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STRATEGIC CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL DISRUPTION: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY ON ORGANISATIONAL ADAPTABILITY AND INNOVATION CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Technology disruption, driven by technological advancements like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and big data, is revolutionising industries globally. Organisations must transform by adopting strategic change management, organisational flexibility, and a culture of innovation to counter technological disruptions. This study aims to investigate the role of strategic change management practices in organisational resilience and flexibility in terms of leadership, decision-making, and strategic alignment. Besides, it explores the role performed by innovation culture in establishing organisational resilience to survive and flourish in the rapid digital era. A mixed-methods study was utilised, with quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews. Data were collected in 20-30 organisations in three sectors, which are technology, manufacturing, and services. Purposive sampling was utilised by the study with the choice of participants with hands-on experience of digital transformation. Regression and correlation analysis were employed for the analysis of quantitative data, and thematic analysis for analysing the qualitative data. The study confirmed that proactive implementation of digital transformation in organisational strategy was very positively correlated with

higher adaptability. Leadership commitment ($r = 0.78$) and innovation culture ($r = 0.82$) were key enablers of resilience. Reactive approaches had lower adaptability. The findings highlight leadership and innovation culture as key to achieving successful digital transformation. Companies must foster an enabling culture and corresponding technological plans in line with long-term goals if they are to remain competitive in the digital economy.

KEYWORDS: Digital Disruption, Organizational Adaptability, Strategic Change management, Innovation Culture, Decision-Making, Technology Integration, Resilience, Leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

The era of technology has introduced unprecedented threats and opportunities to organisations that force them to catch up with technology at an accelerated pace. Digital disruption, driven by technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analysis, and automation, forces businesses to alter their strategic frameworks and business practices (Adepoju *et al.*, 2023). As organisations turn to digital transformation, change management has now become critical to align technology with organisational culture and goals (Appio *et al.*, 2021). This is not only technology-dependent, but also on whether organisations can foster an environment of innovation, which promotes flexibility and adaptability in coping with change (Al-Edenat, 2023). The literature has emphasised the necessity of building organisational resilience, through which companies can not only survive but also prosper in the altered environment (Barlette and Baillette, 2022). This study tries to find out how strategic change management practices and innovation culture contribute to organisational success in the context of digital transformation.

Despite numerous studies on digital transformation in the literature, limited study has been conducted that includes strategic change management and organisational culture, particularly innovation. Most studies cover technological adoption or service-related dimensions of change and neglect cultural and strategic factors that facilitate long-run adaptability (Basiru *et al.*, 2023). This gap in the literature presents a challenge to businesses seeking to implement effective change management that also builds an innovative and responsive organisational culture. The balance between strategic change management and innovation culture in a manner whereby the digital disruption can be handled successfully (Candrasa *et al.*, 2024). This article can help fill this gap by analysing the mutual interdependence of change management, innovation, and organisational flexibility and, therefore, contribute to the wholesome knowledge of digital transformation.

The rationale of the study is based on the necessity of organisations being in possession of sound frameworks to deal with digital transformation. Existing literature indicates that new technology adoption in various organisations does not necessarily entail the application of the required cultural and strategic change to spur sustainable success (Florek-Paszkowska *et al.*, 2021). The main opportunity is to create an innovative culture that will engage in adaptation with the initiation of

continuous improvement, being crucial to the survival in a changed world concerning digital disruption (Casalino *et al.*, 2019). By engaging with strategic change management, organisational adaptability and innovation culture, this paper will provide original thinking about how organisations can streamline the three aspects so that they become better prepared to handle resiliency (Celestin and Vanitha, 2017). With the pressure on companies to innovate and transform more and more becoming a burden to businesses, there is a need to know how these dynamics should be handled better so that businesses can gain a competitive edge in the market (Eyo-Udo, 2024). The study could not have come at a better time; it offers convenient, practical suggestions to organisations amidst digital changes.

The current article is organised as follows: The Methodology section will describe the research design, data gathering procedures and data analysis techniques that have been employed in the study of the issue of strategic change management, organisational agility, and innovation culture in the environment of the digital disruption. The Review of Literature includes how the study articles on the digital disruption, change management, and innovation culture have been conducted, and the outline notes the research gaps the study aims to address. The Results section presents the main set of research findings, and the Discussion presents these findings in terms of the already researched studies. The paper ends by summarising the important findings and implications for practice, as well as suggestions for how future research could be conducted. The model opens up a deep analysis of the issue and can add to the growing literature on strategic change management and organisational flexibility facing a technological upheaval.

In this study, there are two key objectives of study. To begin with, it seeks to analyse how the improvement of strategic change management practices influences flexibility in the face of digital disruption in organisations. Particularly, it seeks to find answers to leadership, decision-making, and strategic matching in establishing organisational resilience amidst the journey of digital transformation. The second aim is to analyse how the innovation culture has contributed to the capacity of an organisation to be resilient and survive and thrive even in the face of technological distraction. Such a goal also underlines the significance of establishing an environment of creativity and manual skills and never-ending education as the major path towards maintaining long-term prosperity in the digital economy.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The research design used in the presented study was mixed-methods that incorporated the iterative use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure that there is a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between strategic change management, organisational adaptability, and innovation culture in digital disruption. Mixed-methods approach was also chosen to ensure that the analysis is richer and fuller, as it allows triangulation of quantitative survey results and qualitative interview results. The methodology offered a wide range of statistics and context-sensitive densities, to the extent that the research could embrace different aspects of the many-colored phenomenon under investigation.

2.2 Study Population and Sampling

Digital transformation was applied in different fields by target organisations, including technology, manufacturing and services. The participants were enrolled considering purposive sampling because they first experienced a digital disruption. The selection of organisations was grounded on the existence of active change management projects that are linked to digital transformation. The number of sampled organisations was 20 to 30 organisations, and diversity was ensured so that the collected data would be within manageable levels. The managerial level, senior managers, innovators or change agents of these organisations were contacted in order to offer articulate information that was valuable and relevant to the issues in question.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

The surveys and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. Questionnaires of employees and managers were taken to obtain quantitative data related to their experience of managing change, innovation culture, and reactivity to digital discontinuity. The interviews carried out amongst the chief organisational leaders were semi-structured so as to have a clear understanding of the strategies and practices in the digital transformations. It is the dual nature of this approach that helped to achieve both quantitative breadth and qualitative depth, meaning that the findings of the study were balanced and represent different organisational experiences of digital change.

2.4 Research Instruments and Tools

The survey used a structured questionnaire as the

most useful tool to measure attitudes and practices of the organisation in terms of strategic change management and innovation culture. The survey used Likert-scale questions to determine the attitude of the respondents on adaptability, innovation and digital change. Interviews utilised a semi-structured interview guide on the subjects of leadership behaviour, organisational issues and cultural development about digital transformation. The two instruments were pilot tested to ascertain their consistency and clarity, and adjustments were made accordingly before any final data collection.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data obtained were analysed with the aid of inferential and descriptive statistics, such as regression and correlation analysis. These were used in the analysis of the interdependence between the strategic change management practices, organisational adaptability and innovation culture. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative information that was in interview form. Coding of transcripts was done with the aim of separating out common themes emerging on innovation strategies and change management practices. Such a blend of thematic and statistical analysis enabled a more in-depth exchange regarding the way various organisations deal with digital disruption and how they create an innovation culture.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In the study, ethical considerations were taken into consideration to enable the rights and confidentiality of the participants to be upheld. Informed consent was given to all participants explaining how the process works, the voluntary nature of the response and the option to leave anytime. Identifying information was kept secret by anonymising the data, and sensitive data was guarded. It was in this way that the study conformed to the institutional ethical principles in that it did not cause any harm to the participants. Also, the outcomes of the research were presented without falsifying data to avoid losing the integrity and credibility of the research.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital disruption is the first effect that the new technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and big data, may have on common business models and industries. Digital disruption presents barriers when updates of business models or technologies significantly influence an industry, requiring a response where companies adjust or

become irrelevant. The change of technology is a high-speed phenomenon tending to disrupt today, and organisations have to reorganise their operations in a constant repetitive manner (Hartl, 2019). Though digital disruption creates innovation possibilities, it has its challenges, especially to the organisational culture, the leadership and the ability to combine it with technology to an organisational strategy (Jerab and Mabrouk, 2023). In cases where organisations experience these challenges, they are supposed to be capable of responding to the pace and sophistication of digital innovations and become flexible and resilient measures that would advance them individually in a very unpredictable digital world that is very competitive. This kind of understanding of digital disruption is therefore required for organisations that want to use the new technologies in ways that would not jeopardise their futures and continue growing.

Digital disruption is managed by having change management at its strategic level. The term is used about the process of organisational adjustment in terms of organisational structure, organisational culture and change in operations to fit changes in technological advancements. Technology, coupled with the realisation that traditional models of change management are not adequate anymore, necessitates that firms have more flexible models in which changes can be reacted to relatively quickly to embrace technological changes and shifts in the market. This change necessitates the coordination of the digital revolution practices with broader organisational initiatives so that the technological initiatives are aligned with the long-term strategy of the firm (Omowole *et al.*, 2024). In order to succeed in the digital age, change management approaches ought to be dynamic, which means that ongoing learning and innovation should be encouraged. The proper management of change involves the creation of an innovative culture where workers are relaxed to explore their options and embrace new technology. This is the way that not only enables adoption of technology, but also enables continuous development and versatility to survive in the disruptive era.

Organisational flexibility will be necessary in order to offer competitiveness against emerging technology environments. Being malleable to the new digital technologies, processes, and market situations influences the long-run sustainability of an organisation (Keller, 2024). An innovation culture that transfers rewards to creativity, experimentation and teamwork is also one of the main sources of adaptability. Innovator organisations can alter course

and pursue new opportunities as they arrive, smartly responding in a rapid way to digital disruption (Olaleye *et al.*, 2024). This article reveals that organisations that emphasise innovation take employees who are open to change, who test new ideas, and cross-functional teams. Besides, the application of digital technologies, such as automation and real-time data analysis, enhances organisational agility through improved decision-making and operation optimisation. However, creating an innovation culture requires tremendous leadership time, resource investment, and re-prioritisation of organisational goals to facilitate continuing learning and innovation at all levels of the business.

Technology plays an important role in driving organisational change by enabling companies to automate processes, improve decision-making, and personalise customer experiences. Cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things are among the digital technologies that present strong tools to organisations for the purpose of driving operational effectiveness (Rauniyar *et al.*, 2023). These technologies allow companies to collect and process vast volumes of data, leading to enhanced insights and better decisions. Nevertheless, the use of these technologies usually calls for considerable organisational, process, and employee role adjustments, to which employees might object. Overcoming resistance is key to successful digital transformation; by itself, technology is not sufficient without a culture that enables its adoption. The leaders ought to be engaged in actively aligning technology with strategic goals and ensuring technology adoption is embraced at all organisational levels. With the establishment of a digital culture for the support of new technologies, organisations are in a position to initiate positive change that supports their overall strategic agendas.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating strategy, culture, and technology to respond effectively to digital disruption. Hopp *et al.* (2018) observe that organisations that are successful in managing digital transformation make sure to integrate technological advancements with organisational culture, leadership, and change management practices. Imran *et al.* (2021) note that organisations that adopt flexible strategies would succeed in overcoming the disruptions associated with the digital phenomenon because they will be able to adjust effortlessly in response to the evolution of the technological environment. Effective leadership of organisations also matters in changing organisations through the maze of digital change,

and the vision and it is holding on to work workforce motivation and engagement in the adoption of new technology. Supply chain resilience literature is also concerned with the need to focus on technology-influenced approaches and forecasting outbreaks. According to such studies, to have the capacity to counter digital disruptions and be competitive, organisations are required to invest in technology and culture too.

Numerous theoretical frameworks can offer beneficial knowledge on how it is possible to manage digital transformation. According to the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) model, it is important to note that transformation in technology depends on technology, organisational ability, and environmental forces like the nature of the market (Putrawan *et al.*, 2025). The second of them is the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, which describes the process of diffusion of innovations in organisations and industries. As explained by the DOI, it is more likely that the early adopters will get a competitive advantage. The Dynamic Capabilities Framework that emphasises the capacity of an organisation to mix and recombine resources according to fast-changing environments comes in quite handy, especially when approaching the concept of digital adaptation (Mou *et al.*, 2022). Such theoretical perspectives can give insights into how

the organisational capabilities can help in understanding the aspect of prospering in the digital disruption, giving relation to culture, strategy, and technology, to achieve sustainable success.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Organisational Strategies to Confront Digital Disruption

It was established that there are three important organisational responses to respond to the digital disruption. Reactive response was adopted by 30% of organisations to provide temporary solutions to the existing issues without any future perspective or plan, as demonstrated in Table I. Proactive integration was implemented in the majority of the organisations (60%), with the process of digital transformation being incorporated into planning and the organisation having an innovation culture. Lastly, 10% of companies adopted adaptive innovation, in which greater focus was on progressive technological enhancement and employee engagement so that they could not only track but also remain robust in a changing technological environment. These results implied the difference between the preparedness and response level of the organisations.

Table I: Organisational Strategies in Response to Digital Disruption.

| Strategy Type | Number of Organisations (%) | Key Features |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Reactive Response | 30% | Focused on immediate problem-solving, short-term fixes. |
| Proactive Integration | 60% | Integrated digital transformation within strategic planning, fostering an innovation culture. |
| Adaptive Innovation | 10% | Focused on constant adaptation through technological upgrades and employee involvement. |

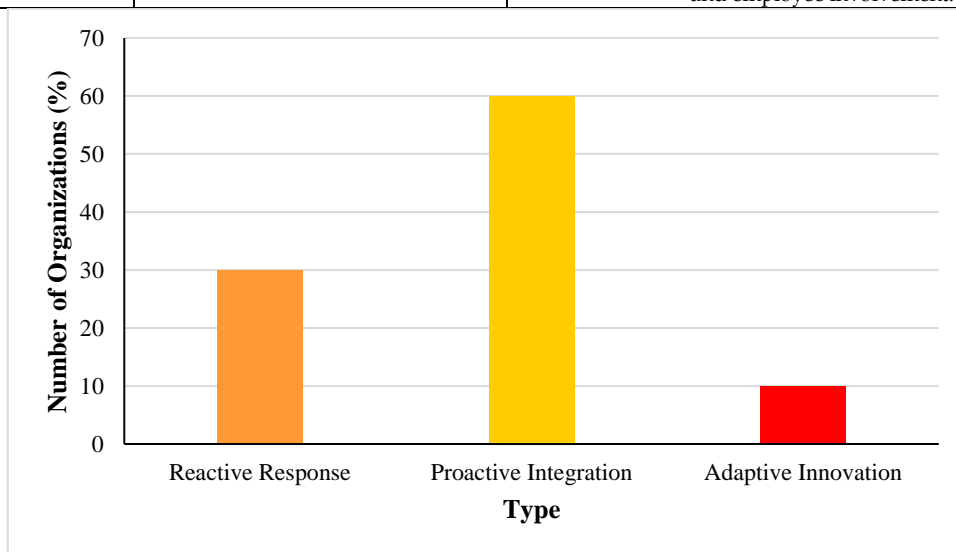


Figure 1: Organisational Strategy Response to Digital Disruption.

The survey revealed that three different strategies were employed by organisations in response to

digital disruption. 30% of organisations employed a reactive strategy, looking at short-term issues without having a long-term strategic plan, as shown in Figure 1. Alternatively, 60% of organisations exercised proactive integration, correlating digital transformation with strategic intent and fostering an environment of innovation. Finally, 10% exercised adaptive innovation, underlining continuous adaptation through technological progress and the involvement of employees. These findings highlighted varied levels of readiness, with proactive strategies being more aligned with higher adaptability and innovativeness in companies that are reacting to digital disruption.

4.2 Success Factors Affecting Digital Transformation

Comparison of digital transformation success factors revealed stark differences between organisations with high and low adaptability. Leadership commitment was equally an essential success factor, and 85% of highly adaptable organisations enjoyed good leadership commitment as opposed to 45% of low-adaptability organisations, as shown in Table II. The culture of innovation was equally significant, and 90% of highly adaptable organisations were in favour of a culture of continuous innovation, but only 30% of low-adaptability organisations. Technological preparedness and worker motivation also assisted in making contributions towards adaptability, emphasising the importance of aligning organisational culture and strategic vision for successful transformation.

Table II: Comparison Of Digital Transformation Success Factors.

| Factor | High Adaptability (%) | Low Adaptability (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Leadership Commitment | 85% | 45% |
| Innovation Culture | 90% | 30% |
| Technological Readiness | 80% | 50% |
| Employee Engagement | 75% | 40% |

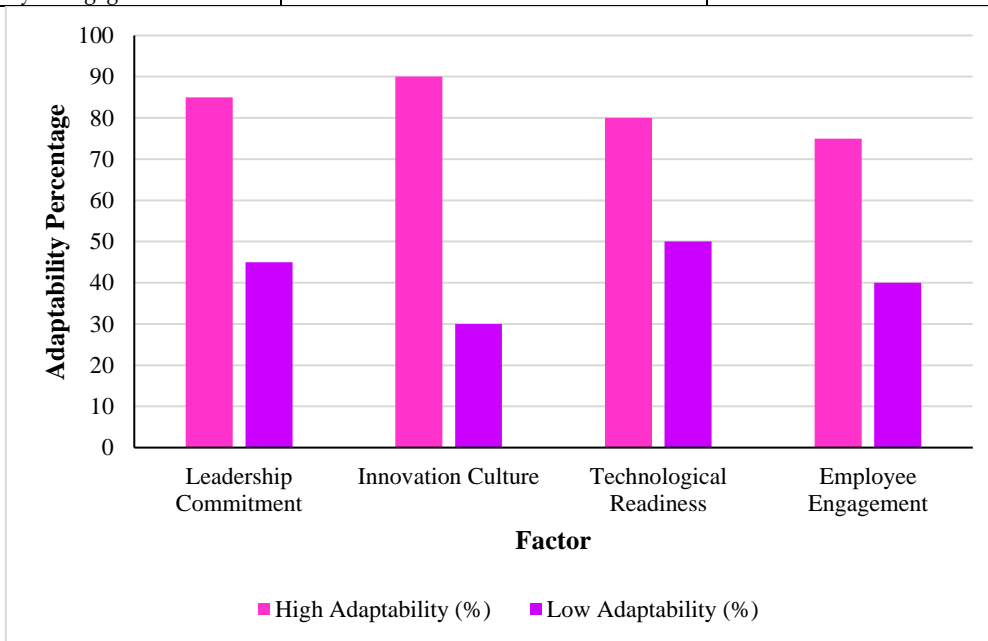


Figure 2: Comparison Of Digital Transformation Success Factors.

The study compared various success factors of digital transformation between companies with high and low adaptability. The findings revealed that innovation culture and leadership commitment were far more prevalent in highly adaptable organisations, where 85% and 90% of highly adaptable organisations reported high innovation practice strength and leadership practice strength, respectively, as shown in Figure 2. Organisations with low adaptability possessed significantly lower

activity in these themes, primarily in employee engagement and technological readiness. The study demonstrated that increased flexibility was linked to improved leadership and culture of persistent innovation, both of which were crucial in order to succeed against digital disruptions.

4.3 Statistical Analysis of Factors Influencing Organisational Adaptability

Statistical analysis assisted in introducing insights

concerning the factors influencing organisational adaptability. Leadership commitment ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$) and innovation culture ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$) were strongly correlated with higher adaptability, as shown in Table III. These factors reflected that organisations with committed leadership and an innovative culture were most capable of responding

to digital disruption. Technology integration ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.05$) and staff engagement ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.05$) were also highly connected with adaptability, albeit their influence was relatively weaker. The analysis underscored the extremely significant role played by leadership and culture in organisational transformation.

Table III: Statistical Analysis of Factors Influencing Adaptability.

| Variable | Pearson Correlation (r) | Significance (p) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Leadership Commitment | 0.78 | < 0.01 |
| Innovation Culture | 0.82 | < 0.01 |
| Technological Integration | 0.63 | < 0.05 |
| Employee Engagement | 0.59 | < 0.05 |

5. DISCUSSION

The study highlights the imperative role of strategic change management practices toward organisational adaptability in the context of digital disruption. The study emphasises that organisations that have proactive digital transformation strategies, accompanied by leadership commitment and an innovative culture, are more likely to respond to the problems of technological change. These drivers not only enhance organisational resilience but also contribute to the competitiveness of firms within the evolving digital landscape. The results from the study indicated evident organisational reactions to digital disruption. As shown by Table I and Figure 1, 60% of the organisations embraced proactive integration, incorporating digital transformation into their strategic planning in general. This strategy aligned organisational goals with digital innovations, fostering a culture of continuous innovation. The companies that applied a reactive approach amounted to 30% as they tried to find quick solutions and patches in the short term and did not really care about their long-term sustainability. The other 10% utilised adaptive innovation, which is a system that entails constant technological updates and the involvement of employees. The fact that leadership commitment and innovation culture positively correlated significantly with organisational adaptability, as indicated in Table III, indicates that organisations that possess leadership commitment and innovation culture are most likely to emerge triumphant in the struggle against digital disruptions. The discovery corresponds to the increasing significance of aligning leadership and culture in response to the changes in technology.

This study has implications for organisations to adopt digital disruption. The results emphasise that proactive integration is highly imperative because the optimal approach to organisations can be

successful in the long run. It was believed that leadership commitment and innovation culture were important elements in developing an adaptive culture to meet the changing landscape, as seen in the high correlations presented in Table III and Figure II. It is not just the need for organisations to adopt digital technologies but also the need to develop a conducive culture to allow the process of experimenting and being open to adaptation. The results indicate that establishing an innovation culture would make an organisation more adaptable to digital disruptions and enable it to continuously evolve. Also, linking the digital strategies with the long-term organisational business aims helps them to resist the changes of digital change without involving them in the short and reactive approaches (Sewpersadh, 2023). These conclusions confirm the importance of the comprehensive strategies involving not only adopting technologies but also changing the culture to sustain success in the digital realm in the long term.

The results coincide with the past research about organisational transformation and digital disruption. To give an example, Saranani *et al.* (2024) reinforced the supreme importance of value-based leadership in fueling an adaptive organisational culture, whereby leadership commitment significantly correlated with adaptability. In the same way, Trenerry *et al.* (2021) also concluded that businesses equipped with an innovation culture and persistent learning would respond to digital instability relatively well, as shown in this study, wherein 90% of highly adaptable businesses ranked innovation culture at the top. The less that organisational flexibility exists in the digital reactive-centred firms also coincides with what was observed by Tornjanski *et al.* (2015), who noted that the reactive response is inapplicable in the long run when it comes to dealing with the digital disruption issues. This further exposes the fact that there is a need to be inclusive in strategic,

cultural, and technological considerations so as to effectuate a successful digital transformation.

Although this research can provide worthy information on how organisations are responding to the field of digital disruption, it has its share of limitations. To begin with, the sample of 20-30 companies is enough to conduct exploratory analysis, but it does not represent the range of companies in terms of industries or different locations around the world. Therefore, its findings cannot be applied to the entire sector. Also, the use of self-reported results obtained in interviews and questionnaires can introduce bias in the response, like organisational innovation culture and leadership. The study was cross-sectional as well, capturing organisational strategy at a single point in time. Future studies must employ longitudinal studies to see the long-term effect of digital disruption on organisational flexibility and culture. Making the sample larger and involving a range of industry sectors will also enhance the study's solidity and allow deeper comparisons to be made (Trushkina *et al.*, 2020).

Future studies must explore the long-term impact of leadership dedication and innovation culture on digital transformation, as this study makes a snapshot without assessing lasting impacts. Additionally, the degree to which emerging technologies like AI and blockchain contribute to organisational agility would show how these specific technologies contribute to digital transformation. Additionally, future studies need to examine how different organisational structures, such as small companies or not-for-profit organisations, respond to digital disruption compared to massive corporations. A cross-cultural study can also illustrate whether local aspects affect the success of digital projects. The industry-specific issues may also outline the success of digital transformation projects, thus necessitating a study to cover sectoral differences in the future. This would provide more insight into how various

types and sizes of organisations respond to digital disruption.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to learn the relationships between the strategic change management activities, organisational resilience and the innovation culture in a case of the digital disruption. The results point to the conclusion that the organisations that consider the digital transformation in their long-term plans are more flexible and dynamic to technological shocks. One of the key flexibilities most companies achieved and are adapting to the competition posed by the emerging digital transformation was the leadership commitment and instilling an innovation culture, which allows flexibility in product offerings. The given study states that there is an imperative need to balance the organisational culture and technological developments to bring about a smooth change. The research makes a contribution to strategic change management as it covers the significance of dynamic strategy that takes into account leadership, culture and technology. It emphasises the essence of creating a culture of experimentation and consistent learning as a way of promoting enhancement in innovation. Organisations should not just dwell on the importance of adopting technology, but they should also put in place an environment that will facilitate growth and flexibility. In the digital era, the study suggests that organisations invest in leadership, innovation culture and integration of the digital strategy with the business goals. Further research analysis will consider the sector-specific approach to digital transformation, explore long-term consequences of establishing its approach, and discuss using new technologies (such as AI and blockchain) as a method of improving organisational agility.

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