects how effectively management teams collaborate, make timely strategic decisions, and collectively drive organisational change. It is a critical element of strategic agility, as strong leadership cohesion fosters swift and coordinated responses to environmental changes. Table 5.10 summarises the descriptive statistics and reliability outcomes for the leadership unity construct, including the mean values, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

**Table 5.10: Leadership Unity**

| Dimension 3 | Variables                                                                               | Cronbach's alpha | Mean       | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|
|             | <b>Leadership unity</b>                                                                 | <b>0.84</b>      | <b>3.5</b> | <b>0.85</b>        |
|             | Strategic decisions are made promptly without unnecessary delays.                       |                  | 3.27       | 1.08               |
|             | Senior leaders share a common understanding of the organisation's strategic priorities. |                  | 3.84       | 0.93               |
|             | Leaders' support and drive change initiatives consistently across the organisation.     |                  | 3.54       | 0.92               |

An average mean score of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.85 suggest that there is a moderate degree of leadership unity within organizations. This implies that although workers generally concur that leaders share a common set of priorities and actions, participants' perspectives vary slightly. A high degree of internal reliability and consistency among the items assessing leadership unity is demonstrated by the Cronbach's alpha rating of 0.84.

The statement “senior leaders have a common grasp of the organization's strategic priorities” received the highest rating among the individual items (Mean = 3.84, SD = 0.93), indicating good leadership alignment. Relatively good feedback was also given to leaders' assistance and consistency in spearheading transformation projects (Mean = 3.54, SD = 0.92). The promptness of strategic decision-making, on the other hand, received the lowest rating (Mean = 3.27, SD = 1.08), suggesting that the delays in decision-making might be a concern for some employees. Given the apparent alignment of leadership, outcomes reveal that strengthening effectiveness and speed of strategic decision-making could potentially enhance leadership unity.

#### **5.4.1.4: Summary of Section B: Strategic Agility**

Overall, the analysis of strategic agility across three dimensions: Strategic Sensitivity, Resource Fluidity, and Leadership Unity, show good reliability. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.80 to 0.84, demonstrating internal consistency of the measures. Strategic sensitivity had the greatest mean (3.9) and the least variability (SD = 0.77), indicating that businesses closely monitor consumer trends, solicit input from clients, and identify potential threats from competitors. Resource Fluidity with a mean score of 3.6 (SD = 0.86), indicating a moderate capacity to scale projects and reallocate resources in response to changing priorities. There is an opportunity for improvement in timely decision-making and steady leadership support for strategic initiatives, as demonstrated by Leadership Unity's lowest mean (3.5) and marginally larger variability (SD = 0.85). Overall, the results indicate that although businesses exhibit high levels of resource flexibility and strategy awareness, leadership alignment is still a crucial component for improving organizational performance and agility.

#### **5.4.2: Section C: Organisational Performance**

##### **5.4.2.1: Dimension 1: Financial Performance**

This dimension assesses the financial outcomes that reflect overall organisational performance, focusing on efficiency, revenue growth, and profitability. It examines how digital initiatives and strategic agility translate into measurable financial gains, such as cost efficiency and sustained revenue improvement. Table 5.11 presents the descriptive statistics and reliability results for the items that measure financial performance, including the mean values, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this construct.

**Table 5.11: Financial Performance**

|             | <b>Variables</b>                                                   | <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard Deviation</b> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Dimension 1 | <b>Financial performance</b>                                       | <b>0.8</b>              | <b>3.6</b>  | <b>0.87</b>               |
|             | Cost efficiency has increased through digital initiatives.         |                         | 3.47        | 0.98                      |
|             | Our organisation has achieved revenue growth over the past 3 years |                         | 3.68        | 1.04                      |
|             | Profitability has improved compared to previous years.             |                         | 3.60        | 1.06                      |

Dimension C1: Financial Performance, the respondent's perceptions are generally positive. The three items have exceptional internal consistency, as demonstrated by the aggregate mean score of 3.6 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.8. Although the respondent's answers indicate varying experiences within organisations, they all concur that financial performance has improved. Even though there was a slight variation (SD = 1.04), the increase in income over the past three years obtained the most agreement (Mean = 3.68), making it the most noteworthy accomplishment. Profitability improvement had the most variability (SD = 1.06), it but received a positive score (Mean = 3.60), suggesting conflicting opinions. The lowest mean (3.47) for cost efficiency through digital initiatives indicates that this area is believed to have less of an influence than profitability and revenue growth. Overall, the figures indicate a positive financial increase, with revenue growth standing out as the most significant achievement. However, more work may be required to increase profitability and cost effectiveness.

#### **5.4.2.2: Dimension 2: Non-financial Performance**

This dimension focuses on the qualitative and operational aspects of organisational performance that extend beyond financial outcomes. It captures how strategic agility and digital transformation enhance areas such as customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and brand reputation, key indicators of long-term sustainability and competitiveness. Table 5.12 presents the descriptive statistics and reliability results for the non-financial performance construct, showing the mean values, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the associated measurement items.

**Table 5.12: Non-financial Performance**

|             | Variables                                                           | Cronbach's alpha | Mean       | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Dimension 2 | <b>Non-financial performance</b>                                    | <b>0.68</b>      | <b>3.5</b> | <b>0.77</b>        |
|             | Our organisation's brand reputation has strengthened in the market. |                  | 3.65       | 1.00               |
|             | Employee engagement and retention have increased.                   |                  | 3.30       | 1.09               |
|             | Customer satisfaction levels have improved.                         |                  | 3.65       | 0.83               |

With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.68 and an overall mean score of 3.5, the test of Dimension C2: Non-financial success reflects a generally positive perception, indicating acceptable but lower internal consistency when compared to financial performance. Although respondents' opinions vary, they all concur that non-financial factors have improved. The greatest scores were for customer happiness and brand reputation (Mean = 3.65), indicating strong agreement that these areas had improved. Customer satisfaction also showed relatively little variability (SD = 0.83), indicating consistent opinions. Overall, customer happiness and brand reputation are regarded as important strengths, but to attain alignment throughout the company, employee involvement will require more attention.

#### **5.4.2.3: Dimension 3: Digital Adaptability**

This dimension measures an organisation's capacity to adopt, integrate, and utilise digital technologies effectively in response to evolving market conditions. It reflects how well firms leverage digital transformation initiatives to enhance competitiveness, operational efficiency, and responsiveness. Table 5.13 presents the descriptive statistics and reliability analysis for the digital adaptability construct, including Cronbach's alpha, mean scores, and standard deviations for each item assessing technology integration, responsiveness to market changes, and digital project implementation.

**Table 5.13: Digital Adaptability**

|             | Variables                                                                          | Cronbach's alpha | Mean       | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Dimension 3 | <b>Digital adaptability</b>                                                        | <b>0.88</b>      | <b>3.3</b> | <b>0.94</b>        |
|             | Our organisation successfully integrates new digital technologies into operations. |                  | 3.56       | 1.04               |
|             | We respond faster to market changes compared to our competitors.                   |                  | 3.17       | 1.09               |
|             | Digital transformation projects are implemented effectively and on schedule.       |                  | 3.28       | 1.03               |

With Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 and an overall mean score of 3.3, the analysis of Dimension C3: Digital Adaptability, reveals an average perception of digital adaptability and strong internal consistency among the questions. Although respondents largely concur that businesses are successfully incorporating digital technologies, there appears to be a variation in their experiences across different functional areas. The successful integration of new digital technologies received the highest rating (Mean = 3.56), indicating confidence in the adoption of new technologies. Responding to market changes, on the other hand, had the highest degree of variability (SD = 1.09) and scored the lowest (Mean = 3.17), indicating that this is a critical area for improvement. The implementation of the digital transformation project obtained a relatively low score (Mean = 3.28), suggesting that it could be executed efficiently and quickly. Although digital integration is generally viewed positively, project execution and agility in reacting to market shifts remain key focus areas for improving digital adaptability.

#### **5.4.2.4: Summary of Section C: Organisational Performance**

The overall analysis of the three dimensions, financial performance, non-financial performance, and digital adaptability, indicates a generally positive outcome with room for improvement. Although cost efficiency obtained a slightly lower rating, Financial Performance (C1) had the highest overall mean of 3.6 and a strong Cronbach's alpha of 0.8, reflecting reliable measurement and positive perceptions regarding revenue growth and profitability. Cronbach's alpha for non-financial performance (C2) was 0.68, indicating reasonable consistency with an overall mean of 3.5. While staff engagement and retention received the lowest score (Mean = 3.30), brand reputation and customer satisfaction were viewed positively, highlighting a critical area for attention. Digital Adaptability (C3) had the lowest overall mean (3.3), even though its Cronbach's alpha was high (0.88), suggesting reasonable

agreement but strong reliability. Although respondents recognized the successful integration of digital technology (Mean = 3.56), they identified timely execution of digital transformation projects (Mean = 3.28) and responsiveness to market changes (Mean = 3.17) as critical areas for improvement.

## **5.5: Inferential Statistics**

This section describes the inferential statistical analysis used to test the hypotheses. While descriptive statistics give a summary of the general trends in the perceptions of respondents, inferential statistics validate evidence of the relationships and the predictive power among the variables being investigated, that is, strategic agility, digital transformation, and organisational performance. The analyses entail correlation and multiple regression modelling, which determine the strength, direction, and significance of relational patterns and associations within the dataset.

### **5.5.1: Multiple Linear Regression Model**

The multiple linear regression model was used to evaluate the combined and independent effects of strategic agility dimensions on organisational performance. This model measures how well strategy sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity predict performance outcomes. It also functions as a framework for incorporating digital transformation as a moderating variable in subsequent tests, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the connection between agility and performance.

#### **5.5.1.1: Conceptual Framework**

Figure 5.8 below depicts the conceptual framework that guides the regression and moderation analyses. The framework shows the hypothesised relationships between strategic agility as the independent variable, organisational performance as the dependent variable, and digital transformation as the moderator. This framework is entrenched by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which supports the idea that organisations achieve superior performance through effective alignment of sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities that are driven by digital integration.

**Research Question:**

What is the impact of Strategic Agility on Organisational Performance and to what extent is this relationship moderated by Digital Transformation ?

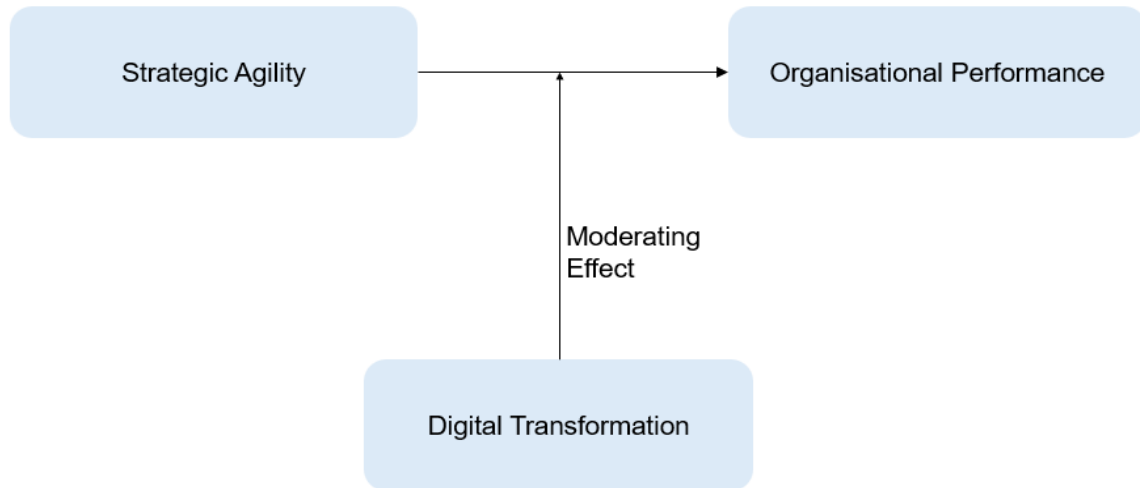


**Figure 5.8: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Author illustration

The diagram in Figure 5.8 highlights the conceptual relationships between three key constructs: organizational performance, digital transformation (Dimension C3), and strategic agility. It indicates a direct relationship between organizational performance and strategic agility, which is the ability of an organization to swiftly adapt to change. Digital transformation, in particular Dimension C3, which serves as a moderator, further shapes this interaction. From a practical standpoint, this suggests that companies that integrate strategic agility with successful digital transformation projects are more likely to attain better performance results than those that only use strategic agility. Strategic agility is strengthened by digital transformation, making it possible for quicker decision-making, better procedures, and more capability for innovation.

**5.5.1.2: Regression Assumptions Conceptual Framework**

Before interpreting the results of the moderated multiple regression model, it was essential to verify that the underlying assumptions of linearity, independence, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals were satisfied. The residual plot presented in Figure 5.9 illustrates the dispersion of residuals against fitted values for the model.

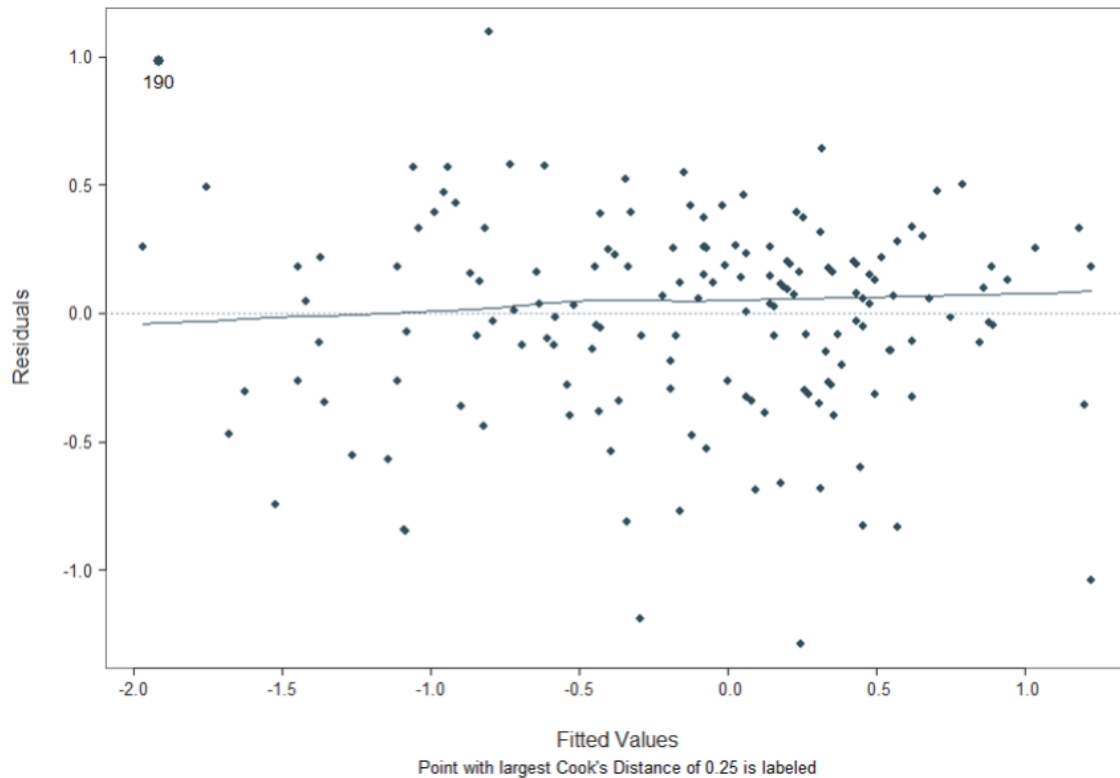


**Figure 5.9: Cook's Distance**

The pattern shows that residuals are randomly distributed around the zero line, with no systematic curvature, indicating that the assumption of linearity is reasonably met. The spread of residuals also appears uniform across the fitted values, suggesting that homoscedasticity is maintained.

Although most observations fall within an acceptable range, Observation 190 stands out as the case with the largest Cook's Distance value of 0.25, implying that it exerts a measurable but not severe influence on the regression estimates. According to the analytical threshold discussed in Chapter 4, Cook's Distance values below 1.0 generally indicate that no individual data point unduly distorts the model fit.

Overall, the diagnostic plot confirms that the regression assumptions hold satisfactorily, validating the model's robustness for testing the moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. Nevertheless, it is recommended that observation 190 be reviewed in further sensitivity testing to ensure it does not disproportionately affect the overall results.

#### **5.5.1.3: Residuals Plot Showing Normality.**

Furthermore, Figure 5.10's residual plot displays the histogram with the density curve overlaid on top, illuminating the regression analysis's residual distribution. Based on the symmetric bell-shaped pattern around zero, the residuals appear to be normally distributed. It appears

that the model's predicted values correspond to the observed data because most of the residual values cluster around the mean (0). Despite minor deviations from normality, such as slight spikes and dips, the overall shape does not exhibit significant skewness. This suggests that the model fits the data well and supports the validity of the regression results by showing that the assumption of residual normality is reasonably met.

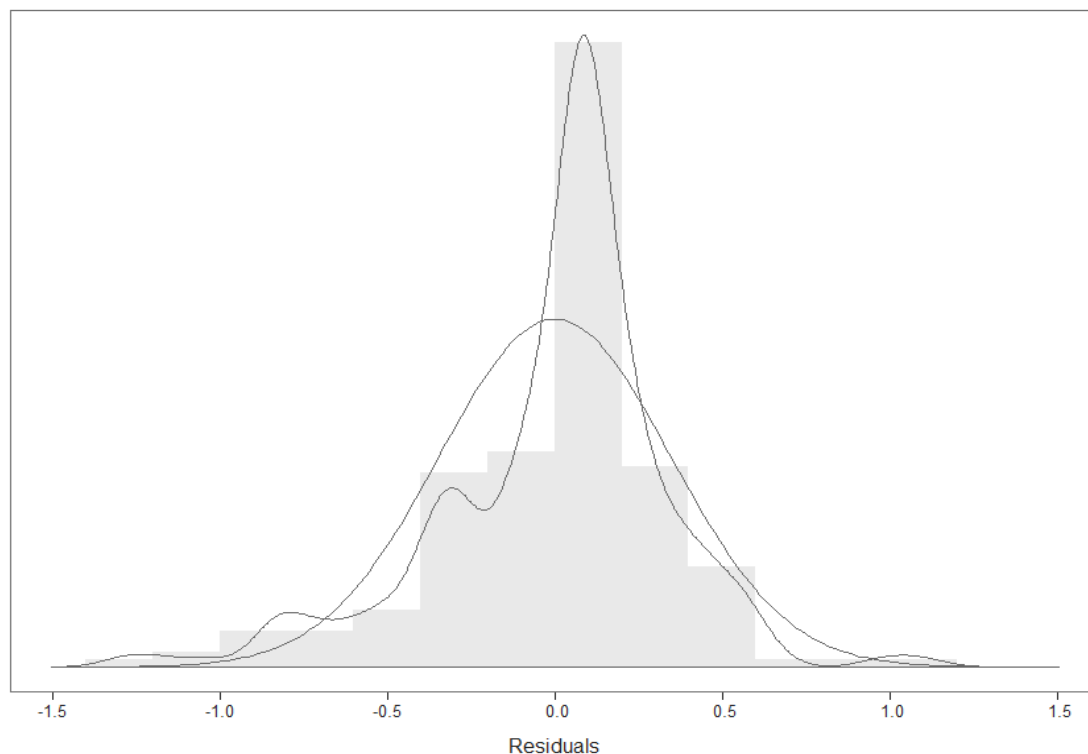


**Figure 5.10:Residual Plot**

Figure 5.10 illustrates the distribution of standardised residuals obtained from the moderated multiple regression model. The histogram with a superimposed normal curve indicates that the residuals are approximately normally distributed around zero, confirming the assumption of normality. The peak near the centre and the symmetric tapering on both sides suggest that the model's error terms conform reasonably to a bell-shaped pattern.

Minor deviations at the tails are observable, yet these do not indicate significant non-normality and are expected in practical datasets drawn from organisational research. As outlined in Chapter 4, adherence to this assumption is essential for ensuring that the regression estimates are unbiased and efficient (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Moreover, the shape of the distribution supports the methodological suitability of the structural regression model applied in this study, aligning with the statistical guidance that normal residuals validate the robustness of linear modelling techniques (Mitra, 2019; Schumaker et al., 2022).

Overall, the visual inspection of Figure 5.10 supports that the residuals conform to normality expectations, reinforcing that the data meet the key assumptions required for valid hypothesis

testing regarding the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance and the moderating influence of digital transformation.

#### 5.5.1.4: Correlations and Regression Fit of the Model.

Additionally, the scatterplot matrix in Figure 5.11 shows the linear interactions and correlations between three variables: Dimension C3, strategic agility and organizational performance. According to the correlation coefficients shown in the upper triangular matrix, there is a positive and moderate to high link between each variable. Organizational performance and Dimension C3 have the largest correlation ( $r = 0.87$ ), followed by strategic agility and Dimension C3 ( $r = 0.72$ ) and organizational performance and strategic agility ( $r = 0.73$ ). These findings imply that enhanced organizational performance is linked to greater degrees of strategic agility and Dimension C3. Overall, the results show that the constructs have a positive relationship with one another, suggesting that Dimension C3 and organisational agility all work together to improve organisational performance.

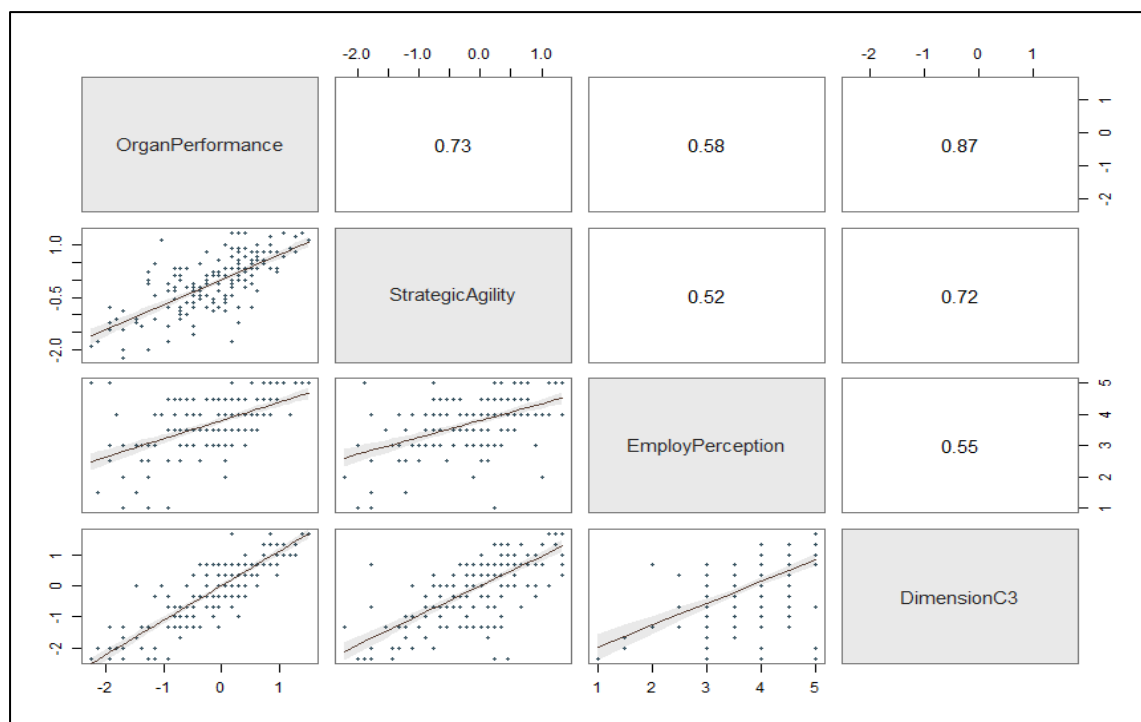


**Figure 5.11: Model Fit and Correlations**

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of linear relationships among the main study variables: Strategic Agility, Digital Transformation (Dimension C3: Digital Adaptability), and Organisational Performance. The purpose of this analysis is to assess potential associations before proceeding to the regression and moderation testing. The results are summarised in Figure 5.11, which presents a correlation matrix and scatterplot relationships for each pair of variables.

The correlation coefficients range between 0.52 and 0.87, all of which are positive, suggesting a consistent pattern of direct relationships between the constructs. The strongest correlation was observed between Digital Adaptability (Dimension C3) and Organisational Performance ( $r = 0.87$ ), implying that organisations demonstrating higher levels of digital adaptability tend to report superior performance outcomes. This observation supports the theoretical assumption derived from the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2018) and earlier empirical findings (see Chapter 2), which propose that digital transformation enhances the capacity of firms to sense, seize, and transform for improved performance.

A similarly strong relationship exists between Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance ( $r = 0.73$ ), reinforcing the hypothesis that agile organisations are more capable of sustaining competitive advantage and achieving superior outcomes (Elali, 2021; Christofi et al., 2023). The correlation between Strategic Agility and Digital Adaptability ( $r = 0.72$ ) further indicates that agility and digital capability are mutually reinforcing constructs, an alignment consistent with the earlier conceptualisation that digital transformation acts as a moderator strengthening the agility–performance relationship (Mhaibes et al., 2024).

Overall, the positive and statistically meaningful correlations presented in Figure 5.11 confirm that the variables are conceptually and empirically related as proposed in the research framework. Importantly, the correlation coefficients are below 0.90, indicating that multicollinearity is unlikely to be a concern and that all variables can be retained in the regression and moderation analyses (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

## 5.6: Regression Results

To test the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3, a moderated multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The model examined the direct effects of Strategic Agility and Digital Adaptability (Dimension C3) on Organisational Performance, as well as the moderating effect of Digital Adaptability on the relationship between Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance. The results are summarised in Table 5.14, which displays the moderated multiple linear regression results.

**Table 5.14: Moderated Multiple Linear Regression Output**

| Variables         | Estimate | Std Err | t-value | p-value | Lower 95% | Upper 95% |
|-------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| (Intercept)       | -0.3926  | 0.1544  | -2.543  | 0.012   | -0.6970   | -0.0882   |
| Strategic Agility | 0.1962   | 0.0516  | 3.804   | 0.000   | 0.0945    | 0.2979    |
| Employ Perception | 0.1052   | 0.0397  | 2.650   | 0.009   | 0.0269    | 0.1835    |

|                                |         |        |        |       |         |        |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|-------|---------|--------|
| Dimension C3                   | 0.5186  | 0.0389 | 13.318 | 0.000 | 0.4419  | 0.5954 |
| Strategic Agility: DimensionC3 | -0.0163 | 0.0312 | -0.523 | 0.602 | -0.0777 | 0.0452 |

The results demonstrate that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in organisational performance ( $R^2 = 0.782$ ), indicating that the included predictors collectively provide a strong explanatory power. Among the predictors, Digital Adaptability (Dimension C3) emerged as the strongest and most significant determinant of organisational performance ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms that organisations that effectively integrate and utilise digital technologies achieve superior performance outcomes. This finding aligns with the theoretical assertions of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2018) and empirical evidence from Christofi et al. (2023), which emphasise that digital transformation enhances a firm's ability to sense, seize, and transform in rapidly changing markets.

Strategic Agility also shows a positive and significant effect on organisational performance ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), consistent with previous findings that agile organisations outperform their less flexible counterparts (Elali, 2021; Mhaibes et al., 2024).

However, the interaction term between Strategic Agility and Digital Adaptability is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = -0.0163$ ,  $p = 0.602$ ). This suggests that Digital Adaptability does not moderate the relationship between Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance. In practical terms, while both strategic agility and digital transformation independently enhance performance, their combined interaction does not yield an additional synergistic effect.

The negative intercept ( $\beta = -0.3926$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) implies that when all predictors are held at zero, the baseline level of organisational performance would be below average, a finding that is statistically significant but primarily interpretive given the scaling of constructs.

Overall, these results reinforce that Digital transformation (Digital Adaptability), and Strategic Agility are vital in shaping organisational performance, but they operate independently rather than interactively. As theorised in Chapter 2, organisations in dynamic environments like the City of Johannesburg benefit most from cultivating both digital transformation initiatives and strategic agility as parallel, complementary capabilities.

### 5.6.1: Slope Analysis

Figure 5.12 below shows the moderating effect of Dimension C3 on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. The graph shows a positive relationship across all levels of Dimension C3, indicating that as strategic agility increases, organisational performance also increases.

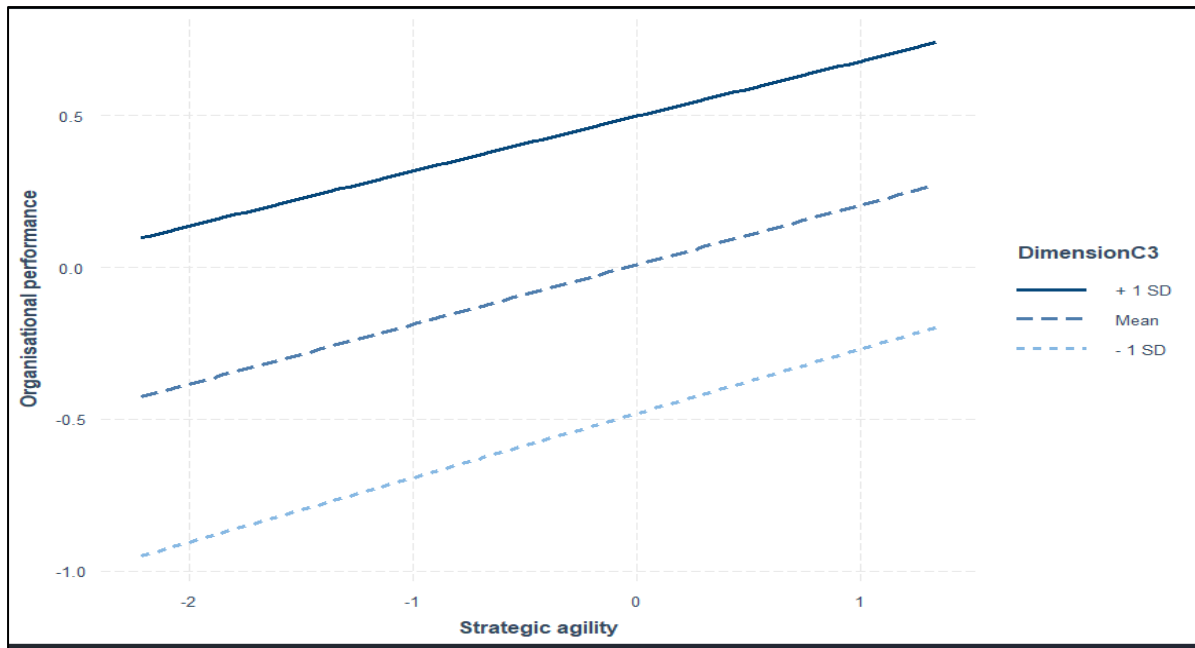


**Figure 5.12: Slope Analysis**

However, the slope of the relationship varies depending on the level of Dimension C3. Specifically, the relationship is strongest at high levels of Dimension C3 (+1 SD), moderate at the mean level, and weakest at low levels (-1 SD). This suggests that Dimension C3 enhances the positive impact of strategic agility on organisational performance, implying that organisations with higher levels of Dimension C3 are better able to translate strategic agility into improved performance outcomes.

### 5.7: Summary of the Hypotheses Tests

This section summarises the results of the hypothesis testing performed through the moderated multiple linear regression analysis. Each hypothesis was evaluated at a 95% confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The summary is presented in Table 5.15.

**Table 5.15: Summary**

| Hypothesis Code | Statement                                                                 | Statistical Test / Evidence                                       | p-value | Decision    |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------|
| H1:             | Strategic Agility has a significant impact on Organisational Performance. | Regression coefficient for Strategic Agility ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ) | 0.000   | Significant |
| H2:             | Digital Transformation (Dimension C3) has a significant                   | Regression coefficient for                                        | 0.000   | Significant |

|            |                                                                                                                            |                                                            |       |                 |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|
|            | impact on Organisational Performance.                                                                                      | Dimension C3 ( $\beta = 0.5186$ )                          |       |                 |
| <b>H3:</b> | Digital Transformation (Dimension C3) moderates the relationship between Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance. | Interaction term (Strategic Agility $\times$ Dimension C3) | 0.602 | Not Significant |

The results indicate that two of the hypotheses (**H1** and **H2**) were significant, affirming the direct and positive influence of strategic agility and digital transformation (capabilities) on organisational performance. The third hypothesis (**H3**) was not significant, as the interaction between strategic agility and digital adaptability was statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.602$ ).

### 5.8: Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the empirical results of the study, focusing on the relationships among Strategic Agility, Digital Adaptability (Dimension C3) and Organisational Performance. The findings were derived from a sample of 211 respondents and analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, correlation analysis, and moderated multiple linear regression.

The results demonstrated strong internal consistency across constructs, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.68 and 0.88, confirming the reliability of the scales. Descriptive results showed that firms operating in the City of Johannesburg exhibit moderate to high levels of strategic agility and digital adaptability, though some variability remains in leadership unity and project execution.

Correlation analysis revealed positive and significant associations among all study variables, particularly between Digital Adaptability and Organisational Performance ( $r = 0.87$ ), and between Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance ( $r = 0.73$ ). These patterns indicated that firms demonstrating higher digital capability and agility also tend to achieve stronger performance outcomes.

Regression analysis further validated these relationships, explaining 78.2% ( $R^2 = 0.782$ ) of the variance in organisational performance. The results confirmed that:

**H1:** was significant - Strategic Agility has a significant positive effect on organisational performance ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**H2:** was significant - Digital Adaptability (Dimension C3) is the strongest predictor of performance ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**H3:** was not significant - The moderating effect of Digital Adaptability on the relationship between Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance was statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.602$ ).

Collectively, these findings indicate that Strategic Agility and Digital Adaptability each exert direct and independent effects on organisational performance, but there is no significant interaction effect between agility and digital transformation. In summary, two hypotheses (H1 and H2) were confirmed, providing strong empirical support for the study's conceptual framework. The next chapter (Chapter 6) builds on these empirical results by interpreting their meaning within the broader theoretical and empirical context, linking them to the literature reviewed earlier and discussing their managerial, theoretical, and contextual implications for firms operating in the City of Johannesburg.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION**

### **6.1: Introduction**

This Chapter presents a critical discussion and interpretation of the empirical results displayed in Chapter 5. It links the results to the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. The aim is not merely to rely on the statistical outcomes but to go a step further and explain the practical, theoretical, and contextual meaning of the findings. The discussion demonstrates how the observed relationships between strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation align or deviate from the assumptions of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) and prior empirical evidence in Chapter 2.

The research was guided by the overarching aim to investigate the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among the firms operating in the City of Johannesburg, to determine the extent to which this relationship is moderated by digital transformation. A moderated multiple regression analysis was used to test three hypotheses. The results indicated that strategic agility and digital adaptability (Dimension C3) had a positive and statistically significant impact on organisational performance. Conversely, the hypothesised moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance showed no statistical significance. In essence, the model explained a substantially significant proportion of variance ( $R^2 = 0.782$ ), indicating that these variables are significant predictors of organisational performance in a competitive and digitally changing business environment in the City of Johannesburg.

This Chapter is structured around the research objectives and hypotheses of the study. It begins by providing a summary of the key empirical findings, deliberated in Section 6.2, and then discusses each hypothesis in detail, as presented in Section 6.3.1 – 6.3.4, incorporating insights from the existing studies and theoretical constructs. In addition, the discussion also investigates how these results strengthen or expand the Dynamic Capabilities Theory by unpacking the role of digital transformation as a parallel rather than interactive capability that influences performance. The Chapter ends by highlighting the theoretical, contextual and managerial implications of the results and discusses how they contribute to both literature and practice.

### **6.2: Overview of Key Empirical Results**

The results presented in Chapter 5 highlighted numerous statistically significant relationships among the study's key constructs. The regression model indicated 78.2% of the variance in organisational performance. This suggests a substantially strong relationship between strategic agility and digital capability. Two of the three tested hypotheses were significant,

showing that each of these constructs has a direct or positive effect on organisational performance. However, the moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between agility and performance was statistically insignificant.

The power of the model indicates that organisations that operate in the City of Johannesburg are increasingly embracing both strategic agility and digital transformation capabilities for sustainability in the competitive, volatile market environment. The evidence from the statistical analysis suggests that digital adaptability ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is the most substantial determinant of organisational performance, exceeding the contribution of strategic agility ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding challenges the general assumption in strategic management that agility is regarded as the most dominant determinant of competitive advantage. Besides, the finding illuminates the current evolving reality where digital readiness and technological integration have become complementary drivers of organisational superior performance.

Nonetheless, the lack of a moderation effect as shown in the statistical analysis ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), requires further interrogation. In theory, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory posits that digital transformation strengthens the relationship between agility and performance by fostering faster sensing and seizing of opportunities as they present themselves in the market (Teece, 2018; Christofi et al., 2023). The non-significant finding in this research may suggest that digital transformation and agility work in parallel rather than as interactive capabilities. Put differently, both capabilities have an influence on performance, but are not integrated enough to work synergistically for the best performance. This discrepancy might be attributable to differences in the digital maturity levels across the many firms in Johannesburg. For example, the existence of limited cross-functional collaboration and structural silos hampers the full capitalisation of digital initiatives.

Holistically, the empirical evidence reaffirms many of the theoretical insights in the literature. Elali (2021) and Mhaibes et al. (2024) reaffirm that strategic agility remains a significant predictor of performance, while expanding their argument to also indicate that digital transformation plays a vital independent role than was previously believed. However, the weak moderating effect demands a closer interrogation of the organisational, structural, and behavioural mechanisms that may hamper the much-needed digital-strategic integration in businesses operating in the City of Johannesburg.

The following section discusses this analysis in detail, contrasting the empirical results with previous studies and examining possible theoretical and contextual explanations convergence or divergence of the analysis.

## **6.3: Discussion by Research Objective and Hypotheses**

### **6.3.1: Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance (H1)**

The first hypothesis proposes that strategic agility has a significant impact on organisational performance. This relationship is supported by the regression results ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), affirming that organisations with high levels of agility tend to achieve superior performance outcomes. This affirms the empirical studies that contend that agility makes organisations swiftly anticipate changes in the environment, respond and reconfigure, and realign resources to remain competitive (Elali, 2021; Christofi et al., 2023; Mhaibes et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, the magnitude of the effect observed in this study, though statistically significant, was moderate relative to digital adaptability. This, then, evokes a critical question as to why agility has a weaker direct effect on organisational performance and digital adaptability in firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. The reason may lie in the level of institutional and infrastructural constraints in the business environment. As deliberated in Chapter 2, firms operating in the City of Johannesburg are confronted by a plethora of unique constraints such as fluctuating costs, unstable utilities, and discrepancies in technological infrastructure (Lamidi and Juta, 2024). These challenges constrain the efficiency with which strategic agility translates into the required performance outcomes. Strategic agility initiatives such as quick decision-making and resource allocation can be ineffective where there are inadequate digital capabilities, funding, and regulatory support, among others.

As alluded to previously, theoretically, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory suggests that strategic agility enhances organisational performance when firms can effectively sense, seize, and transform (Teece, 2018). The results from the statistical analysis show that the organisations have developed considerable ability to sense and seize opportunities; however, they may find the transformation phase very challenging. This means that most firms tend to struggle with reconfiguring structures and processes to sustain the performance gains. Similarly, Deshati (2023) and Ali et al. (2025), found that agility is stronger when supported by digital tools, leadership, and an effective learning culture. As such, the partial and not dominant impact of strategic agility in this study indicates that, despite the responsiveness and strategic awareness by firms in the City of Johannesburg, they may still have inadequate resource fluidity, leadership cohesion to successfully operationalise agility as a performance mechanism.

In comparison, prior studies in developed economies have often reported higher coefficients for the strategic agility and organisational performance relationship. For instance, a study by Christofi et al. (2023) found a stronger association among European organisations that benefit from mature digital environments. Thus, the moderating coefficient in this research might be

greatly affected by the contextual disparities in market infrastructure and digital readiness. This affirms Arokodare and Asikhia's (2020) assertion that agility is not a mere universal capability, but one that is heavily dependent on environmental stability, technological alignment, and leadership commitment.

Moreso, another possible interpretation pertains to organisational inertia and bureaucratic hurdles that punctuate operations for some firms in the City of Johannesburg, particularly businesses in the public sector, which make up 39% of the sample used. Vrontis et al. (2022) observed that hierarchical structures and inflexible processes impede the speed and flexibility required for agility to translate into quantifiable performance outcomes. Also, the descriptive results in Chapter 5 indicated relatively lower mean scores for leadership ( $M = 3.5$ ), implying a weak internal alignment.

Overall, the confirmation of H1 indicates that agility is indeed a driver of organisational performance; however, the strength of the relationship is shaped by and dependent on contextual contingencies such as infrastructure readiness, the extent of digital support, and leadership commitment. This finding is consistent with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory. However, it also suggests that agility alone may not be adequate in environments where operational and technological constraints inhibit transformation efforts.

### **6.3.2: Digital Adaptability and Organisational Performance (H2)**

Hypothesis (H3) proposed that digital capabilities (Dimension C3) have a significant influence on organisational performance. This relationship was strongly supported by the regression results ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which identified digital capabilities as the most influential predictor among the other tested variables. As such, this finding confirms that organisations with high levels of digital integration, technological responsiveness, and implementation efficiency achieve superior performance outcomes. Also, it signals a transition in the strategic performance landscape, where digital capabilities are now indispensable in sustaining competitiveness.

At a superficial level, the size of the effect appears intuitive, as digital transformation has become indispensable in modern business success. However, its strength in the City of Johannesburg context demands interrogation. The high coefficient implies that, for organisations operating in a dynamic and resource-constrained environment like the City of Johannesburg, digital capabilities do not merely represent an operational tool but a strategic driver that enhances efficiency, timely responsiveness, and innovation. This logic concurs with the observations by Schilirò (2024) and Verhoef et al. (2021), who argued that digital technology promotes faster sensing of opportunities, improves coordination, and quickens data-driven decision-making, which are all critical to the attainment of superior performance.

However, the question that arises is: why does digital adaptability dominate strategic agility in this model despite strategic agility's theoretical centrality in the Dynamic Capabilities Theory? One possible explanation is that numerous firms in the City of Johannesburg prioritise digital infrastructure investments as a critical strategic response. As observed by Christofi et al. (2023), digital transformation can be used as a proxy for firms' adaptability in volatile markets. Thus, firms may rely on digital tools to compensate for gaps in leadership alignment and resource fluidity to keep operational continuity even in instances where their broader agility mechanisms are lagging.

In addition to the above, another possible interpretation is contextual and infrastructural in nature. Now, the City of Johannesburg, as an urban economic hub, is punctuated by unique constraints, including infrastructural gaps, intermittent service delivery, and high market volatility (Lamidi and Juta, 2024). In this context, digital capability provides a stabilising mechanism that enables organisations to maintain performance regardless of the external turbulence. For example, the use of digital tools in logistics, communication, and finance reduces operational costs and dispels systemic inefficiencies.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding expands the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, as it suggests that digital capability can work as both a capability and an infrastructure for capability deployment. Dynamic capabilities are conceptualised by Teece (2018) as an organisation's ability to sense, seize, and transform. The findings from this study suggest that digital capabilities appear to simultaneously enhance all three dimensions of Dynamic Capabilities Theory. First, it reinforces sensing through data analytics. Second, it enables seizing through automation and integration. Third, it supports transformation by creating flexible processes that enhance reconfiguration. The evidence thus posits digital adaptability as a critical lever with the dynamic capability process rather than a mere technological peripheral component.

Moreover, studies affirm this interpretation. For example, Ali et al. (2025) assert that digital orientation accelerates organisational responsiveness. Shehadeh et al. (2023) found that digital transformation enhances both efficiency and competitiveness in the service sector. Likewise, Mhaibes et al. (2024) argued that organisations with advanced IT capabilities and integration experience higher operational agility and performance. The consensus among these studies and the current findings highlights a global relevance of digital adaptability as a determinant of performance.

The findings also raised a conceptual issue. The idea of reliance on digital adaptability as the key predictor shows that firms are becoming overly technologically dependent at the expense of human and strategic alignment. The high mean score for digital integration (Mean 3.56) compared to the relatively low mean score for leadership unity (3.5) implies a gap where

technology moves faster than cultural-structural adaptation. This finding aligns with the caution by Igang (2025) who argued that digitisation without cultural transformation leads to nothing but “technological agile but fragile” firms.

Overall, the confirmation of hypothesis (H2) corroborates that digital adaptability is a key driver of organisational performance in firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. This finding affirms the literature contending that digital transformation validates dynamic capabilities by enhancing sensing, seizing, and transforming processes. However, it also brings about a paradox, asserting that while technology supports competitiveness, it may overlook that the softer, human-oriented dimensions of agility are not well-aligned with leadership unity and resource fluidity. Hence, firms need to treat digital agility as an enabler rather than as an end for them to attain sustainable performance.

### **6.3.3: The Moderating Effect of Digital Transformation (H3)**

The third hypothesis tested was whether digital transformation (digital capability) moderates the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. The finding was contrary to the theoretical expectation. The relationship between strategic agility and digital capability was statistically insignificant ( $\beta = -0.0163$ ,  $p = 0.602$ ). The result highlights that while both variables independently influence organisational performance, they have no complementary effect on performance. This insignificance demands a closer interrogation, particularly because existing literature and critical theoretical reasoning suggest a positive moderating effect on strategic agility and organisational performance relationship.

From the theoretical viewpoint of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, digital transformation is supposed to strengthen the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance, by facilitating organisational ability to sense opportunities, rapidly seize them, and transform the necessary processes accordingly (Teece, 2018; Cavusgil and Deligonul, 2024). Similarly, empirical evidence from Yogatama et al. (2024) and Shehadeh et al. (2023) further affirms this view, implying that digital transformation augments the effectiveness of agile practices. Nonetheless, in this research, the absence of moderation suggests that the moderating effect of digital transformation has not been embedded in the strategic agility processes of firms operating in the City of Johannesburg.

Yet another plausible explanation is that digital transformation and strategic agility operate as parallel rather than interconnected variables for firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. Moreso, digital transformation can be managed as a technological initiative, premised on improving operational efficiency, rather than a strategic resource that is dynamically linked to leadership decision-making processes and resource allocation. Put differently, digital tools enhance individual processes but may be incapable of changing the strategic behaviours that

characterise agility. This disconnect between technological adoption and strategic responsiveness is consistent with the findings of Domniku and Ahmeti (2024), who argued that many firms regard digital transformation as a necessary technological upgrade rather than a holistic driver of strategic renewal.

Furthermore, another possible explanation concerns the varying levels of digital maturity among the sampled organisations. Descriptive statistics in Chapter 5 indicate a moderate mean for digital adaptability ( $M=3.3$ ), with a high variability of 0.94 ( $SD = 0.94$ ), this demonstrates that firms are advancing digital integration at different paces. While some firms are moving rapidly with their digital integration, others are still in the early stages of adoption. In this respect, the moderating potential of digital transformation can be affected by inconsistent implementation across the different sectors and organisational sizes. This interpretation echoes the sentiments of Khumalo and Moloi (2025) who advocate that infrastructural inconsistencies and disparities in the adoption of digital tools still hamper digital transformation progress in firms operating within the City of Johannesburg.

In addition to the above, the insignificance of the moderating effect may also highlight organisational misalignment between digital transformation and strategic agility. Leadership unity, one of the critical components of strategic agility, which underpins the speed of decision-making and cohesion, recorded only a moderate mean score of 3.5 ( $Mean=3.5$ ). Digital initiatives require effective cross-functional collaboration between digital and strategic teams to be able to influence the speed at which firms anticipate and respond to changes in the market. This finding echoes the argument by Elali (2021), who expounds that the absence of leadership unity hinders the ability of digital capabilities to translate into strategic agility.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding necessitates a refinement and not a rejection of the Dynamic Capabilities framework. It insists that digital transformation must be conceptualised not only as a moderator but also as a complementary capability that drives performance together with agility. This reconfiguration aligns with the recent proposition by Steininger et al. (2022), who contend that digital transformation shows a distinct form of dynamic capability that interacts with, but does not really catalyse, the other capabilities.

From a contextual perspective, the finding indicates a structural dichotomy within firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. Digital transformation is being promoted as a performance enabler, yet the organisational architecture needed to incorporate it into strategic decision-making processes remains fragmented. Hence, the weak interaction effect may thus reflect a transitional phase digital initiatives enhance efficiency but have not yet developed to a level where they redefine the extent to which agility can translate into superior performance.

Synthesising the main points, the insignificant moderation finding does not undermine the value of digital transformation; if anything, it illuminates a gap between technological and strategic capabilities. Firms in the City of Johannesburg seem to benefit from both agility and digital adaptability; however, the lack of alignment between the two constructs hampers potential synergistic effects. To close this gap, there is a need to incorporate digital transformation into the strategic planning process, boosting leadership collaboration and commitment, and fostering a culture that sees technology as a catalyst for adaptive strategy execution rather than just another tool for efficiency.

#### **6.4: Reinterpreting Dynamic Capabilities in the Context of Johannesburg Firms**

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory posits that firms' success is dependent on their ability to sense opportunities and threats, seize them through making timely decisions, and transform structure and resources to sustain competitiveness (Teece, 2018). As such, this theoretical chronology assumes a coherent interconnection between internal technological capabilities and adaptive leadership. However, the empirical evidence from the study indicates a different play altogether. While the firms operating in the City of Johannesburg demonstrate some elements of dynamic capabilities, these capabilities still exist in fragmented, context-specific ways. Hence, the theory demands a contextual reinterpretation to fully articulate how environmental volatility, organizational design, and infrastructural realities shape its operationalization, particularly in developing countries.

Essentially, the results showed that strategic agility ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and digital adaptability ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) both exhibit strong independent influence on organisational performance, while the interaction between the two remained statistically insignificant. With respect to the DCT framework, this sequence suggests that the sensing and seizing processes are developed while the transformation phase, where the capabilities converge to create synergy, is still underdeveloped. Organisations appear to be cognisant of the identification of opportunities and adoption of digital tools but still find it difficult to incorporate them into strategic and structural reconfigurations to attain the desired cumulative performance gains. This incomplete operationalisation of dynamic capabilities speaks to the findings of Steininger et al. (2022), who contended that many firms in developing markets show "functional rather than systemic agility" where responsiveness is fragmented rather than being an organisation-wide coordinated effort.

The City of Johannesburg's situation explains this partial realisation of dynamic capabilities. Working in an environment that is punctuated by infrastructural constraints, policy uncertainty, and cost volatility, organisations tend to be preoccupied with temporary responsiveness at the expense of total structural transformation. For instance, digital capabilities are often utilised to

enhance operational efficiency, such as automating processes or bolstering reporting, but not to reshape or reconfigure the entire business model itself. This then speaks to why the digital capability and strategic agility indicate strong direct impact on performance, as technology provides immediate performance outcomes without necessarily requiring a strategic overhaul. Nonetheless, such incremental adaptation may inhibit the long-term renewal that the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) demands. This then confirms the argument by Moradi et al. (2021) who contend that organisations operating in rapidly changing environments tend to show adaptive routines rather than real transformative capabilities.

Moreover, leadership unity came out as moderate yet a significant driver of performance, indicating that the human infrastructure of the dynamic capabilities remains inadequate. Teece (2018) contends that transformation is dependent on the coordinated managerial intent and a sustained culture of continuous learning. As such, the results here demonstrate that although leaders in the firms operating in the City of Johannesburg acknowledge the importance of agility, decision-making often delays (Mean =3.27) and variable employees' engagement (Mean 3.30) hampers the collective system from transforming. This finding echoes the assertions by Diete-Spiff and Olori (2021) that managerial cohesion and cultural alignment are key to translating agility into sustained competitive advantage.

Delving deeper into the reinterpretation of the theory within this context, the finding purports that the three foundational processes of the DCT, that is, sensing, seizing, and transforming, should not be seen as chronologically or uniformly strong. In the case of firms operating in the City of Johannesburg, sensing is increasingly digital, seizing mostly managerial, and transforming is largely the weakest and most context dependent. This inconsistent and uneven configuration shows that firms depend heavily on technological sensing and quick operational responses but do not have the necessary governance structures, resources, and cross-functional integration needed for sustained transformation. Thus, the study concurs with the view of Cavusgil and Deligonul (2024) that dynamic capabilities evolve differently across contexts, with their effectiveness dependent on the interaction between leadership practices, environmental volatility, and digital infrastructure.

From a theoretical perspective, this reinterpretation redefines DCT in two ways. First, it advances digital transformation not just as a supporting variable but as a developing fourth dimension that cuts across all three traditional phases. Digital adaptability fosters the effectiveness of sensing, the speed of seizing, and the flexibility of transforming accurately and redefining what it really entails to be dynamically capable in a digital era. Second, it underscores that in developing urban economies, capability development is hampered by

systemic and institutional factors that stifle full integration. Hence, dynamic capabilities need to be conceptualised as layered and adaptive rather than uniform.

In summary, the City of Johannesburg's evidence points out that dynamic capabilities do exist but operate within structural and environmental constraints. Firms show notable sensing and seizing capabilities through digital tools and managerial responsiveness; however, transformation is still restrained by inconsistently fragmented integration and cultural inertia. Thus, when the DCT is reinterpreted through this lens, it must therefore incorporate the realities of uneven capability maturity and context-specific adaptation that characterise organisations operating in turbulent, volatile, and digitally transitional markets such as the City of Johannesburg.

### **6.5: Comparison with Prior Empirical Studies**

The findings of this research highlight both convergence and divergence with prior empirical studies on the interrelationship between strategic agility, organizational performance, and digital transformation. This comparison is critical for identifying how contextual dynamics in the City of Johannesburg define the generalizability of the existing research and for articulating where this study contributes to the global body of knowledge.

In agreement with much of the previous research, the findings of the study confirm that strategic agility has a positive and statistically significant influence on organizational performance. Scholars like Elali (2021), Christofi et al. (2023), and Mhaibes et al. (2024), argue that firms that can quickly sense and respond to changes in the business environment outperform less agile competitors. However, the coefficient shown in this study ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ), appeared weaker than in most studies conducted in developed economies, where agility is often the key determinant of performance. This existential disparity can be associated with the contextual constraints within the City of Johannesburg's business environment, which is marred with infrastructural instability and cost pressures that inhibit the speed and effectiveness of resource redeployment. Organisations may show the necessary awareness and intent for sensing and seizing opportunities, but encounter practical impediments in executing transformation, often owing to institutional and operational bottlenecks that exist. This is consistent with the assertion by Moradi et al. (2021), who argued that the external volatility often debilitates the agility-performance relationship in upcoming markets.

Conversely, digital adaptability recorded the strongest effect on organisational performance ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), outweighing the impact of strategic agility. This phenomenon contradicts the findings by Alkandi and Helmi (2024), who pointed out that agility remains the key determinant of performance, with digital transformation as an enabler. Thus, the stronger digital impact in the City of Johannesburg purports that organisations working under conditions

of structural uncertainty rely on digital systems to enhance operations, improve efficiency, and maintain competitiveness. These digital systems, like data analytics and automation tools, may be used to foster strategic foresight within volatile contexts by enabling real-time decision-making and cost control. Thus, this interpretation concurs with the observations by Schilirò (2024) and Shehadeh et al. (2023) that digital transformation offers quick performance gains by ingraining resilience and process efficiency within firms.

However, the lack of a significant moderating effect between strategic agility and digital adaptability is different from empirical evidence in other contexts. For instance, studies by Yogatama et al. (2024) and Verhoef et al. (2021) argued that digital transformation enhances the positive effect of agility on performance, particularly in organisations that have mature digital systems and flatter organisational structures. The divergence indicated in this research can be understood in view of the varying levels of digital maturity. Numerous organisations are still in their transitional phase from digitisation to full digital transformation, which entails strategic integration across value chains. Hence, the interdependent interplay between traditional decision-making hierarchies and developing digital systems may, nonetheless, diminish the synergistic potential between agility and technology. This interpretation echoes the caution submitted by Domniku and Ahmeti (2024), who propounded that when digital transformation continues to be siloed within functional departments, it fails to have a meaningful impact on strategic agility.

In totality, the comparative analysis highlights three primary insights. Firstly, the study confirms global evidence to the effect that both strategic agility and digital transformation enhance organisational performance; however, the relative power of their effects showed contextual variance. Secondly, the City of Johannesburg's evidence corroborates the emerging view that digital transformations are transitioning from a supportive role to being a determinant of organisational performance, especially in situations where technological systems complete the gaps left by institutional inefficiencies. Thirdly, the existence of an insignificant moderation effect purports that theoretical models that assume seamless synergy between strategic agility and digital transformation may not really hold in developing economies marked by cultural and infrastructural fragmentation.

Overall, these observations position this research as a remedial lens within a broader discourse. They articulate that even though the foundational relationships in strategic management remain valid, their operational efficiency relies heavily on environmental maturity, organisational integration, and digital preparedness. Thus, the City of Johannesburg case affirms previous findings and enhances the global understanding of how dynamic capabilities reveal themselves in sophisticated emerging market environments.

## 6.6: Managerial and Contextual Interpretation

The findings from this research have many practical and contextual implications for managers working for the firms in the complex business environment of the City of Johannesburg. As alluded to previously, the city's economic structure is marked by turbulence, volatility, and infrastructural constraints and tense competition that challenge a firm's ability to adapt strategically while at the same time maintaining operational stability and efficiency. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that even though firms are equipped with some elements of strategic agility and digital adaptability, these capabilities often exist independently of each other rather than as an integrated system. For the managers, this separation negatively affects the way strategic decisions are formulated, implemented, and sustained.

Firstly, the importance of strategic agility as a performance driver underpins the significance of enhancing the speed of decision-making processes and flexibility. As such, managers in businesses should move with speed beyond the traditional reactive adjustments to a state of continuous proactiveness. This entails the institutionalisation of market sensing and scenario planning as a conventional managerial practice rather than an occasional exercise. This is consistent with the observation by As Christofi et al. (2023), who emphasise that sustained agility manifests when organisations incorporate feedback loops in their strategy formulation, enabling early detection of threats and opportunities. In the City of Johannesburg's unpredictable market environment, where disruptions like power outages and skyrocketing costs are recurrent, the ability to make swift decisions becomes an absolute imperative for survival.

The second one is the strong impact of digital adaptability, which recorded a ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that digital transformation has transitioned from a support role to a strategic core. Technology, for managers, is no longer a sole concern of the IT department; it has now been positioned as a strategic asset that fosters decision precision, customer experience, and efficient resource allocation. The evidence from the study implies that organisations that can align their digital initiatives with their corporate strategy would experience superior performance outcomes. However, this needs an integrated approach where technology investments are backed by cultural alignment and process redesign. This corroborates the sentiments by Schilirò (2024) that digital maturity is realised not only by the acquisition of technology but rather through the reconfiguration of structures and workflows around technology-oriented capabilities.

Thirdly, the lack of a significant moderating effect between agility and digital adaptability offers a critical managerial insight, indicating that an investment in technology alone is not a panacea for strategic integration. Many organisations in the City of Johannesburg implement digital

systems to bolster efficiency but fail to integrate these systems into decision-making and performance management frameworks. Hence, managers should focus on strategic digitisation, which is the intentional integration of digital processes into the strategy execution. This entails connecting digital dashboards to key performance indicators. This then enables real decision-making and fosters cross-functional collaborations. That said, the focus should now shift from technology acquisition to strategic utilisation, thus making sure that digital tools available inform rather than just record organisational actions.

Finally, these results suggest that context-sensitive leadership is vital. Different from firms in developed markets, firms in the City of Johannesburg operate under institutional and infrastructural uncertainties that need concrete rather than formulaic strategic responses. The leaders of these organisations need to balance formal planning with pragmatic, adaptive implementation, integrating agility with resilience. This, therefore, means building teams that can learn from rapid feedback, appreciate calculated risk, and distribute responsibilities where necessary. This echoes the arguments by Teece (2018) and Vrontis et al. (2022) that dynamic capabilities thrive in organisational cultures that reward innovation, initiative, and learning rather than stringently ossified compliance.

To this end, the managerial implications of this research emphasise the need for holistic capability integration. Organisations should strengthen interrelationships between strategic agility, digital adaptability, and employee engagement to convert responsiveness into sustainable superior performance. In the context of the City of Johannesburg's volatile environment, there is a need not just for speed but coherence, where technological, strategic, and human systems evolve as an integrated force. The findings, thus, advocate a transition from partial capability development to systemic alignment where agility and digital transformation operate in synchrony to sustain organisational competitiveness.

## 6.7: Summary of Hypotheses: Overview of the Conceptual Model

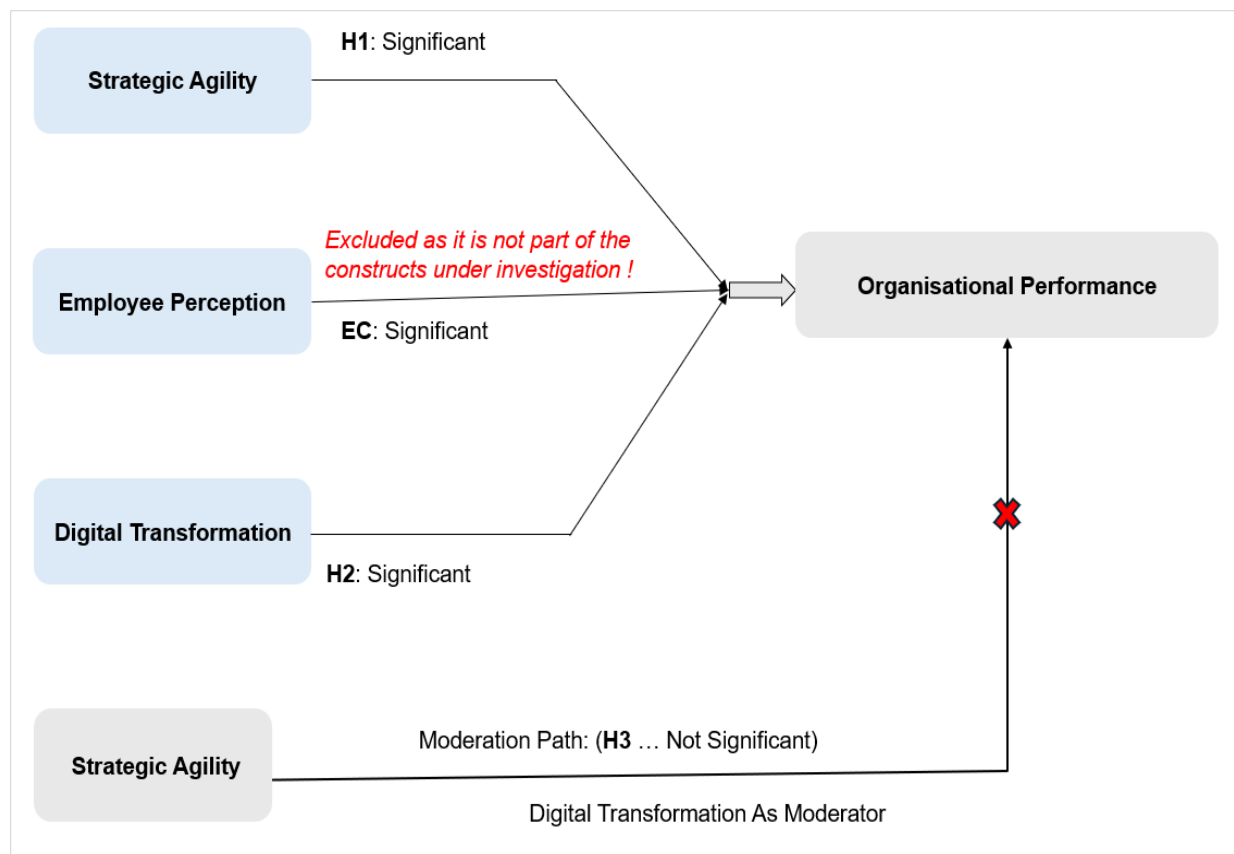


**Figure 6.1: Summary of Hypotheses: Conceptual Model**

Source: Author's Illustration

## 6.8: Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the empirical findings from the study as underpinned by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) framework and the broader body of literature on strategic agility, organisational performance, and digital transformation. The analysis confirmed that strategic agility and digital transformation both have a positive impact on organisational performance among organisations operating in the City of Johannesburg. Nonetheless, the hypothesised moderating effect of digital adaptability on the strategic agility and organisational performance relationship was insignificant, and that could not be statistically established, implying that even though the two constructs enhance performance, their influence is independent of each other, and they do not have interactive capabilities.

The analysis highlighted several crucial insights. First, strategic agility remains an essential performance drive; however, its impact is moderated by contextual constraints such as resource inadequacy, infrastructural instability, and disintegrated leadership structures. Second, digital adaptability was identified as the most prominent determinant of performance,

indicating the growing centrality of technology in managing uncertainty and operational efficiency. However, this centrality exposes organisations to overdependency on technology, where technological progress surpasses organisational integration and cultural readiness.

The reconstruction of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory within the context of firms in the City of Johannesburg shows strong sensing and seizing capabilities but limited transformation capacity. This disproportion indicates that while firms have become proficient in identifying opportunities and investing in digital capabilities, they still find it difficult to integrate these respective digital tools into integrative strategic and structural systems. The research thus expands the theoretical understanding by demonstrating that dynamic capabilities in developing economies are evolving unevenly, dictated by institutional and contextual realities.

From a practical perspective, the discussion underlined the need for managers to focus on systemic capability integration, connecting digital transformation, strategic agility, and cultural alignment as mutually complementary elements of competitiveness. Also, technology must be embedded within decision-making processes rather than viewed as a parallel construct. Likewise, leadership unity needs to be reinforced to ensure that strategic and technological efforts translate into meaningful, sustainable organisational performance.

The next chapter draws from these insights to offer a comprehensive conclusion, theoretical and managerial recommendations, and provides direction for future research. The chapter consolidates the empirical and interpretive findings into workable directions for enhancing strategic and digital capabilities in the dynamic business environment of the City of Johannesburg.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1: Introduction**

This chapter encapsulates the study by synthesising its key findings, drawing overarching conclusions, and presenting implications and recommendations for both theory and practice. The study investigated the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance among firms operating in the City of Johannesburg and examined the extent to which the relationship is moderated by digital transformation. Employing a quantitative research approach underpinned by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, the study analysed data from 211 respondents to test three hypotheses linked to strategic agility, digital adaptability, and organisational performance.

The previous chapters demonstrated that strategic agility and digital adaptability each have a significant and positive impact on organisational performance. However, the moderating effect of digital transformation was statistically insignificant. Thus, these findings suggest that firms operating in the City of Johannesburg benefit from strategic agility and digital transformation as two parallel elements and that they are yet to integrate them into one cohesive performance system.

Essentially, the chapter consolidates critical conclusions by research objective, indicates theoretical and managerial implications, and presents evidence-based recommendations for enhancing organisational competitiveness. It then culminates with reflections on the generalisability and validity of the results and identifies the areas for future research.

### **7.2: Overall Conclusions**

The study sought to examine how strategic agility impacts organisational performance among firms operating in the City of Johannesburg and to determine to what extent the relationship is moderated by digital transformation. The conclusions made are consistent with the research objectives and hypotheses.

#### **7.2.1: Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance (H1)**

As previously identified, the study's results confirmed that strategic agility has a significant, positive impact on organisational performance. Organisations that possess high levels of responsiveness, resource fluidity, and leadership unity perform better than those that are slow to adapt to changes in the market environment. However, the impact was moderate, suggesting that even though agility is a critical enabler, its potential is hampered by contextual constraints such as infrastructural instability, delays in decision-making, and resource limitations. This, therefore, implies that strategic agility within firms operating in the City of

Johannesburg is often operational rather than transformative. This makes it difficult for such firms to respond to the immediate challenges they face in turbulent market environments.

### 7.2.2: Digital Adaptability and Organisational Performance (H2)

As articulated in the previous chapter, digital adaptability emerged as the strongest predictor of organisational performance. Organisations that effectively integrate and use digital technologies experience superior outcomes through improved responsiveness, efficiency, and quality decisions. This finding demonstrates that digital transformation has evolved from being a support function to a key strategic driver. However, the strength of this effect also demonstrates a reliance on technology that may be faster than organisational and cultural adaptation. In many organisations, digital systems bolster operations but continue to be loosely linked to broader strategic frameworks. Thus, creating strategic, capable firms, yet strategically fragmented.

### 7.2.3: The Moderating Role of Digital Transformation (H3)

There was no statistically significant moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance. This result suggests that strategic agility and digital transformation function as parallel rather than interactive capabilities. While each one improves performance on its own, the lack of integration points to a structural and cultural mismatch in many organisations operating in the City of Johannesburg. The finding necessitates more management attention to strategic digitisation, integrating digital procedures into the very core of strategy formulation and implementation.

### 7.2.4: Proposed Strategic Agility and Organisational Performance Model

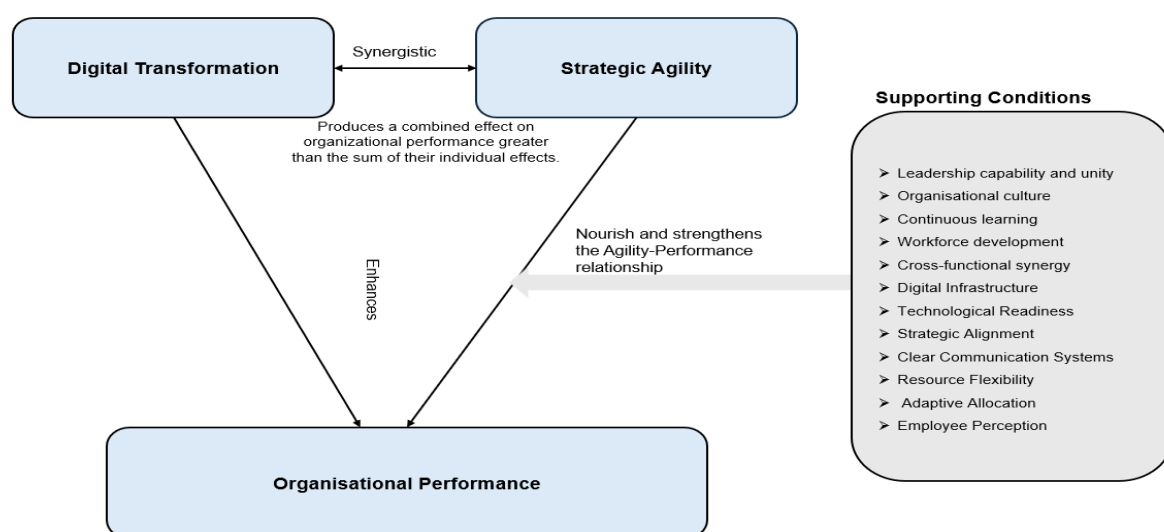


**Figure 7.1: Strategic agility and organisational performance model.**

Source: Author's Illustration

The above model illustrates how supporting conditions provide a conducive internal environment necessary for the effective functioning of strategic agility. The arrows indicate that when these conditions are strong, they strengthen and sustain strategic agility. When further reinforced by digital transformation as a moderating variable, it translates into superior organisational performance. Essentially, the supporting conditions, as shown in the diagram, act as enablers, which make sure that strategic agility does not just exist but translates into quantifiable organisational performance outcomes.

### **7.3: Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The study's findings add to the theoretical discourse on dynamic capabilities as well as the practical knowledge of how businesses in emerging urban markets may improve performance through strategic agility and digital transformation. The implications are twofold: they help practitioners navigate unstable, technology-driven contexts like the City of Johannesburg by offering practical insights and advancing the conceptualisation of strategic agility and digital transformation under the auspices of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT).

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings confirm the validity of the DCT's fundamental processes, which are sensing, seizing, and transforming, but also challenge the notion that these processes operate in a seamless order. The three stages seem to operate differently in Johannesburg firms. Although transformation is still limited by institutional and cultural inertia, sensing and seizing are digitally accelerating. This partial synchronisation suggests that dynamic capacities might not necessarily appear as a cohesive cycle, but rather as a collection of disparate but related competencies. This observation affirms the findings of Steininger et al. (2022), who proposed that organisational maturity and context, rather than theoretical completeness, enhance the strength of dynamic capacities.

The lack of a substantial moderating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance further expands the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), indicating that digital transformation can function as an independent capability rather than a reinforcing one. The research presented here establishes digital adaptability as a stand-alone driver of performance, capable of creating direct effects independent of agility, in contrast to the original notion of the theory, which highlights digitisation as an enabler within the seizing phase. This result is consistent with the findings of Cavusgil and Deligonul (2024), who observed that digital capabilities are increasingly becoming a distinct pillar of competitive advantage. Therefore, the DCT may need refinement to include digital transformation as a fourth, cross-cutting capability that supports and interacts with all current processes, rather than serving solely as a support mechanism.

Practically, the findings highlight that concurrent development of digital, strategic, and behavioural capabilities is necessary to achieve performance gains in turbulent markets. Managers need to create integrative processes that let digital data influence strategic choices instead of expecting technology to automatically improve agility. The study's findings posit that organisations that view digital systems as strategic infrastructure that improve agility through data-driven insight and cross-functional connectivity tend to achieve superior performance. As argued by Verhoef et al. (2021) that when digital transformation is combined with organisational restructuring and decentralised decision-making, it produces the desired value.

Additionally, the moderate coefficients for leadership unity show that organisational culture remains a crucial factor in determining performance. For managers, this suggests that without cultural renewal, strategic agility, and digital transformation initiatives will not yield the desired results. To help employees understand and take ownership of strategic changes, managers should fund leadership alignment initiatives, continuous learning programmes, and open communication frameworks. By so doing, organisations can bridge the behavioural gap between human adaptability and technical advancement, which is considered in this study as the primary challenge to the synergy between agility and digital transformation.

From a policy perspective, the study's findings suggest that support mechanisms for digital adoption in the City of Johannesburg should transcend technology funding to encompass managerial and workforce capacity-building. This confirms the notion that dynamic capabilities are not just organisational capabilities, but ecosystem-dependent constructs driven by the institutional and infrastructural context in which organisations find themselves.

Essentially, the theoretical contribution of this research is embedded in contextualising and expanding the Dynamic Capabilities Theory to incorporate the prevailing realities of the developing economies. In the same vein, the practical contribution of the study is ingrained in finding ways on how digital adaptability, strategic agility, and human engagement must coexist for organisations to secure sustained performance. Invariably, both contributions converge on one insight: that is, competitiveness in a turbulent market environment is less dependent on the possession of discrete capabilities, but more on the organisation's ability to align and synchronise its capabilities into an integrated, context-sensitive system of dynamic action.

#### **7.4: Recommendations**

The study's findings, as corroborated by the reviewed literature, suggest several specific steps that managers and legislators can take to improve the alignment of digital transformation, organisational performance, and strategic agility in the City of Johannesburg's dynamic business environment.

#### **7.4.1: Integrate Digital Transformation into Strategic Agility Processes**

The non-significant moderation impact suggests that rather than working in tandem, digital and strategic competencies are being built in parallel. According to Teece (2018), managers should embed digital transformation directly into the procedures that drive agility, that is, sensing, seizing, and transforming. Hence, this can be achieved by:

- incorporating digital analytics and market intelligence systems into strategic planning and opportunity-sensing procedures (Christofi et al., 2023).
- using real-time data to support quick and decision-making resource reallocation (Schiliro, 2024).
- Integrating IT governance with corporate strategy to ensure that digital initiatives enhance adaptability rather than function as independent endeavours.

#### **7.4.2: Strengthen Leadership Unity and Decision-Making Speed**

The findings revealed slow decision cycles and modest mean scores (Mean =3.5) for leadership unity. To address this, management should establish and institutionalise cross-functional councils or agile strategy teams councils that convene regularly to assess data, approve quick pivots, and timely disseminate decisions throughout the organisation. This concurs with the argument by Diete-Spiff and Olori (2021) and Elali (2021) that cohesiveness and shared leadership intent speed up transformation and reduce resistance.

#### **7.4.3: Institutionalise Strategic Digitisation**

Considering the significant direct impact of digital adaptability ( $\beta = 0.5186$ ), firms should shift from technology acquisition to strategic utilisation. The recommended actions are:

1. Integrating digital performance dashboards with financial and operational key performance indicators to facilitate real-time monitoring.
2. Using cloud-based technologies for collaboration to eliminate functional silos.
3. Using predictive analytics to improve responsiveness in supply-chain planning and budgeting.

These practical actions operationalise what Verhoef et al. (2021) refer to as data-driven agility, where digital infrastructure continuously informs strategy execution.

#### **7.4.4: Address Contextual Constraints through Adaptive Resource Management**

The moderate strategic agility coefficient recorded ( $\beta = 0.1962$ ) indicates the City of Johannesburg's infrastructure and resource constraints. Hence, Arokodare and Asikhia (2020) noted that managers should employ flexible resource-allocation models that ensure quick reconfiguration of people and budgets when circumstances change. Moreover, partnerships

with critical institutions such as fintech companies and regional innovation clusters are paramount in bridging the existing capability and infrastructural gaps.

#### **7.4.5: Promote Ecosystem-Level Support for Capability Integration**

Policymakers and industry groups must broaden the scope of digital transformation programmes to incorporate leadership development and change management components. Moloi and Khumalo (2025) contend that varying digital maturity across sectors hampers performance outcomes. Hence, providing industry-specific training on data-driven governance and agile project management would convert technology adoption into measurable outcomes.

#### **7.4.6: Cultivate a Culture of Continuous Learning and Experimentation**

Both the findings of this study and the literature reviewed (Vrontis et al., 2022) show that transformation fails in the absence of adaptive learning systems. Thus, organisations should institutionalise post-project reviews, innovation sprints, and reflective learning forums that capture insights from both successes. These practices strengthen the transformation phase of the Dynamic Capabilities cycle and integrate resilience into organisational procedures.

In conclusion, managers need to coordinate digital, strategic, and human systems to achieve integrated agility. Digital transformation should enhance rather than replace strategic thinking. Leadership must ensure alignment between technology, people, and process. Also, policy support should go beyond funding to capability development. As a result, implementing all these evidence-based recommendations will enable firms operating in the City of Johannesburg to transform from reactive adaptability to long-term, strategic competitiveness.

### **7.5: Limitations and Future Research**

While the study offers valuable insights into the relationships between digital adaptation, strategic agility, and organisational performance in Johannesburg firms, several methodological and theoretical limitations need acknowledgement. These limitations do not diminish the significance of the findings; rather, they point to areas where further study might improve theoretical clarity and understanding.

#### **7.5.1: Methodological Limitations**

To begin with, first, the limitations arise from the cross-sectional research approach of the study, which records relationships at a single, specific moment in time. While the findings show statistically significant correlations, the approach limits the capacity to determine causality or capture the evolution of strategic agility and digital transformation capabilities over time. Dynamic Capabilities Theory posits a temporal dimension of continuous sensing, seizing, and transforming resources, but the dataset's static nature makes it difficult to observe this

progress. Consequently, future research should, therefore, adopt longitudinal designs to investigate how the relationship between strategic agility and digital transformation evolves, stabilises throughout business cycles.

Second, the study used self-reported data gathered through standardised questionnaires. Even though reliability tests demonstrated internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha between 0.68 and 0.88), self-reporting may add perceptual bias, especially when assessing organisational performance and digital capability maturity, as it tends to be difficult for an employee who may not be well-versed in IT capabilities to understand where the organisation is in terms of its digital capabilities. Respondents may have overstated or understated their organisations' agility or digital performance, due to positional bias or optimism. Triangulating future data using objective performance measures like return on assets, digital investment ratios, or innovation rates would improve validity and decrease subjectivity.

Third, the chosen purposive snowball sampling method, while effective in reaching eligible respondents, restricts generalisability across sectors and outside of the City of Johannesburg. As a result, the findings are naturally limited by the institutional and infrastructure make-up of the city. Perhaps, conducting comparative studies across the South African economic sectors and replicating the findings in other South African urban or provincial contexts would determine whether the observed patterns reflect the larger emerging-market phenomena or localised effects.

Fourth, a further significant limitation of this study is the emergence of the unplanned construct 'overall employee perception'. This indicates that the instrument employed may have captured broader evaluative tendencies that extend beyond the scope and constructs outlined in the conceptual framework.

### **7.5.2: Theoretical Limitations**

In theory, the unsupported moderating hypothesis (H3) calls into question the limits of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory when applied in the context of digital transformation. The finding that the relationship between strategic agility and organisational performance was not significantly moderated by digital adaptability ( $p = 0.602$ ) raises the possibility that the anticipated synergistic interplay between these capabilities may not always materialise uniformly. There could be several reasons for this.

First, digital transformation in many firms in Johannesburg are still focused on automation and efficiency rather than on strategic renewal. As noted by Domniku and Ahmeti (2024), when technology adoption is separated from strategy, it immediately improves performance but does not necessarily increase strategic agility. Therefore, the theoretical assumption that digital

technologies automatically enhance the impact on performance oversimplifies the relationship. Thus, future research should test this hypothesis using models that differentiate between operational digitisation and strategic digital transformation to determine whether digital dimensions support dynamic capacities.

Second, the current study considered digital adaptability as a one-dimensional construct (Dimension C3), which was predominantly measured using indicators of technological integration and responsiveness. This operationalisation may not have completely addressed the strategic, cultural, and structural dimensions of digital transformation. The insignificant interaction term might thus represent a construct limitation rather than the absence of impact. Future study could improve measuring scales by integrating indicators for digital culture, leadership commitment, and cross-functional integration, as proposed by Verhoef et al. (2021) and Shehadeh et al. (2023).

Third, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), despite its conceptual strength, might need to be contextually adjusted to reflect the reality of emerging markets. The theory posits that sensing, seizing, and transforming work well in environments with comparatively stable institutional infrastructures. In Johannesburg, a city marred with high levels of regulatory uncertainty and infrastructure instability, capability interactions may be nonlinear or delayed. Therefore, future research should expand the theory by modelling resource restrictions and environmental turbulence as independent moderating factors.

### **7.5.3: Directions for Future Research**

Expanding on these limitations, numerous avenues are worth exploring:

#### **1. Longitudinal studies**

Monitoring businesses over time may show how digital transformation and agility coexist and whether delayed moderating effects appear as integration progresses.

#### **2. Mixed-method techniques**

Combining quantitative modelling with qualitative research would provide insight on the influence of other organisational mechanisms, such as leadership behaviour, cultural adaptability, and process redesign, through which digital transformation interacts with agility.

#### **3. Expanded theoretical models**

Expanded theoretical frameworks could include insights from socio-technical systems or institutional theory to describe how human and environmental factors influence the effectiveness of dynamic capabilities.

#### **4. Sector-specific analysis**

Sector-specific analysis, for example, manufacturing, ICT, and public utilities, could reveal whether the relationships differ across industries that are affected by different levels of digital intensity.

#### **5. Comparative regional studies**

Comparative regional studies across different South African urban economies could help ascertain whether the City of Johannesburg pattern of strong direct but weak interactive effects of digital adaptability represents a more general developmental stage in the evolution of digital capabilities.

In summary, the limitations of this study constitute its cross-sectional, self-reported, and context-specific nature, as well as the theoretical oversimplification of digital transformation as a single moderating construct. Hence, future research should employ multi-dimensional and longitudinal designs to capture, among others, the dynamic interaction between digital adaptability, organisational learning, and strategic agility. Thus, this will enable a more complex and contemporary grounded understanding of how organisations in emerging economies translate dynamic capabilities into long-term performance advantages.

#### **6. Emerging Construct (EC): Overall Employee Perception**

Furthermore, due to the existence of the unanticipated construct 'overall employee perception', future research should consider examining the influence of overall employee perception, as its appearance in this study suggests its critical role in shaping employees' responses to constructs such as organisational performance, digital transformation and strategic agility.

#### **7.6: Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the research results and analysis in relation to the reviewed literature as a basis for elaborating on the study's theoretical and practical contributions as well as recommendations for future research. The study acknowledged that firms in the City of Johannesburg operate in a turbulent and technologically changing business environment where traditional sources of competitiveness are becoming ineffective and less relevant.

#### **7.7: Conclusion**

The primary focus of the study was to investigate the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance and to determine how digital transformation moderates this relationship within firms operating in the City of Johannesburg. Although global research has

shown that agility improves performance and digitalisation facilitates adaptation, little is known about how these dynamics appear in developing urban economies that are often characterised by infrastructure constraints, rapid shifts in technology, and diverse organisational cultures.

Building upon this problem, the study was underpinned by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which explains organisational success through the ability to sense, seize, and transform in response to change in the market. Three hypotheses were developed to examine the direct and moderating relationship between digital transformation, strategic agility, and organisational performance. A quantitative research approach was used. Standardised questionnaires were distributed to 211 respondents from public and private institutions operating in the City of Johannesburg. Regression analysis, validity, and reliability ensured methodological rigour and offered a solid empirical foundation for interpretation.

The findings demonstrated that employee perception, digital adaptability, and strategy agility each have a positive and statistically significant effect on organisational performance, affirming that both digital capability and strategic responsiveness are critical to sustain competitiveness. However, there was insignificant evidence to support the moderating influence of digital adaptability, indicating that most firms in Johannesburg use digital transformation and strategic agility as stand-alone rather than integrated capabilities. The findings suggest that although organisations are gradually adopting digital technologies and agile practices, there is still a huge synergistic gap between the two.

When interpreting the findings through the Dynamic Capabilities lens, it became clear that while Johannesburg firms have excellent sensing and seizing capabilities, supported to a greater extent by digital technologies, they still, nevertheless struggle to transform their organisational structures and cultures to maintain a sustained competitiveness. In this view, dynamic capabilities in developing countries are progressing unevenly, punctuated by inadequate organisational learning capacity, leadership cohesion, and infrastructure constraints.

The study makes a theoretical contribution by extending the Dynamic Capabilities framework to include digital adaptation as a unique, cross-cutting capacity, while at the same time emphasising the human aspect of dynamic capabilities through employee engagement. In practical terms, it provides managers with specific strategies for integrating digital technologies into strategic processes, enhancing leadership unity, and cultivating cultures of engagement and learning.

Overall, the study concludes that organisational performance in the City of Johannesburg's dynamic business environment is not just dependent on agility or digital transformation alone, but on their intentional alignment and integration with human and structural enablers.

Organisations that can coordinate these factors will be in greater position to transform responsiveness into resilience and adaptability into long-term competitiveness.

This conclusion brings the research journey to an end: from the conceptual gap identified in Chapter 1 through theoretical framing, methodological design, empirical testing, and interpretive analysis to enhancing understanding of how strategic agility and digital transformation influence organisational performance in emerging-market contexts.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: List of Codes

#### Section A: Demographics

|                     | Item Description                    | Coding                                                  |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Demographics</b> | Ownership structure of the business | 1 = Public, 2 = Private                                 |
|                     | Organisation sector/industry        | 1 = Manufacturing, 2 = Services, 3 = IT/Tech, 4 = Other |
|                     | Organisation size                   | 1 = <50, 2 = 50–249, 3 = 250–999, 4 = 1000+             |
|                     | Respondent position                 | 1 = Executive, 2 = Manager, 3 = Supervisor, 4 = Other   |
|                     | Years of experience                 | 1 = <1, 2 = 1–3, 3 = 4–7, 4 = 8+                        |

#### Section B: Strategic Agility

|                                             | Item Description                        | Coding     |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Dimension 1</b><br>Strategic Sensitivity | Organisation monitors market trends     | Likert 1–5 |
|                                             | Collects and analyses customer feedback | Likert 1–5 |
|                                             | Leadership recognises threats quickly   | Likert 1–5 |
| <b>Dimension 2.</b><br>Resource Fluidity    | Rapid resource shifting                 | Likert 1–5 |
|                                             | Cross-department collaboration          | Likert 1–5 |
|                                             | Scales initiatives quickly              | Likert 1–5 |
| <b>Dimension 3</b><br>Leadership Unity      | Leaders share common priorities         | Likert 1–5 |
|                                             | Strategic decisions made promptly       | Likert 1–5 |
|                                             | Leaders support change                  | Likert 1–5 |

#### Section C: Organisational Performance

|                                                         | Item Description                                     | Coding     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Dimension 1</b><br>Financial Performance             | Revenue growth achieved                              | Likert 1–5 |
|                                                         | Profitability improved                               | Likert 1–5 |
|                                                         | Cost efficiency improved through digital initiatives | Likert 1–5 |
| <b>Dimension 2.</b><br><i>Non-Financial</i> Performance | Customer satisfaction improved                       | Likert 1–5 |
|                                                         | Employee engagement improved                         | Likert 1–5 |
|                                                         | Brand reputation strengthened                        | Likert 1–5 |
| <b>Dimension 3</b><br><i>Digital Adaptability</i>       | Integration of new digital technologies              | Likert 1–5 |
|                                                         | Digital projects implemented effectively             | Likert 1–5 |
|                                                         | Responds faster than competitors                     | Likert 1–5 |

#### Section D: Overall Employee Perception

|                           | Item Description                       | Coding     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Overall Perception</b> | Strategic agility drives performance   | Likert 1–5 |
|                           | Quick strategy adaptation is essential | Likert 1–5 |

## Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

### The impact of strategic agility on organisational performance in the digital era: Businesses operating in the City of Johannesburg.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, a final-year MPHIL Corporate Strategy student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria, South Africa. As part of my MPHIL Corporate Strategy studies, I am conducting research on the impact of strategic agility on organizational performance. This survey aims to gather feedback on the impact of strategic agility on organizational performance in the current digital era.

Participation in this survey is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Nonetheless, we appreciate your feedback; only aggregated data will be used for this report, and the responses you provide will remain anonymous.

The survey comprises four sections and should take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. When responding to each statement, please provide answers from your own perspective. By completing the survey, you confirm that you are voluntarily participating in this research.

For any further information or clarity on this survey, please contact me \_\_\_\_\_ or my supervisor at \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Section A: Demographics

|    |                                        |                      |                  |                   |                        |
|----|----------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|    |                                        | <b>Public</b>        |                  | <b>Private</b>    |                        |
| 1. | Ownership structure of the business    |                      |                  |                   |                        |
| 2. | Organisation sector/ industry          | <b>Manufacturing</b> | <b>Services</b>  | <b>IT/Tech</b>    | <b>Other (Specify)</b> |
|    |                                        |                      |                  |                   |                        |
| 3. | Organisational size (No. of employees) | <b>&lt;50</b>        | <b>50 – 249</b>  | <b>250-999</b>    | <b>1 000+</b>          |
|    |                                        |                      |                  |                   |                        |
| 4. | Respondent Position                    | <b>Executive</b>     | <b>Manager</b>   | <b>Supervisor</b> | <b>Other (Specify)</b> |
|    |                                        |                      |                  |                   |                        |
| 5. | Years of Experience in the position    | <b>&lt;1 Year</b>    | <b>1-3 Years</b> | <b>4-7 Years</b>  | <b>8+ Years</b>        |
|    |                                        |                      |                  |                   |                        |

## Section B: Strategic Agility (Independent Variable)

**Direction:** Rate the following constructs on the impact of strategic agility on organisational performance in a digital era using the following scale: **1 = Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.**

|                                                    | <b>Statement / Question</b>                                                                                 | <b>Response Scale</b> |          |         |       |                |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
|                                                    |                                                                                                             | Strongly Disagree     | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| <b>Dimension 1</b><br><i>Strategic Sensitivity</i> | 1. My organisation continuously monitors market trends to identify opportunities.                           |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | 2. We regularly collect and analyse customer feedback to adapt our strategy.                                |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | 3. Our leadership team quickly recognises potential threats in the competitive landscape.                   |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    |                                                                                                             |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | <b>Statement/ Question</b>                                                                                  | <b>Response Scale</b> |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    |                                                                                                             | Strongly Disagree     | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| <b>Dimension 2.</b><br><i>Resource Fluidity</i>    | 1. My organisation can rapidly shift resources such as budget, people, and technology to priority projects. |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | 2. Departments collaborate effectively to share resources when priorities change.                           |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | 3. We are able to quickly scale up or scale down initiatives as needed.                                     |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | <b>Statement/ Question</b>                                                                                  | <b>Response Scale</b> |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    |                                                                                                             | Strongly Disagree     | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| <b>Dimension 3</b><br><i>Leadership Unity</i>      | 1. Senior leaders share a common understanding of the organisation's strategic priorities.                  |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | 2. Strategic decisions are made promptly without unnecessary delays.                                        |                       |          |         |       |                |
|                                                    | 3. Leaders' support and drive change initiatives consistently across the organisation.                      |                       |          |         |       |                |

### Section C: Organisational Performance (Dependent Variable)

| Dimension 1<br>Financial Performance      | Statement / Question                                                                  | Response Scale    |          |         |       |                |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
|                                           |                                                                                       | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|                                           | 1. Our organisation has achieved revenue growth over the past 3 years                 |                   |          |         |       |                |
|                                           | 2. Profitability has improved compared to previous years.                             |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Dimension 2.<br>Non-Financial Performance | Statement/ Question                                                                   | Response Scale    |          |         |       |                |
|                                           |                                                                                       | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|                                           | 1. Customer satisfaction levels have improved.                                        |                   |          |         |       |                |
|                                           | 2. Employee engagement and retention have increased.                                  |                   |          |         |       |                |
| Dimension 3<br>Digital Adaptability       | Statement/ Question                                                                   | Response Scale    |          |         |       |                |
|                                           |                                                                                       | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|                                           | 1. Our organisation successfully integrates new digital technologies into operations. |                   |          |         |       |                |
|                                           | 2. Digital transformation projects are implemented effectively and on schedule.       |                   |          |         |       |                |
|                                           | Statement/ Question                                                                   | Response Scale    |          |         |       |                |
|                                           |                                                                                       | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|                                           | 3. We respond faster to market changes compared to our competitors.                   |                   |          |         |       |                |
|                                           |                                                                                       |                   |          |         |       |                |

### Section D: Overall Employees' Perception

| Statement/ Question                                                                              | Response Scale    |          |         |       |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
|                                                                                                  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1. Strategic agility is a major driver of our organisational current performance.                |                   |          |         |       |                |
| 2. In the digital era, the ability to adapt strategy quickly is more important than ever before. |                   |          |         |       |                |

**Source:** adapted from (Tanujaya et al., 2023)

## Appendix C: Ethical Approval

### GIBS ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM 2025/26

#### G. APPROVALS FOR/OF THIS APPLICATION

When the applicant is a student of GIBS, the applicant must please ensure that the supervisor and co-supervisor (where relevant) has signed the form before submission

#### **STUDENT RESEARCHER/APPLICANT:**

29. I affirm that all relevant information has been provided in this form and its attachments and that all statements made are correct.

Student Researcher's Name in capital letters: .....

Date: 14 Aug 2025

Supervisor Name in capital letters:

Date: 14 Aug 2025

Co-supervisor Name in capital letters: .....

Date: 14 Aug 2025

**Note:** GIBS shall do everything in its power to protect the personal information supplied herein, in accordance to its company privacy policies as well the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013. Access to all of the above provided personal information is restricted, only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to this information.

#### **Decision:**

Approved

#### **REC comments:**

Date: 22 Aug 2025