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The Role of Organisational Culture in Digital Transformation in the South African Retail Sector

Malebo Lehabe

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business

Johannesburg, 2024

Supervisor: Erasmus Appiah

DECLARATION

I, _____Malebo Lehabe_____, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Malebo Lehabe Signature: M. Lehabe

Signed at ……Johannesburg……

On the ……30… day of ……April…… 2024…..

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify the role of organisational culture in the South African retail sector and determine how it affects digital transformation. The study considers the state of digital transformation in the South African retail sector, the role of organisational culture and the attributes that hinder and propel the success of digital transformation. COVID-19 accelerated disruption in the retail sector, and retailers were compelled to transform digitally.

This is a qualitative study that focuses on Fast Moving Consumer Goods in the retail sector. Diverse entities were considered regardless of size or digital maturity. The Westerman Framework was the aspect of digital maturity.

It was found that the South African retail sector is in its infancy regarding digital maturity and that retail entities could not provide evidence of the importance of organisational culture. Organisational culture attributes that enable and hinder success and those that currently hinder the success of digital transformation were also considered to understand the impact these attributes have on digital transformation.

KEYWORDS

Digital Culture, Digital Transformation, Organisational Culture, Retail Sector

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To my participants, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to offer your valuable insights and allowing me to use your networks.

To my supervisor, thank you for your support.

To Dr Ngwako Sefoko, you can make anyone fall in love with research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mum, dad, sister, and brother. Thank you for your constant love and support.

To my mum, Elsie Lehabe, you are one of the bravest women I know; thank you for pushing me and encouraging me to finish.

My dad, Earl Lehabe, raised me to believe in myself and that my dreams are valid and worth pursuing.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

4IR	4th Industrial Revolution
AI	Artificial Intelligence
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
HR	Human Resources
IoT	Internet of Things
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
VR	Virtual Reality

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore propellers and prohibitors of digital transformation from the perspective of organisational culture within the South African retail sector.

1.2 Background of the Study

According to Goran et al. (2017), organisational culture is one of the biggest barriers to being digitally effective. This is synonymous with Hemerling et al. (2018), who stated that digital transformation cannot happen without a digital culture in the organisation. According to Kambil (2016), executives interviewed identified a company's culture as the biggest constraint to growing their company. The link between organisational culture, digital transformation and innovation has been researched in the past few years because of the important role that organisational culture plays (Redwood et al., 2016). Culture has become a top concern for executives and has a critical impact as high as 69.21% when it comes to entities realising their goals (Redwood et al., 2016). According to Teasdale (2002), a comment was made: "Culture eats strategy for breakfast", meaning even if an entity has a great strategy but an organisation does not have the right culture, it will not achieve its goals.

The retail sector has been severely impacted by COVID-19 to the point that digital transformation is not an option for this sector (Rampathy et al., 2020). Some authors believe that COVID-19 has resulted in a boom in online trade (Mwamba & Qutieshat, 2021), while others believe that there has not been a change in the adoption of online trade in South Africa according to a study conducted on the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on the retail sector. The findings of this study did not show much change in consumer behaviour from physical stores to online pre and post-COVID; the authors do acknowledge that the short time span

between pre-covid to post-covid might not have been enough to truly reflect a change in customer behaviour (Redflank, 2021). The author did, however, note that there might be an increase in online trade in the future due to the change in customers who have different expectations from the current consumers because they are digital natives. While Redflank (2021) may differ on the reasons for the change in retail in South Africa, they do agree that there is a change happening in the retail sector that requires retailers to transform digitally to remain relevant. Retail has also been stated as an industry that is highly likely to be disrupted in South Africa (Armstrong, 2019), which makes this industry critical for digital transformation.

1.3 Research Problem

Rampathy et al. (2020) said that COVID-19 had catapulted the need for players in the retail sector to digitally transform. Retailers need to find innovative ways to interact with the customer, better supply chain, logistics, pricing, merchandise, employees, etc (Rampathy et al., 2020). The biggest barrier to digital transformation is organisational culture (Westerman et al., 2019). It is, therefore, important to understand the type of organisational culture that a retailer needs to have to be able to digitally transform their organisation in the hopes of being competitive and relevant.

The importance of this research is rooted in the fact that digital transformation from the retail perspective in South Africa is not widely covered (Van Dyk & Van Belle, 2019). The retail sector is a sector that is highly likely to be disrupted in South Africa and, therefore, is in need of entities to understand the digital transformation from a retail perspective (Armstrong, 2019). According to Al-Faihani and Al-Alawi (2020), digital transformation has been studied from a financial sector perspective and from the perspective of developed countries. The author suggests that studies on organisational culture affecting digital transformation be expanded to different sectors and not only developed countries.

This study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on the state of digital transformation in the South African retail sector and to how the current organisational culture in retailers affects the state of digital transformation in this industry.

1.4 Research Questions

The research problem seeks to understand the role of organisational culture in digital transformation in the South African retail sector. The research questions are aimed at firstly understanding digital transformation in South Africa because Alexander and Mason (2017) described the South African retail sector as not yet a "fait accompli" when it comes to e-retail and one that has many challenges, as with many emerging economies. Secondly, there are limited studies on the relationship between culture and innovation (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2011). Thirdly, Naranjo-Valencia et al. (2011) describe that there are limited studies on the effect of culture on innovation, and most of the studies have focused on cultural characteristics, not on archetypes of cultural values, and most of these studies were done in the United States.

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1) What is the state of digital transformation in the South African retail sector?

2) How important is organisational culture to digital transformation?

3) How do the drivers of organisational culture enhance or hinder the implementation of digital transformation in the South African retail sector?

1.5 Study Rationale

Based on the literature reviewed at this moment, the topic of organisational culture has mostly been researched from the perspective of developed countries and the financial services sector, which has been experiencing disruption all over

the world (Al-Faihani & Al-Alawi, 2020). It is therefore argued that it may be incorrect to assume that the organisational culture of corporate organisations in developed countries behaves the same as the organisational culture in the corporate organisations of developing countries (Al-Faihani & Al-Alawi, 2020).

It is also incorrect to assume that the behaviour of the financial sector and the retail sector is the same even if they are in the same country (Al-Faihani & Al-Alawi, 2020). There has been little research done on this topic in the South African retail sector, and this research aims to contribute to the knowledge of the role that organisational culture plays in the digital transformation of the South African retail sector (Van Dyk & Van Belle, 2019).

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The research was delimited accordingly:

i. The research focuses on the South African retail sector.
ii. The research only focuses on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) in the retail sector.
iii. The participants of the study will only be senior management as they will have a better overview of their relevant entities and their role as decision-makers.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Digital Transformation is defined as "the sum total of an organisation's change efforts to respond to disruption" (Armstrong & Lee, 2021). It can also be defined as changes within an organisation using digital technologies (Al-Faihani & Al-Alawi, 2020).

Organisational culture is defined "as the pattern of basic assumption which a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which have worked well

enough to be considered valid enough to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1983).

1.8 Assumptions

The study assumed:

i. All participants were honest when answering the questions.
ii. The views they have of their organisational structure, as far as possible, reflect the organisational culture of the entity of interest.
iii. Organisational culture is a contributor to companies being digitally transformed.
iv. The South African retail sector is on a journey to be digitally transformed.

1.9 Chapter Outline

In conclusion, the study aims to understand how the organisational culture of an entity has propelled or prohibited the entity from digitally transforming. The question posed above aids them in answering the overall problem identified. The study focuses on just the South African retail sectors in FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) clothing, food, and furniture.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The importance that organisational culture plays in digitally transforming an organisation has been introduced in the previous chapter. In this chapter, literature on digital transformation, organisational culture and attributes of a digital culture is introduced. The literature considers digital transformation frameworks and how these frameworks can be used to understand the role that organisational culture plays.

The theoretical framework is also formulated based on frameworks compiled by other authors discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Background Discussion

Many authors stated above agree that organisational culture is the biggest barrier to digital transformation. In a survey conducted by authors Goran et al. (2017), the participants named organisational culture as the biggest barrier to meeting digital objectives, see Figure 2.1.

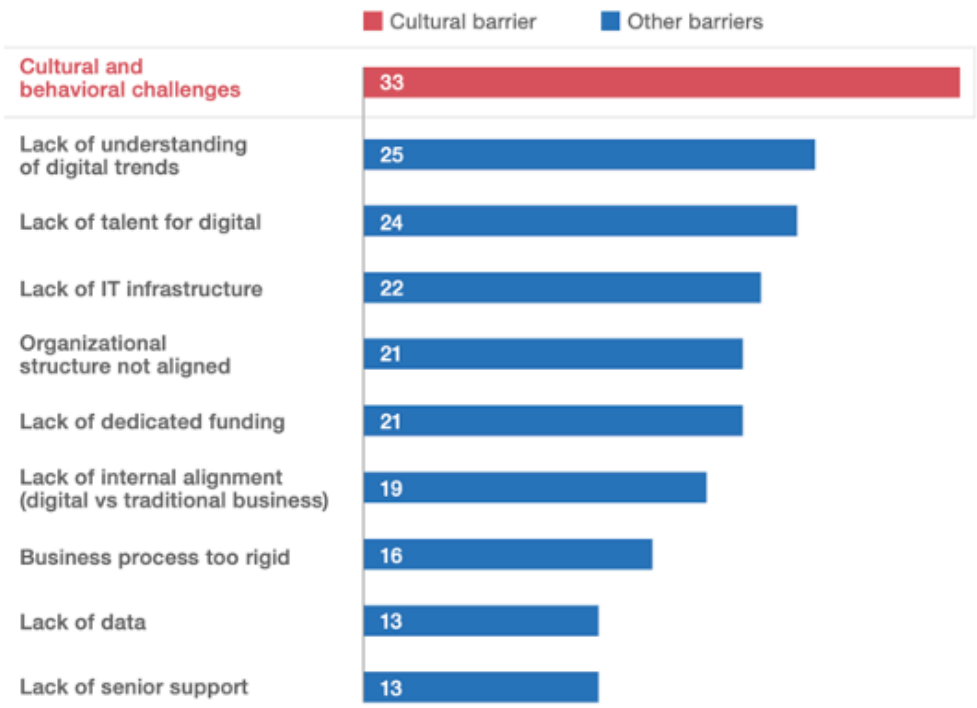
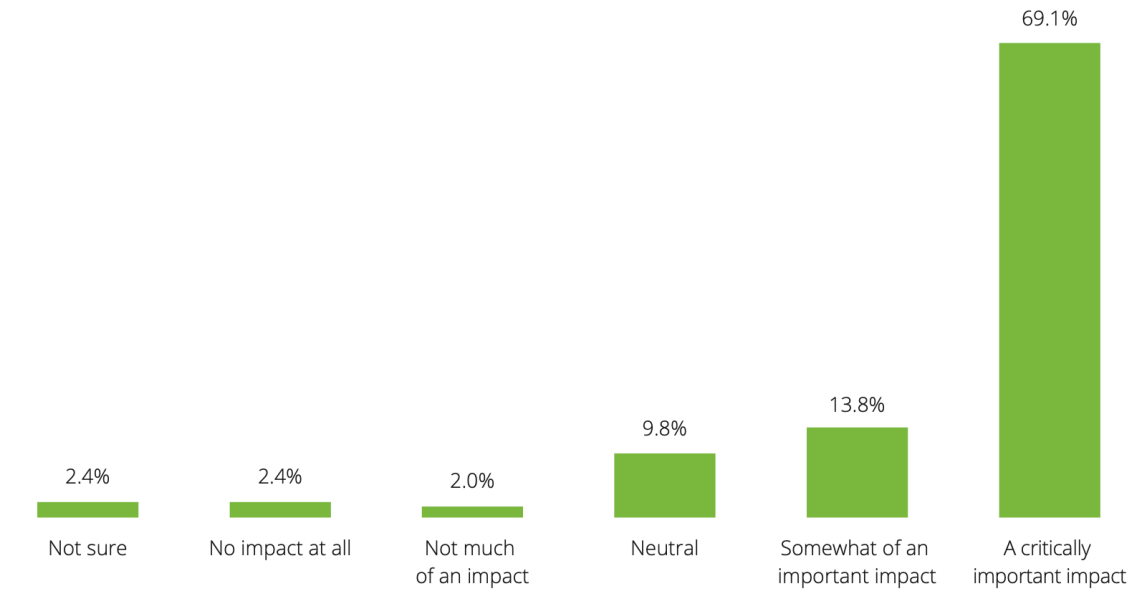


Figure 2.1: Importance of Culture

Source: (Goran et al., 2017).

This is in line with another survey conducted by Redwood et al. (2016), where respondents were asked about the importance of culture in them realising their goals. The responded, being top executives in numerous entities, identified culture as being critical to an organisation realising its goals. Culture is even more critical the larger the organisation is, and as many as 69.1% of executives agree on the importance of culture, see Figure 2.2.

As important as organisational culture, only a few executives' pay attention to organisational culture in the way they should, to gain a competitive advantage (Klein, 2011). The author also mentioned said that leader's success is linked to the extent to which a leader understands the organisation's culture (Klein, 2011).



Note: Numbers do not add to 100% due to rounding

Figure 2.2: Culture Critical Importance

Source: (Redwood et al., 2016).

2.3 Research Question 1: Digital Transformation in the South African Retail Sector

2.3.1 Definition

There is currently no single definition of digital transformation because the topic is so broad Gong and Ribiere (2021). Therefore, it is important to explore the different definitions of digital transformation to better understand what is meant in this report when the term digital transformation is used.

Gong and Ribiere (2021) conducted a literature review compendium of definitions of digital transformation definitions in an attempt to develop a unified definition of digital transformation and came up with the definition of “a fundamental change of a whole new form or structure with the use of technology in order to create new value”.

An expanded definition of digital transformation stated above is “the application of technology to build new business models, processes, software, and systems that result in more revenue, better competitive advantage, and greater efficiency” (Schwertner, 2017).

2.3.2 Measurement

In order to determine the state of digital transformation, one has to consider the digital maturity of the sector or industry (Westerman et al., 2014). Westerman et al. (2014) makes use of the term digital mastery, which refers to entities or organisations that excel in digital capabilities, which refers to what technology is used to drive transformation, and digital leadership, which refers to how change is led.

Gong and Ribiere (2021) use different terms to describe digital maturity, which is “*Innovative”,* which means the use of technology and *Strategic,* which refers to how resources and capabilities are leveraged. This is depicted in the conceptual framework for digital transformation in Figure 2.3.

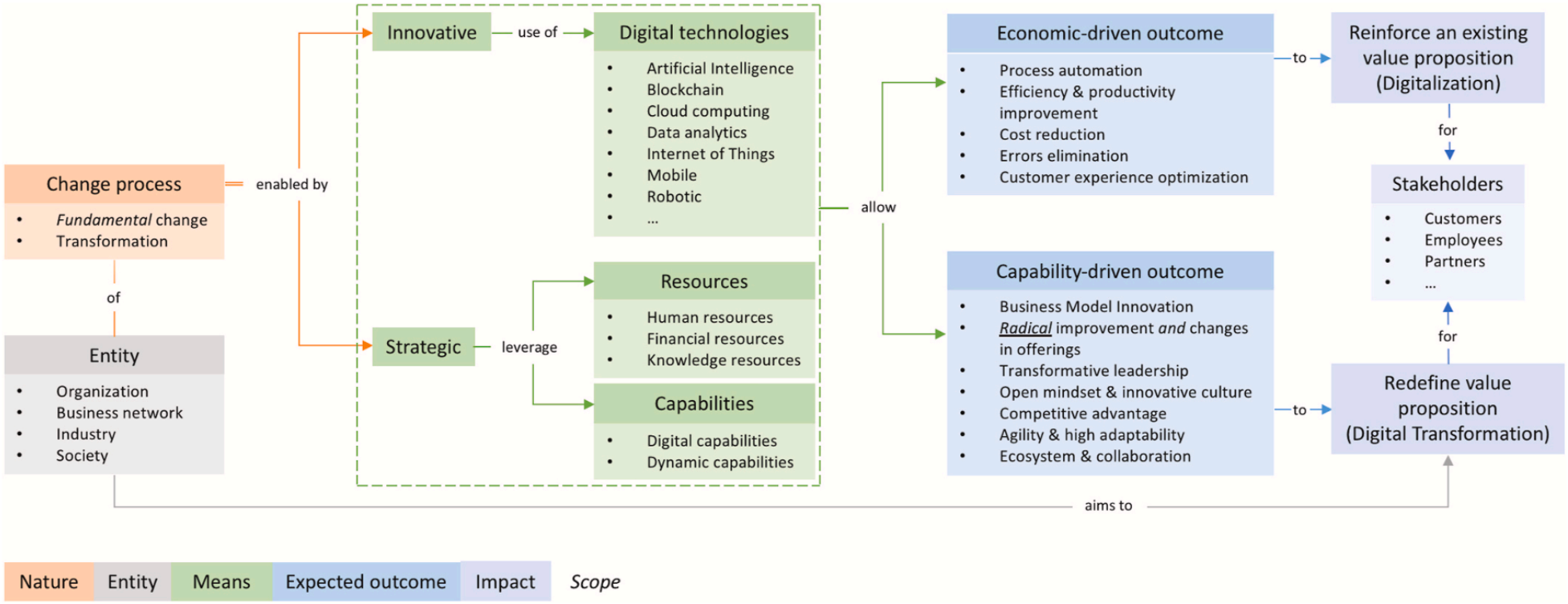


Figure 2.3: Digital Transformation Conceptual Framework

Source: (Gong & Ribiere, 2021).

2.3.3 Digital Capabilities

As stated consistently above by numerous authors, technology capabilities are important in achieving digital maturity. Isharyani et al. (2023), who considered retail technology adaption in traditional retailers, noted that traditional retailers regarded digital technology as challenging to comprehend and implement for users within the retail industry. These users included employees and buyers. The author goes on to elaborate that in order for retailers to use digital technologies, the technologies offered to them must fit the task characteristic demanded by the retailer. The digital technologies must be able to offer the retailer better cost analysis, manage control and determine the most profitable price for their products.

In an attempt to understand the type of new digital technologies that have transformed the retail industry, technology such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), internet connectivity, interactive chatbots, online payment platforms and online communication are some of the technologies that have been identified as some of the trends in developing country like India (Karthik Ram et al., 2022). Malenkov et al. (2021), whose study focused on Russia, stated that AI is the one new digital technology that will most significantly change the trade and structure of retail chain stores. Other technologies identified as important in digital transformation include big data, cloud computing, mobile services, cyber security, and app marketplaces (Verina & Titko, 2019).

2.3.3.1 Technologies for South African Retail

To understand the digital capabilities that accelerate digital transformation in the retail sector, the most prevalent initiatives that the retail industry decided to undertake were cloud technologies and data analytics (Van Dyk & Van Belle, 2019). In addition to the list in Table 2.1, Anderson (2021) also identified social media applications. The other technologies that were found to be used in this sector included e-commerce solutions, big data and analytics, cloud, artificial intelligence, and bots (among others). Van Dyk & Van Belle, (2019) listed in

Table 2.1 technologies respondents identified as important in the adoption of digital transfomration

Table 2.1: Factors Influencing the Intended Adoption of Digital Transformation: A South African Case Study

e-Commerce Solutions	12
Big Data & Analytics	9
Cloud	9
Artificial Intelligence	5
Bots	4
Machine Learning	3
Facial Recognition	3
Self-Checkout	2
RFID	2

Source: (van Dyk & van Belle, 2019).

Anderson (2021) and Mađarac et al. (2021) who wrote from a perspective outside of South Africa also noted the importance of including technology that allows for an Omni-channel experience to ensure convenience, consistency, relevance, and empowerment in serving its customers. In addition to the above technologies stated, mobile commerce and IOT were also identified as important in digital retail (Madarac et al., 2021). Another study identified social media marketing tools and digital marketing management in addition to the tools added above (Anderson, 2021).

Vartanova (2019) did not put emphasis on technology but rather identified people as the important factor in digital transformation in retail. The main objectives were employee centricity and customer centricity in order for adoption of digital technologies to take place (Vartanova, 2019).

2.3.4 Digital Leadership

According to Westerman et al. (2014), digital leadership is how change is managed. In digital transformation, the use of as many technologies as possible is not enough. Digital transformation can only be successful if there is a good strategy and leadership (Westerman et al.,2014). Transformational changes require strategy, leadership, and organisational culture for digital transformation to be implemented (Schwertner, 2017). In order to better understand the digital maturity aspect that is rooted outside of technological capabilities, the following capabilities were looked at strategy, leadership, people and expertise, culture, and governance (Rossmann, 2018). All these capabilities were discussed below except for cultural governance. This was explored in the Organisational culture section.

2.3.4.1 Strategic, Leadership and Governance

Senior leaders must not only articulate a vision people can get behind but also create conditions that enable digital maturity, attracting the best talent and bringing the best out of the talent they have attracted (Westerman et al.,2014). The most important attribute is that a digital leader must be able to provide a transformative vision which provides purpose and direction (Kane et al., 2016). Digital transformation is driven by technology, but the value of that technology can only be brought about as new business strategies and practices allow it (Kane et al., 2016). Before a business invests in technology, it must articulate the need for that investment (Kane et al., 2016).

When trying to digitally mature using leadership, Kane et al. (2016) state that an entity should consider hiring digital leaders from outside the entity who possess digital transformation experience and can provide the needed expertise, especially in the early stages of digital transformation. It is also noted that as an entity matures digitally, the leadership in the CEO's office heads up the digital transformation as opposed to the early stages of digital transformation, where digital transformation is primarily headed by IT (Kane et al., 2016).

In a model of digital strategising which contributes to digital maturity, communication and leadership are some of the important dimensions that contribute to maturity (Boström & Celik, 2017). For an entity to reach level 3 digital strategising, which is the highest level of the maturity model of digital strategising, the entity must have the following in place according to the two dimensions:

Communications: The digital strategy must be well-communicated and coherent. IT and business must have a united business strategy. Business and technical skills must be established among the employees, as well as cross-functional knowledge sharing (Boström & Celik, 2017).

Leadership: Transparency driven by information using digital technology is embraced. Managing change and building adaptive capacity. Drive risk as a cultural norm (Boström & Celik, 2017).

Table 2.2: Who Leads Digital Transformation

EARLY STAGE	DEVELOPING	DIGITALLY MATURING
Information technology 23%	CEO's office 31%	CEO's office 41%
CEO's office 22%	Information technology 20%	Information technology 16%
Marketing 10%	Marketing 9%	Marketing 7%
Operations 7%	Operations 7%	Product development 7%

Source: (Kane et al., 2016)

In the model of digital strategising, which contributes to digital maturity, another dimension identified in order to reach level 3 of digital strategising is skills (Boström & Celik, 2017). An entity must actively arrange for learning to take place in external alliances in order to upgrade digital skills (Boström & Celik, 2017).

Isharyani et al. (2023) found that retailers' internal users (owners and buyers) readiness is the absolute key to encouraging willingness and continuous intention to use digital technologies even though they do not have adequate technology resources. In order to understand the readiness of internal users, Trushkina et al. (2020) investigated the skills required for digital transformation to take place. Looking at the technologies identified below as the technologies needed in the retail sector, it was identified that there was a shortage of skills (Trushkina et al., 2020).

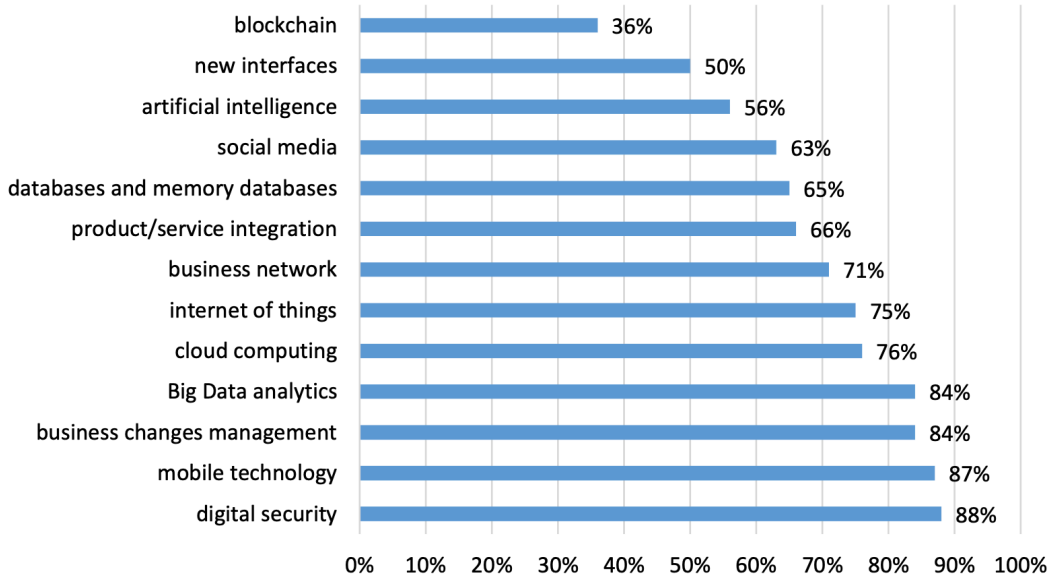


Figure 2.4: Skills Available for Companies for Digital Transformation

Source: (Trushkina et al., 2020).

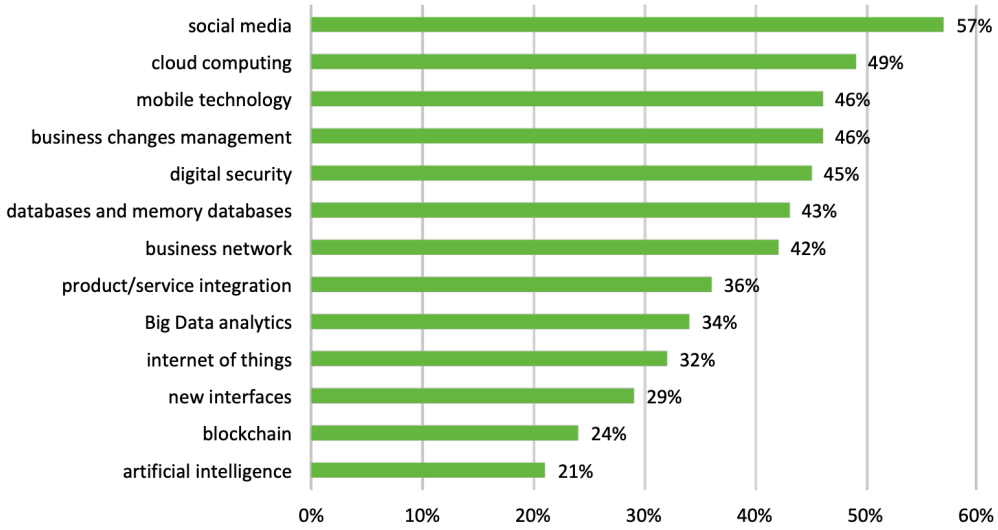


Figure 2.5: Skills Available for Digital Transformation to Improve Business Process Effectiveness

Source: (Trushkina et al., 2020).

2.3.5 Digital Mastery

In order to understand where an entity is placed in terms of digital maturity, Westerman et al. (2014) introduced four levels of digital maturity. They are outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Digital Mastery

Level	Characteristics
Beginners	These are entities who are starting out on their digital transformation journeys. They are either in denial or restricted by legislation. They currently do not have the digital or leadership capabilities.
Conservatives	These entities have digital leadership but not digital capabilities. The leaders in these entities are conservative about their digital spending and investment in time and resources to enhance their digital capabilities.

Fashionistas	These entities have digital capability through spending; however, they lack leadership capabilities meaning there is no set vision, and the entity mostly likely operates in a culture with silos.
Digital Masters	These entities have high digital capabilities and leadership capabilities. They have an overall digital vision, culture, and governance.

Source: (Westerman et al., 2014).

Pinto et al. (2023), who explored the digital maturity of the retail industry in an emerging economy, used a slightly amended different degree of maturity. They suggested the following degrees:

- Beginners are companies that have little investment in actions in regard to strategy and operations dimensions.
- On the way – Companies who are average in strategy, marketing, operations, culture, and technology.
- Digitally mature – Above average for the above.

An assessment was done in April–May 2018 by Capgemini Digital Transformation Institute to understand the level of digital mastery based on industries (Stevenson, 2018). In the findings below, the retail industry was found to be at the digital master's level (Westerman et al., 2014). However, it is important to know that this was done from the perspective of a developed economy.

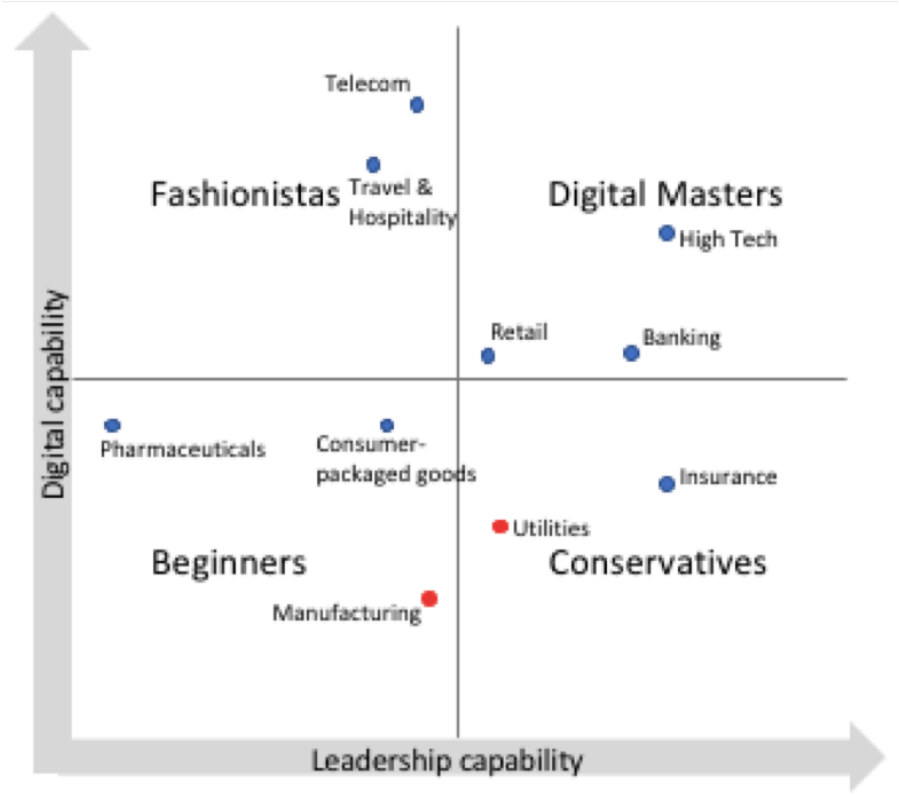


Figure 2.6: Digital x Leadership Capability Matrix

Source: (Stevenson, 2018).

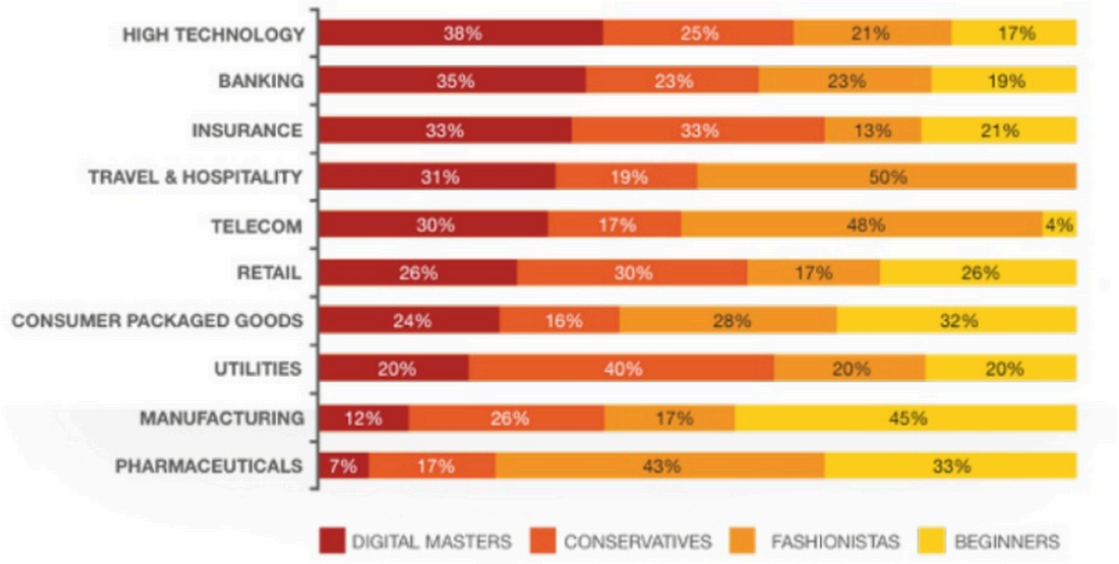


Figure 2.7: Digital Mastery by Industry from MIT Centre for Digital Business

Source: (Sunkara, 2018).

A further breakdown of the results obtained from Westerman et al. (2014) shows a breakdown of each industry stated above and the percentages of each industry within each of the four levels of digital mastery.

Contrary to Westerman et al. (2014), Anderson (2021) describes the retail industry as being in its infancy stages due to the drastic changes in consumer behaviour caused by COVID-19. Anderson (2021) believes that retailers have not taken full advantage of the opportunities brought on by changed customer behaviour. Pinto et al. (2023), who studied digital transformation in the retail industry in an emerging economy context, found that most of the companies were considered intermediate or advanced in terms of digital transformation.

2.3.6 South African Retail

According to Sibanda (2019), the industries in South Africa that are further ahead in terms of digital mastery include large corporations in the banking industry, telecommunications industry, and tech industry. Traditional industries, such as retail and mining, are only starting to implement digital strategies. Westerman et al. (2014) who writes from the perspective of the West and mostly developed countries and Sibanda (2019) who writes from the South African context seem to differ in opinion in terms of retail.

Alexander and Mason (2017) conducted a study on the readiness of South African retailers for e-retail. E-retail can be described as using digital technologies to offer purchasing options to customers, i.e., online purchases or e-commerce or internet shopping (Alexander and Mason, 2017). The findings stated that South African retailers mostly lacked technologies such as e-platforms, cyber security, front-end and backend technologies, as well as business capabilities, i.e., analytics, intelligence and data provided by digital technologies (Alexander and Mason, 2017).

2.4 Research Question 2: Importance of Organisational Culture to Digital Transformation

2.4.1 Definition of Organisational Culture

The definition of organisational culture has been previously stated using one of the most popular definitions from Schein (1983). His framework focused on three things:

Artefacts – The most visible of the three are how people dress to work, the technology used, and the layout of the office (Schein, 1983).

Values or Espoused beliefs – This refers to the group's principles, norms, and ideals. This can be described as how people rationalise their behaviour, e.g., a group of people who are risk-takers because they understand it leads to digital transformation (Schein, 1983).

Assumptions – This is the hardest to dissect. This is the basic assumption of an organisation; in most cases, it is even subconscious. An example of this is a difference between Western culture, which is oriented towards individualism, and Eastern culture, which is more oriented toward the group being more important than the individuals (Schein, 1983).

Another study by Martin and Siehl (1983) includes another aspect of organisational culture management practices. They describe this as the way the organisation conducts its hiring practices and appraisal practices. They feel this is not something that can be included as part of the artefact's definition included above by Schein (1983).

In a simpler definition, culture is defined as the environment in which people work and the influence it has on how people think, act, and experience work (Warrick et al., 2016). Culture is a broad aspect encompassing all aspects of its internal and external relationships (Tharp, 2010). Culture also guides individual actions (Tharp, 2010). Another simple definition of culture is the way we do things around here, the set of values that guide human interaction (Westerman et al., 2019). It's the present espoused values, unspoken assumptions and commonly accepted

behaviour that have assisted an organisation to succeed in its environment (Westerman et al., 2019).

An organisation that has a strong culture is one where the organisation has a clear understanding of what the cultural values and norms are, and a weak culture is one where an organisation's values and norms are not clearly known or emphasised (Warrick, 2017).

2.4.2 Importance of Organisational Culture

The building blocks of digital transformation depict a relationship between the eight building blocks, shown in Figure 2.8. What is important for this study is to see that organisations can use digital technologies to change their value creation paths; however, they must make structural changes and overcome organisational barriers to succeed in their transformation efforts (Vial, 2019). Organisational culture is one aspect that is described as importan for sustaining performance and competitive advantage, yet only a few leaders give it the attention it deserves (Madu, 2011).

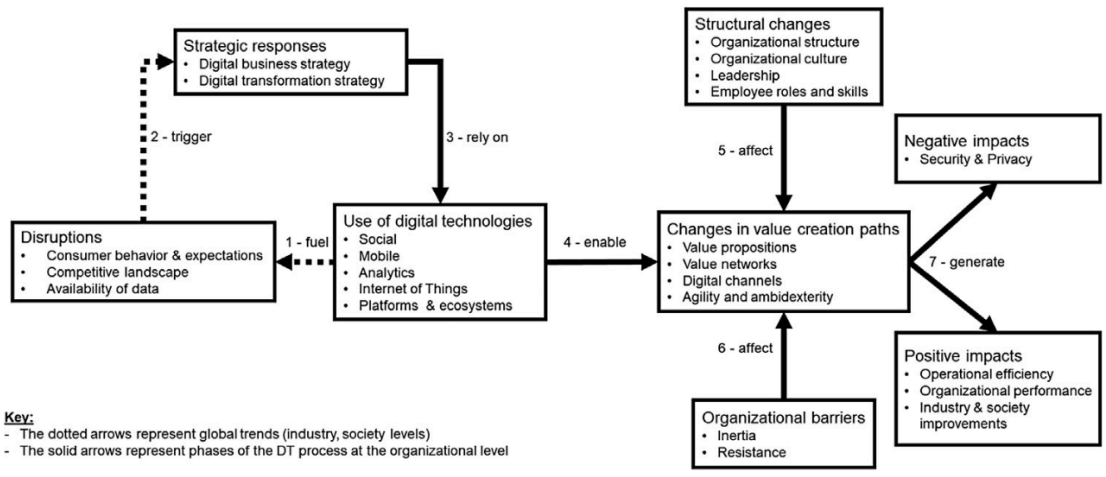


Figure 2.8: Building Blocks to Digital Transformation

Source: (Vial, 2019).

2.4.3 Assessment of Organisational Culture

According to Warrick (2017), an organisation needs to be assessed at least annually. This helps to alert leaders whether the organisational culture is moving in the right or wrong direction. The organisation needs to have planned ways to survey or receive feedback from its employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders (Warrick et al., 2016). One tool that can be used for managing culture is the organisational culture assessment instrument (Hartl & Hess, 2017). It is important to note what a leader emphasises, and measures can have a great impact on the organisation's culture (Madu, 2011). It is important to measure culture because one of the biggest reasons for transformational failures is digital transformation (Kane et al., 2016).

2.4.4 Responsibility of Organisational Culture

While leaders are not the only factor that influences culture, organisational culture is a reflection of the leaders. The leaders in an organisation influence the culture through their strategies, practices, values, and leadership styles (Warrick, 2017). An important key to building a culture is to have the CEO and the leadership throughout the organisation committed to building the culture (Warrick et al., 2016). Culture is the core responsibility of the executives (Westerman et al., 2019). Leaders are the ones who start the culture formation process (Madu, 2011).

2.5 Organisational Culture Attributes

2.5.1 Digital Organisational culture

Digital organisational culture can be described as an organisational culture that incorporates features such as speed, autonomy, etc. These attributes that contribute to an entity being digitally transformed were explored later in the report

(Westerman et al., 2019). Serpa et al. (2022) define digital organisational cultures as having characteristics such as full acceptance of innovation, collaboration, the process of volumes of data, taking risks and the ability to work in intricate environments.

Duerr et al. (2018) considered digital organisational culture using the definition of organisational culture of artefacts, values and beliefs and underlying assumptions established by Schein (1983) and considered the attributes the author considered relevant for organisational culture perspective to enable digital transformation.

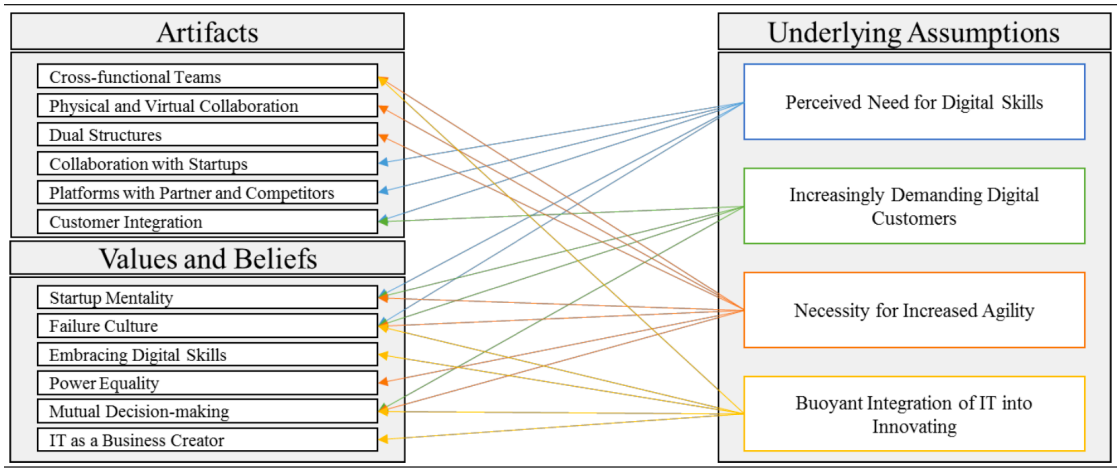


Figure 2.9: Digital Organisational Culture Model

Source: (Duerr et al., 2018).

2.5.2 Attributes Relevant to Digital Culture

After understanding the importance of culture, it is imperative to understand the characteristics of digital culture. In a study conducted by Westerman et al. (2019), the research identified the type of culture that traditional companies (companies that are not digital natives) can learn from digital culture and how they can make changes to their current culture to adopt digital culture. It is also imperative to understand that when it comes to digital culture, a one-size-fits-all approach does not work, meaning some attributes of digital culture will be more important in one organisation than in another.

Westerman et al. (2019) compare cultural practices in traditional companies to practices in digital companies. The practices that have remained consistent between the practices are being customer-focused and focusing on results.

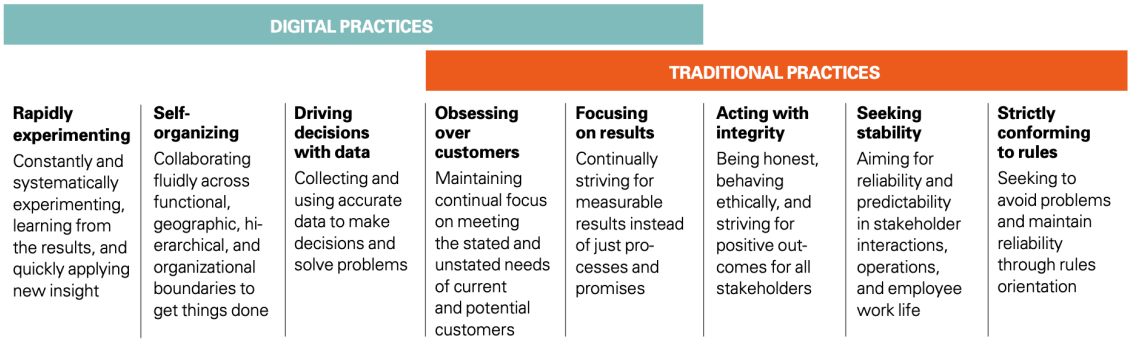


Figure 2.10: Digital-Ready Culture

Source: (Westerman et al., 2019).

In order to establish consistencies and contradictions of characteristics of digital organisational culture, four sources have been considered: Goran et al., 2017; Hartl & Hess, 2017; Hemerling et al., 2018; Westerman et al., 2019 (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Comparison of Organisational Culture Attributes

Westerman et al. (2019)	Goran et al. (2017)	Hemerling et al. (2018)	Hartl and Hess (2017)
Impact – Digital leaders are said to focus on the impact they provide, and then profits will follow.	**Risk-taking** is considered important in the digital world because of the first-mover advantage and the winner-takes-all that is prevalent in the digital era. The fast follower is no longer considered a safer option.	**Being externally oriented and not internally oriented –** employees need to focus on the customer and their partners to identify opportunities to meet emerging customer needs	**Open to change –** Open towards new ideas and be willing to accept change.

Westerman et al. (2019)	Goran et al. (2017)	Hemerling et al. (2018)	Hartl and Hess (2017)
Speed – An organisation needs to respond speedily to changing customer needs and iterate rather than wait to have the perfect product.	**Making bold bets-** means keeping abreast with the level of disruption that is prevalent in the company's industry.	**Promotes delegation over control -** Organisations should grant employees a sense of autonomy so that they can make their own decisions.	**Customer Centricity –** Organisation need to design products and processes with the aim of meeting customer's needs.
Openness – allows its employees to be creative and innovative, gather information from numerous sources, and share the information with its employees.	**Customers** – need to be incorporated as co-creators to reduce risks in experimentation.	**Promotes boldness over caution -** Organisations should have a culture that encourages employees to take risks, fail fast and learn.	**Innovation** – The organisation pursues improvement and growth by being innovative.
Autonomy – An organisation should grant employees the freedom to make their own decisions.	**Busting Silos -** Organisations with silos is considered the number one problem that prevents entities from having a digital culture.	**Collaboration than individual effort –** Organisations need to promote collaboration over indvidualism	**Agility –** Flexibility and adaptability.
	Instilling accountability- Organisations **should** encourage employees to accept responsibility for tasks handed to them.	**More action, less planning -** speed is of great importance, as well as continuous iteration rather than perfection.	**Willingness to learn** – Continuously acquiring new skills and knowledge.

Source: (Goran et al., 2017; Hartl & Hess, 2017; Hemerling et al., 2018; Westerman et al., 2019).

Based on the above, the most common characteristics are:

Customer centricity – Organisations need to be externally focussed on their customer's changing needs and be able to meet these needs speedily (Hartl & Hess, 2017). Organisations need to understand their customer's needs, so all products and services are designed or produced with the customer in mind (Hartl & Hess, 2017). They should also be considered co-creators when creating new products.

Risk-taking – Based on the literature above, this characteristic is what Hemerling et al., (2018) describe as a culture that promotes boldness over caution. Organisations need to promote a culture that encourages to take risks and a tolerance for failure (Hartl & Hess, 2017).

Innovation – Organisations pursue innovation and growth by promoting a culture where employees are encouraged to be creative and innovative. Westerman et al., (2019) describes this attribute as openness. This is also what Hartl and Hess (2017) consider as being open to change.

Collaboration – Organisations promote collaboration more than individual effort (Hartl & Hess, 2017). The organisations are more transparent and share information across different functions (Hartl & Hess, 2017). They do not operate in silos (Hartl & Hess, 2017).

Autonomy – Employees need to be granted freedom to make their own decisions (Westerman et al., 2019).

2.6 Analytical Framework

2.6.1 Digital Transformation Framework

The digital transformation framework by Gong and Ribiere (2021) is depicted in Figure 2.3. The purpose of this framework was to depict the logic of the six

identified basic elements in the process of digital transformation. The shortfall of this conceptual framework is that there is a shortage of capabilities identified in this model. Cultural capabilities, governance capabilities and market capabilities were some of the capabilities that were identified by Rossmann (2018) when the author considered capabilities from the concept of digital maturity.

The digital transformation conceptual framework in Figure 2.8 digital transformation building blocks illustrates a relationship established through the six building blocks in the process of digital transformation. The deficiency of this model is that digital technology is at the centre of the digital transformation process according to the image depicted in Figure 2.8. This contradicts other definitions of digital transformation, which describe digital transformation as the sum total of an organisation's change effort (Armstrong & Lee, 2021).

Bumann and Peter (2019) conducted a review and comparative analysis of digital transformation frameworks and maturity models. The study considered eighteen confirmed digital frameworks and maturity models against one hundred dimensions that described digital transformation. The six most cited dimensions were strategy, organisation, corporate culture, technology, customers, and people/employees. The study concluded that these six dimensions should always be included in digital transformation strategies.

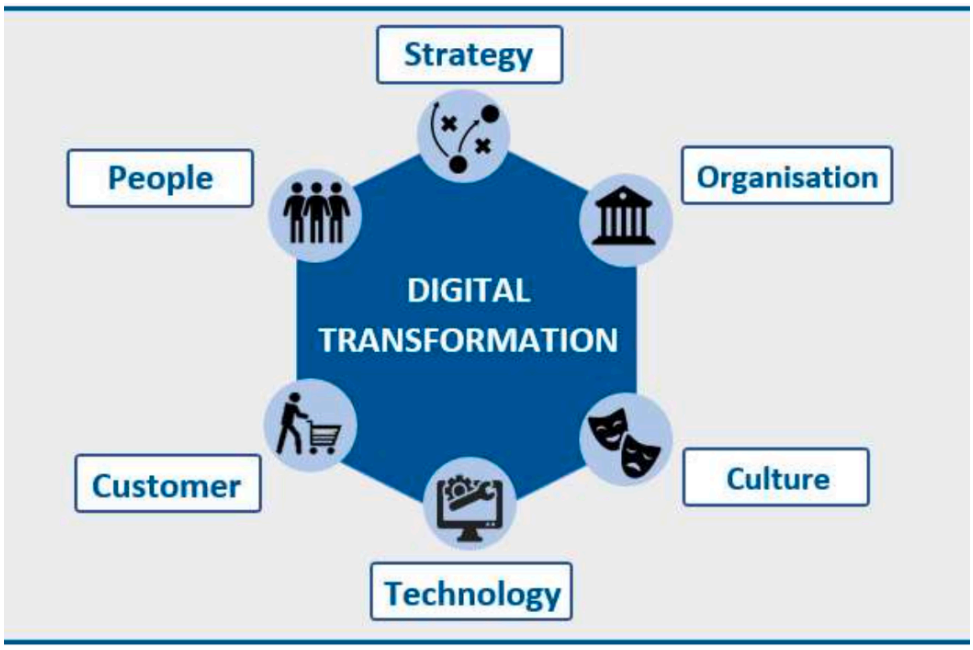


Figure 2.11: Digital Transformation Dimensions

Source: (Bumann & Peter, 2019).

This model is all-encompassing and, therefore, was the theoretical framework for the development of the conceptual framework for digital transformation. This framework also incorporates organisational culture.

Table 2.5: Digital Transformation Framework

Dimension	Meaning
Strategy	Organisations need to have a well-formulated strategy that has strategic foresight. The strategy needs to be documented, communicated, and supported with sufficient resources.
Organisation	Organisations need to leverage relationships with partners and ecosystems. Corporate venturing in the form of innovation labs should also be leveraged, as well as cross-functional team

Dimension	Meaning
	collaboration. Organisational agility is also considered important.
Culture	Organisations need to have a culture that embraces tolerance of failure and a leadership that is committed to the digital strategy.
Technology	Organisations need to explore new technologies and leverage modern architectures while digitising core systems.
Customer	Organisations should allow customers to interact with the organisation using a variety of channels. Organisations should also gather customer insights in order to improve the customer experience. Customers should be considered as co-creators by the organisation.
People	Organisations need to upskill their workforce.

Source: (Bumann & Peter, 2019).

The deficiency of the above model is that it cannot determine the level of digital maturity (Westerman et al., 2014) and is still relevant to determine digital maturity even though Bumann and Peter (2019) described the Westerman model as generic.

2.6.2 Conceptual Framework

As stated above, the conceptual framework was established using the theoretical framework stated in Figure 2.12, which is the digital transformation framework Bumann & Peter, (2019), as this digital transformation framework is all-encompassing and already considers organisational culture. The conceptual framework, however, incorporates the attributes determined in section 2.5 as determined by an analysis done on the literature review.

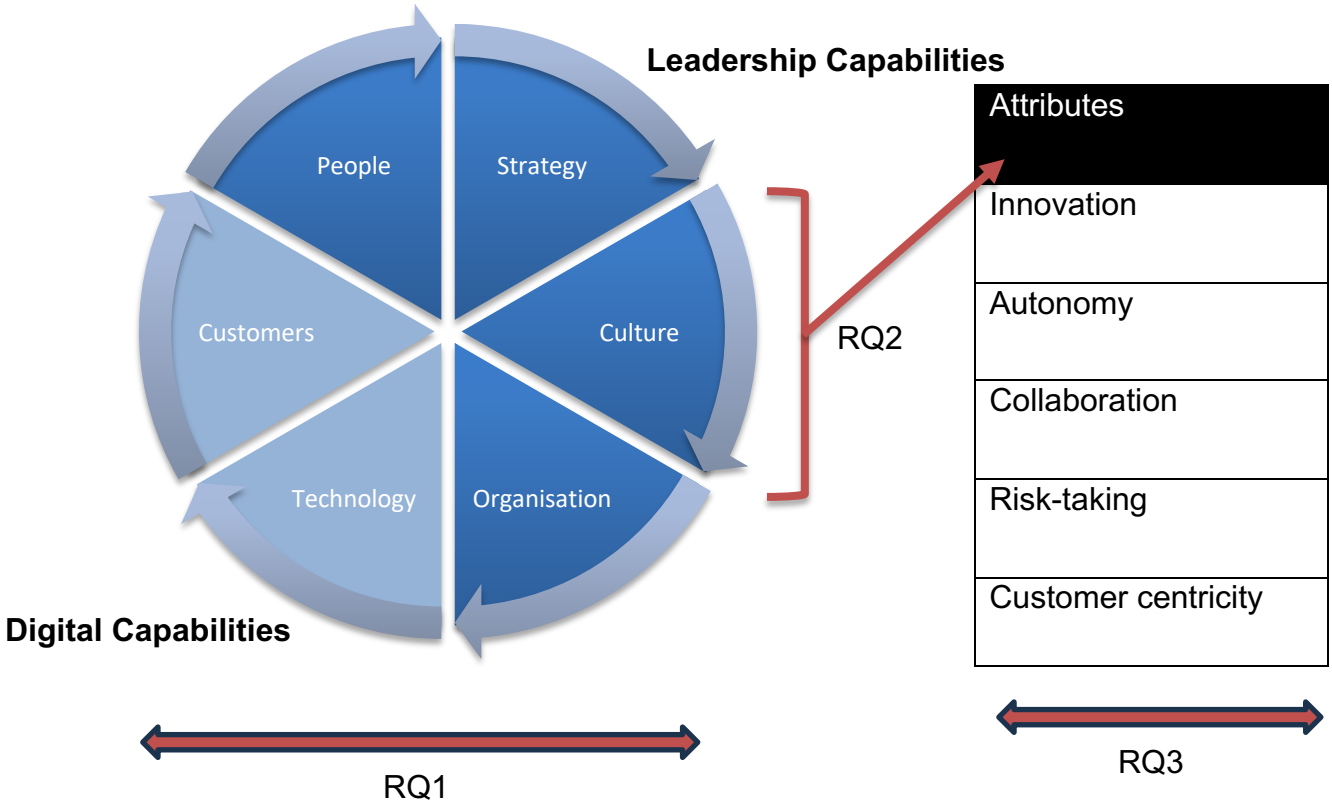


Figure 2.12: Study Conceptual Framework

The attributes established using Bunmann's framework were incorporated into Westerman's framework in order to determine the digital maturity posed in research question one. Customer and Technology were discussed as Digital Capabilities, and Strategy, People, Culture and Organisation were discussed as Leadership capabilities. Attributes in the conceptual framework have been determined in 2.5 Attributes that enable digital transformation.

2.7 Chapter Summary

In order to determine the state of digital transformation, digital maturity is determined using digital capabilities and leadership capabilities (Westerman et al.,2014). The digital transformation of the retail industry is stated to be at a global level of digital mastery, looking at digital capabilities and digital leadership (Westerman et al.,2014). However, in South Africa, the retail industry is still in the

nascent stages of its journey despite being identified as the industry most likely to experience disruption (Sibanda, 2019) .

When it comes to characteristics that make up digital organisational culture, most researchers have determined their own set of attributes, therefore, based on several authors' characteristics. Five of the most common attributes that are needed for digital organisational culture have been determined (Goran et al., 2017; Hartl & Hess, 2017; Hemerling et al., 2018; Westerman et al., 2019).

The conceptual framework was determined using the digital transformation frameworks. The conceptual framework combined the dimensions determined in Bunmann's model into Westerman's digital maturity model in order to determine the retail industry's digital maturity.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology that was used to gather data that answers research questions that have been posed in Chapter 1. The research approach, the type of data that was collected, and how the collected data was analysed have been discussed. The population and the sampling method have also been explained. This chapter was concluded by discussing quality assurance and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach

The aim of this research is to answer questions related to the state of digital transformation within the South African retail sector and the role that organisational culture plays in digital transformation. The qualitative approach allows an epistemological position where the researcher can examine the participant's interpretation of their world (Bryman, 2001), in this case, the participant's organisational culture and their understanding of their organisation's digital transformation. In answering this question, the multiple realities of people in the different organisations were perceived as important.

A qualitative approach has also been followed in response to the shortage of research on this topic. A qualitative approach is used to provide a different view from different industries on this topic (Al-Faihani & Al-Alawi, 2020). Qualitative research studies things in their natural settings and attempts to interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This research seeks to study senior management's view of their natural setting in terms of their workspace to interpret the impact this might have on the phenomena of digital transformation. This is the reason a qualitative approach was selected.

The criticism of qualitative research is that it is inherently subjective and sensitive to the biases of the researcher and participants as it is based on the people's lived experiences, the subjectivity although it is considered a flaw, it is also the very thing that creates value from qualitative method from the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm (Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

3.3 Research Design

As stated above, a qualitative research method was used, and interviews with several senior managers in different retailers were collected. Participants in senior management positions at different retailers were interviewed. An inductive approach was used. An inductive approach was used in order to explore a phenomenon that allows themes and codes to emerge as there is little known about the topic (Yin, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with open-ended questions to accommodate the inductive approach selected. A qualitative general research design was used as it allows an exploration of participants' points of view in their work settings (Bryman, 2001). The data was collected from semi-structured interviews according to a list of set questions in order to derive the information required (Bryman, 2001). This idea is based on a similar research method followed in the following research (Duerr et al., 2018).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The data collected was semi-structured interviews according to a set list of questions to ensure the required information is derived. The interviews were recorded with permission from the participants to ensure the transparency and trustworthiness of the collected data.

3.5 Population and Sample

3.5.1 Population

The population is all senior management in retail in South Africa. The population is limited to FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) in South Africa because the entire industry behaves differently, and it would be difficult to conclude the industry. Senior management would be the c-suite, executives, manager or leads in the organisation.

3.5.2 Sample

A researcher cannot determine at the onset how many interviews need to be conducted for qualitative research before theoretical saturation is reached (Bryman, 2001). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) offer qualitative research advice on determining sample size so that it should not be too small that the data or theoretical saturation or informational redundancy cannot occur. The data should also not be too large that a case-orientated analysis cannot be achieved.

A total of twelve interviews were conducted across different types of organisations, ranging from small to large organisations. This was to ensure there were diverse views of the same industry. The participants interviewed were senior management members who were exposed to digital transformation. The participants had extensive experience working in the retail sector. The participants were approached through the researcher's networks and the LinkedIn platform.

3.5.3 Sampling Method

The required participants for this form of study were senior management in FMCG in the South African retail industry; therefore, a probabilistic sample method would not have been viable. Only a non-probabilistic sample method was considered viable because only participants who meet the above criteria are likely to be

selected. The purposive sampling method was used to ensure that the required information was obtained.

The demographic profile was senior management of the organisation. This was senior management who were likely to understand the digital transformation and the organisational culture of the organisations. The sample was obtained through the researcher's networks and snowballing. A snowballing approach and non-sequential sampling were not ruled out due to the information that might have been derived from participants' recommendations to contribute to answering the research questions (Bryman, 2001).

3.6 The Research Instrument

The research instrument that was used was an interview guide in the semi-structured interviews to ensure the required information was derived from the participants while allowing the researcher to remain open to new knowledge that might be shared by the participants. Appendix C was used for the semi-structured interviews.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

The procedures that were used for collecting data were interviews conducted online using platforms such as Google Meet, which access was granted by the researcher's Wits student account. This method has been identified to be efficient due to geographical realities. Most retail head offices are in Cape Town, while the researcher is based in Johannesburg; therefore, the Google Meet platform was used to not limit the researcher based on geography, and it ensured consistency in the data collection process.

The researcher's process for collecting data was as follows:

- Prior to the interview – Ensure the participant is comfortable to be recorded prior to conducting the interview.

- During the interview – Conduct the interview using Google Meet and ensure the interview is recorded and transcribed during the interview.
- After the interview, listen to the recorded interview, analyse what was transcribed by Google Meet, and make changes where required.
- Upload the transcribed document to Atlas.ti for coding purposes.

3.8 Data Analysis Strategies and Interpretation

The type of analysis and interpretation to be used was thematic analysis. It begins with open coding (after transcription of recorded interviews) and is defined as the process of placing the participant's data into categories. This process allows the researcher to let the meaningful data receive a code (Emerson, 2022). This form of analysis help identifies themes in the participant's responses. A thematic categorisation was followed. The researcher followed the following process as described by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- Develop a deep familiarity with the data obtained.
- Develop initial codes from the data using Atlas.ti software.
- Looking for themes from codes developed in Atlas.ti and creating mind maps.
- Reviewing themes.
- Defining and naming themes.
- Produce the research report.

There is some criticism of the quality assurance of using the thematic analysis; however, Braun and Clarke (2006) provide guidance on a 15-point checklist in order to ensure a good thematic analysis. The researcher made use of the 15-point checklist to ensure quality assurance. In addition to the checklist, transferability, credibility, and dependability were established (Murphy & Yielder, 2010).

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The following are challenges and limitations experienced when collecting data:

- The sample size that is not enough to allow for generalisation for the entire FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) part of the retail sector and selecting a sample of industry players might give a distorted view of the entire industry. This limitation is inherent in a qualitative study (Rahman, 2017).
- The interpretation of data can be complex (Rahman, 2017).

3.10 Quality Assurance

To determine the quality of a qualitative study, transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability need to be established (Murphy & Yielder, 2010).This is to ensure that information consumed by the reader is credible and can be trusted (Morse, 2015).

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the trustworthiness, plausibility, reality and truth of the research findings (Tracy, 2010). This is achieved by interviewing multiple participants in organisations of different sizes to ensure diversity.

3.10.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to having an audit trail where the researcher has documented their process, data, method, and decision-making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam & Tisdell, (2015) also emphasises the importance of being logical and having consistency in the researchers approach. The researcher ensured that an audit trail is kept, and consistency is maintained.

3.10.3 Transferability

Transferability is achieved when users of the study can apply the information to their own situation and can transfer the research to their own action (Tracy, 2010). This is achieved by obtaining testimony directly from senior management in the retail industry with vast experience so that readers can identify instances to which they can relate.

3.10.4 Confirmability

This is like sincerity, where the researcher evaluates their vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and self-reflexivity (Tracy, 2010). The researcher acknowledges some bias as they work in the retail industry; however, to compensate for this, the researcher keeps an audit trail of their data collection and decision-making to ensure their views of the retail industry do not hamper the results. She also acknowledges some sort of bias as some of the interviews were conducted with her network, who have shared lived experiences in retail. In order to combat this risk, the research ensured an identical objective step-by-step process during the interviews with each participant and transcribed recordings verbatim to capture the participants' voices.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The researcher adheres to Wits University guidelines for conducting research. The collection of data only began once ethical clearance from the University had been granted (see Appendix E). The participants were made aware that they were not obligated to participate in this study but that they could do so on a voluntary basis. Informed consent was sent to the participants. They were also notified that they are able to withdraw from the study when they seek to do so. The case sites and the participants' identities remained confidential, and this information was also volunteered to the participants of the study.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces the research methodology used to answer questions about digital transformation within the South African retail sector and the role of organisational culture in it. A qualitative approach was chosen to provide a different views from different orgnisations. The research design involved semi-structured interviews with senior management in different retailers, using an inductive approach. The population consisted of senior management in retail in South Africa, with a sample size of twelve across different types of organisations. The purposive sample method was used to ensure the required information was obtained.

The study aimed to understand the impact of digital transformation on senior management's perceptions of their workspace and the role of organisational culture in this transformation. The research instrument used in this study was an interview guide for semi-structured interviews. Data collection was conducted online using Google Meet, ensuring consistency and efficiency. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes in participant responses. The 15-point checklist was used to ensure quality assurance, transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Limitations of the study included the sample size not being adequate enough to generalise the findings on the retail sector in FMCG in South Africa. Ethical considerations included adhering to Wits University guidelines, ensuring participants were informed and voluntary, and maintaining confidentiality.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore propellers and prohibitors of digital transformation from the perspective of organisational culture within the South African retail sector. The research explores the research questions stated in Chapter 1.

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings obtained through interviews with twelve participants from different organisations within the retail sector. The interviews were conducted over Google Meet. The results of these interviews were analysed using the qualitative research analysis tool Atlas.ti, and themes were identified in the form of similarities in the responses of the participants. These are presented as formal quotes by the participants.

This research report seeks to understand three subheadings:

1. The state of digital transformation in retail, particularly FMCG, within the retail sector in South Africa.
2. The importance of organisational culture to digital transformation.
3. The propellers and prohibitors in organisational culture contribute to digital transformation.

4.2 Research Question 1: Findings Pertaining to Digital Transformation in the South African Retail Sector

4.2.1 Definition of Digital Transformation

The term digital transformation is very broad; therefore, the researcher wanted to understand how the participants understood this term. Many of the participants described digital transformation from a retail perspective, either from the perspective of the customer by looking at digital transformation as a transition

from bricks and mortar to an online presence or from the perspective of the company by digitising internal processes. Participants considered the perspective more on the customer and e-commerce than on internal processes.

> Participant 4: *"I'm going to look at this, firstly, from an employee's perspective. So, you've got the impact of possible internal digital changes that are transforming the way we work within the group. Then you've got the impact that it could have from a perspective of customer interfacing or customer-impacting processes that are undergoing. I suppose a digital transformation within themselves will provide the customer with a more contemporary experience. Whether that be within a brick-and-mortar environment, or whether it be the online, i.e. generating options that enable the customer to choose where and how they want to buy".*

> Participant 2: "*When we talk about digital transformation historically within retail, it was very much focused and confined to digital marketing and e-commerce because it was easy to comprehend, but digital transformation fits into what McKinsey calls intelligent process automation*".

4.2.2 State of Digital Transformation in the South African Retail Sector

There were mixed views of how participants regarded the state of digital transformation in South Africa. These mixed views were shaped by considering several different factors. However, most of the participants had a positive sentiment of retail in South Africa. Some participants considered factors such as the percentage of online sales to total sales to conclude that South Africa is not on par with the rest of the world. This measure had a negative sentiment from the participants.

> Participant 9: "*I think in our space what we would do is we would look at online retail as a percentage of overall retail and would use that measure. We also asked some questions about the major retail processes. Are those digitised, or are they still offline? And South Africa's, I think it's like 5%*

online adoption right now in retail. If you compare it to the rest of the world. The top markets are doing 40% like South Korea and China, the UK, Indonesia is doing 30%, and the Netherlands is doing plus 25%. So, we're far behind".

Participant 1: "*Is e-commerce as high as a percentage of our total turnover as it is in some of the established markets? No, I mean you're tracking at 5% of total turnover now.*"

Some participants considered different retailers in the FMCG space and how they view these retailers' ability to respond to customer's changing needs in terms of offering logistics services.

Participant 8: "*So I guess the best retailer that is doing it is probably Shoprite, and that's probably the biggest transformation in retail. They've taken everything from your real basic Excel sheets to transform their processes. In retail, I'd say they are the best ones for showing digital transformation.*"

Participant 7: "*So, we're not the Amazon or the Alibaba leading the way, but we were able to keep up with the pace of change. And I mean, that's where I can also mention a couple of names, like Shoprite X and TFG. They are doing some great work in that space, but then there are several other retailers who are falling way behind. I think the likes of Pick 'n Pay are the ones that come to mind*." -

Participant 4: "*I would say that in environments where you find someone breaking out and disrupting and I think that the retail sector has been quite responsive. You've seen Woolies Dash move from what was even ahead of the Checkers proposition. I mean, Woolies had their delivery service first, but they didn't have a 60-minute delivery promise.*"

Participants also had several other views on why South African digital transformation in retail was not on par with other countries. These included the government's adoption of available technologies and the retailer's appetite to

invest in digital transformation, considering the country's macroeconomic factors. Verbatim has been included below:

> Participant 12: "*I think we have less resources and less money. We're a bit slower in adopting new technology, there's no doubt about that, and there are case studies. Starlink is quite a good example. A lot of our neighbouring countries have already adopted Starlink, which offers Wi-Fi in rural areas.*"
>
> Participant 3: *"Can we afford to pay for the delivery? Probably not, because our margins are not big enough. It comes down to the economic factors of our customer base. What we are selling to me is where the hesitancy of that commitment that we can actually change how our business looks because of the macroeconomic factors that we have in our country that hold that leap of faith back. However, if I were sitting in England and we had a company that was as hesitant about digital transformation as we were, we would be dead. The competition would have eaten us."*
>
> Participant 11: "*If you don't have electricity, you can't automate anything, and everything sits in the cloud. Everything these days is cloud-based. The app is in the cloud. You are just accessing it through a portal, and you are accessing the front end of it. You don't actually download the full program, and load shedding is a big limiting factor to using and accessing that application.*"

4.2.3 Digital Capabilities

The researcher wanted to understand the digital capabilities that retailers are employing for digital transformation purposes. Digital marketing and social media were some of the aspects identified in Chapter 2 as important digital capabilities. Several participants were starting to experiment with social media platforms as a form of marketing. Participants had the following to say about their ability to use social media tools.

Participant 8: "*I don't think anybody understands the true social media presence. And it's an expensive exercise. I think a lot of companies don't have the budgets to really use it correctly. And I know I've got a couple of people that you're looking at R30 000 or R40,000 a month for just Google optimisation, and then you've got another R40 000 that must go into your social media platforms. And that's just to get a decent return on investment. It's an expensive exercise, and I don't think we get to use it correctly because of budget constraints, and people are scared. Many small retailers don't even get the opportunity to grow their business enough because they don't have the budget for marketing.*"

Participant 9: "*Yes, we're using social media much better than before, but against best practice, there is a long way to go. If we talk about the best in the world in China, people buy via live streams on TikTok daily. It's not occasionally on Black Friday. That's on a random Tuesday in July, so that's how far we need to get to. We are still doing random posts. We encourage people to just go to our websites. Other businesses around the world have integrated their supply chains and their purchasing all the way to the back end. It integrates into stock, it integrates into fulfilment, and it integrates into customer support. Businesses in India and China are already doing that from social media sites, and then they've got analytics piled on top of that. So, the analytics are not only for their websites and stores; they are for the social media online stores and the WhatsApp stores. We're far, but again, it's part of the maturity curve for South Africa*."

Data analytics is also another important capability that was identified in terms of digital transformation in retail. Participants all identified the importance of accessing data, but participants did not think retailers were using the data to their fullest capacity and identified opportunities to use the data better; hence, they were on a digital transformation journey. Participants had the following to say about data and analytics.

Participant 4: "I've *mentioned data centricity; I don't think you can have a digital journey without understanding data. So, in whatever fundamental*

format people interface with the data, I think there has to be a data-centric component that is almost as strong as your customer-centric component."

Participant 1*: "I think there are gaps in the data and analytics side. So, when you talk about digital transformation, we don't just talk about selling items on websites. So, the gap for me, not just in South Africa but to a bigger degree in South Africa, is our ability to develop insights from our data, not just reports, but talking about true insights. Writing those algorithms, actual studies on behavioural patterns, and how people shop, there is a big gap still. And it's a pity because it's got to be the foundation for everything that we do. For now, we are gathering the data, but I think the real next step is to actually interrogate and deeply understand shopping behaviours that do not come from traditional consumer research."*

Participant 3: *"I think we are starting to use data better. I don't think we're extremely proficient at it... So, I don't think we've really made this switch entirely in the group. We are definitely on that journey, and we are using data far more as a decision-making tool than we have ever done before."*

When it came to core operations, none of the participants believed that their core operations were automated, regardless of the size of the entity.

Participant 9: *"Some people will look at a system like SAP or ERP and say that their processes are automated, but that's like one component of a big end-to-end process that drives retail. I would say that if you were to take the big end-to-end process of retail, we have digitised a small portion of that, probably maybe 30 to 40 percent of that. The top end of it, like everything that comes into the retail process and the back end of it, which is everything that goes out to the retail process, is still very much manual."*

Participant 1: *"When you come to stock planning, merchandising, automating doesn't exist. We run our business on Excel spreadsheets and the complexity of our order frequencies, etc. Understand your customers and target your messaging to them in an automatic way. Manage your*

stock and plan effectively by store and location. E-commerce is the only part that is automated, but some key process is missing at the moment."

Participants also considered the extension of new business models or value adds or exposure to new channels using technology. Some participants considered e-commerce as a new business channel. Other retailers were able to explore logistics in the form of door-to-door deliveries. These capabilities are seen in the expansion of many traditional businesses.

When it came to the exploration of other well-known technologies, one participant had the following to say:

> Participant 2: *"We try to take time to break out and look at what the exponential technologies are. Where are the applications for those in our business, whether that's blockchain or whether it is AI or machine learning or whether it's 3D printing or IoT so and by doing that, you use steps a little bit outside of the day-to-day and say, are we missing anything then you look at? Should you change your whole operational model? Will that still exist, or should you venture into other industries? So we are doing that."*

4.2.4 Digital Leadership

All participants unanimously expressed that their entities understood the importance of having digital transformation as part of their strategies and included in the company's vision. Participants also expressed that they were on some form of digital transformation journey. Participant responses began to vary when asked about how this strategy has transcended middle management and the level of focus leadership has put on digital transformation. Participants had the following to say:

> Participant 7: *"I'll say it's on the agenda of every retailer that I'm engaging with at the moment. But again, there's a bit of a variation in the market where some are really putting it into practice, and doing some great things, but they like to make it feature as a buzzword on their annual integrated*

report, and they have quite a lot of plans, but they're not executing on those plans yet."

Participant 12: *"If you don't digitally transform, you will die. That's how important it is. It's not a question of keeping up. If you fall behind in digitally transforming your organisation, the consumers will punish you immediately because of how you are as a consumer. What we expect and what we want is changing all the time."*

Participant 7: *"If the CEO is not a huge part of the digital transformation efforts and is not able to articulate that to his board or her board, then I find that there's a lack of traction in the results that take place. But if the chief executive and the exco are well entrenched in that digital transformation, that's typically where the movement starts, but it's always a challenge to cascade that down to your senior management, middle management, and teams on the ground. Senior management tends to get it, but sometimes, middle management and the people on the ground don't get it. And that could be a bit of a change management issue, a bit of a communication issue, and perhaps not sitting a clear enough aspiration at an organisation-wide level for where that transformation is intended to journey."*

All participants also unanimously identified that they all invest in digital skills when it comes to their employees.

Participant 7: *"I think that there is a lot of investment in digital skills, especially on the data side, as I see it. Mostly, to some extent in the process optimisation side as well, a lot of RPA, but there are probably other areas where they're a bit more thin, such as artificial intelligence, Cloud, blockchain or the Internet of Things. So, these are maybe areas where they could invest more."*

Participant 2: *"Lots of investment in data analytics, data engineers, analysts."*

> Participant 1: *"Yes, there are investments. I mean, we are building a big team here. We have identified webmasters. We are training them and are spending money on educating them. We've been buying resources through agencies, and over time, we have been cutting all of those bought resources and building those capabilities internally for a long time."*

In conclusion, the state of digital transformation was broken up into three main headings: Definition, digital capabilities, and digital leadership. Participants defined digital transformation as looking at more external factors, such as what the customer sees than internal characteristics, which are more about the process within the business. Digital capabilities were described as the beginning stages for several entities, and digital leadership had a structured vision, but this had not transcended to middle management.

4.3 Research Question 2: Findings Pertaining to the Role of Organisational Culture

4.3.1 Definition of Organisational Culture

The researcher wanted to understand how participants understood the term organisational culture. Many participants had a similar understanding of the term organisational culture.

> Participant 6: *"A definition of organisational culture, the simplest way, is how things are done here, and you can go into trying to get into the professional or MBA speak of what an organisational culture is, but to the crux of things is: we all coming from such different backgrounds? Let's create acceptable behaviour in the business that will be accepted, promoted, and encouraged, and that, for me, is what forms the culture. It's the agreement amongst us as people to say we are going to work together, and how do we do that when we have different cultures and different beliefs and certain things?"*

Participant 2: *"I think it's not something that has one definition that exists for the organisational culture. I think it's a realistic approach to how you are trying to achieve your goals of delivering value. So, it's how we function as an organism, moving in the same direction and taking everyone along that journey. How we allow different people and business units in an organisation to give their inputs and opinions before making a decision."*

4.3.2 Responsibility of Organisational Culture

Participants also unanimously agreed on who was responsible for setting the organisational culture. They all agreed that it is set by top management, which means either the CEO, the executives, or the board. Participants also felt that human resources also have a part to play.

Participant 11*: "I think it's the board of directors. They need to determine that, and to me, the culture and your strategic vision need to be aligned, and it can't just be words in a boardroom against the wall. It must be something that people can live and breathe, so if it doesn't come from the very top. It fails."*

Participant 12: "*HR practitioners should be the custodian of cultural organisation. HR practitioners don't like that answer because they like to shift responsibility. They would probably say it's ultimately driven by the CEO and the CEO, and there's an element of truth in it. Ultimately, the CEO and your top management drive culture and say this is the way we're going to do things here. So, I think that's a top-down approach. I don't think it's a bottom-up approach, but I think HR has a huge role to play."*

4.3.3 Importance of Organisational Culture

Participants shared the sentiment that organisational culture is important for digital transformation. However, not all the participants could see this importance being translated into their organisations.

Participant 7: *"I suppose people are the key ingredients to digital transformation. So, even if you have the best possible digital transformation plan or roadmap, if you don't have your organisation and a culture that's geared towards digital transformation, it could become a failure. I think one of the key areas where we see it is the topic of digital and innovative learning. So those companies that have a strong culture and participation rates in digital and innovation learning initiatives tend to outperform some of their peer companies and also tend to be able to move along their digital transformation roadmap faster."*

Participant 6: *"Digital transformation has a lot to do with change, and digital transformation can impact your culture for the good or the worst and if it finds a very strong culture in place and digital transformation processes are costly exercises and if it comes into an environment where the culture is very strong and the well embedded the chances of success of a digital transformation process are quite high, but if it's coming into an environment where this culture is shaky, we don't know where we are going, chances are that it will negatively affect any digital transformation process that is being implemented. When you have a strong culture, you have a better chance of surviving a digital transformation process in the business, and so it's linked. When we talk about digital transformation, in essence, we are talking about people's transformation into the digital path. It might be talking about systems, technological materials, and products. But I think a lot of it has to do with people's mindsets and the health of that mindset, and that comes through the culture of the organisation, and if it's strengthened, you will have a successful digital transformation process."*

When it comes to assessing organisational culture, several participants either did not assess the organisational culture or those who did assess the culture did so sporadically or could not articulate the outcome of the assessment. Very few participants did so often and understood the outcome of the assessment.

Participant 5: *"No assessment or surveys. I mean, we measure sales growth and opportunity, but there's no tool that we've used to measure an individual or business from that perspective."*

Participant 4: *"There is an employee app where you can access and put team photographs and share good customer experiences as a branch. They all have recognition programs for cashiers and branch managers, just for example, that have got a very specific interactive drive, but I wouldn't say that there's anything intentional around an annual employee survey, for example."*

In conclusion, participants understood the importance of organisational culture and who is responsible for it. The gap that was identified is the frequency of assessing organisational culture and the method of assessing organisational culture.

4.4 Research question 3: Results Pertaining to Attributes for Digital Transformation

Participants considered attributes in their organisational culture that contributed to the success of their organisational culture and those that hindered their success. They considered their current culture and the ideal culture they believed contributed to success. One participant made sure to mention that organisational culture must be fit for the purpose of the organisation. Below are some of the attributes that participants identified as the attributes needed that either contributed to their successes or failures. The same attribute was identified as a positive in some entities, while the absence of that attribute was considered a negative in another entity.

The attributes identified are:



Figure 2.13: Organisational Culture Attributes

4.4.1 Organisational Attributes that Propel Digital Transformation Success

4.4.1.1 Leadership

Most participants attributed the success of their digital transformation to obtaining leadership buy-in or the digital transformation being instructed from the top. They noticed that if the initiative came from the top, then the chances of the initiative succeeding were high. Several participants mentioned this.

> Participant 7: *"The first one, I'd say, is Digital leadership. So, the ability to have digital leaders who excel in leading their teams forward and staying abreast of the latest trends in the sector or the operating domain. And I suppose that inspiring individuals is being able to inspire their organisation to change. I think this is the main one: leadership. Leadership who doesn't fully understand the direction that they're trying to take the business in and*

they haven't taken the time to become digitally aware and digitally advanced in the trends in the industry or what good looks like, what some of the world leaders are doing in the space, they are bound to fail".

Participant 9: *"Leadership, you need one or two people. I mean, the leadership group would be better, but you only need one or two really brave ones to pay attention to some of those principles we talked about before and then literally fight everyone else to make sure that they can implement what they're looking for and then also it takes a leader to be able to experiment, test theories and be result focused and hire the right people it all comes down to leadership."*

4.4.1.2 Customer Centricity

Most participants made mention of putting the customer first as a desired attribute they either had in the organisation that drove them to success or a key attribute that was needed in order to be successful

Participant 1: *"So that obsession with customers actually drives the digital transformation, and many businesses who do not acknowledge that, is actually falling way behind. So, I think the whole notion of being customer-focused and customer is a key input. It's amazing how many companies just provide lip service rather than employing it. So, I think digital transformation through the culture that we've already established and have now documented has led to that. And I think it's an important requirement here to put the customer's transactional needs at the heart of this. And as a company, you won't debate digital transformation anymore, which I think many companies are trying to debate it".*

Participant 2: *"Your customers must be at the centre of our architecture, and historically, it was always like the transaction is at the centre of the organisation, and it's moving to the customer being the centre of the architecture with the transaction just being a piece that they are involved in."*

4.4.1.3 Innovation or Curiosity

Participants used different words to express the above theme, such as being innovative and curious and asking questions.

> Participant 7: *"I'd say that as a culture of innovation, embracing experimentation and being able to try new things, you always have to have innovation goals and a clear innovation mandate. But if you're able to then create a safe space for experimentation where your teams are free to explore new initiatives that could benefit the organisation, and that's typically a good one."*

> Participant 12: *"You need people that are willing to go out of their boxes and say the way we've been doing things is going to have to change. We have broadened our horizons throughout the organisation. We actually need to ask everybody to be an explorer, think differently, and think outside of their box."*

4.4.1.4 Agile or Adaptable

Participants used these terms interchangeably, but in the examples provided, participants mentioned the importance of changing course or being open to new ideas.

> Participant 4: *"So those two things really go hand in then the other one is, we hear a lot about agility, and yes, I think agility is definitely one, but I think it's more the adaptability because it's not that you have to be agile to win but agility is required and when you can prioritise slow down and anticipating what the benefit is because very often, you go quite far down the road with something particularly because digital solutions can be expensive to develop and something really isn't the best that it can be and then you can be agile and forge ahead and get it done but it's being able to adapt."*

4.4.1.5 Tolerance of Failure

Some participants regarded this as risk-taking or experimentation, and others considered this as a culture of safety.

> Participant 10: *"I would say allow people to fail because generally what happens is when you put the fear of people failing into the organisation with those circumstances of penalties, you find that people won't take risks. But a culture that allows people to fail obviously to be guided by the amount of time. But if you allow people to fail again, you find a lot of benefits and advancements or even a new way of thinking comes from mistakes, and we've seen that in several companies, many things were invented because of mistakes if you have a culture where a lot to fail generally won't advance past your competitor".*

4.4.1.6 Decision Making

Participants had different schools of thought when it came to decision-making. Some considered how decisions were made, which led to data-driven and data-centricity as a theme. Others considered who made the decisions, whether they were centralised or decentralised and the level of freedom that middle management had in decision-making. The concept of centralisation and decentralisation was another attribute. The answers to this question were not simply considering whether centralisation was better or worse off than decentralisation, but participants considered the size of the entity and the state of the entity.

> Participant 9: *"Data-driven is very important. When I say data-driven, I mean all your decisions are powered by data to some degree. Of course, it doesn't always happen that way, but you are always striving to find a data point and focus on removing friction".*

4.4.1.7 Collaboration

Some participants identified collaboration as a contributor to their success. Many participants stated that IT and business have improved over the years to collaborate better.

> Participant 7: *"I'd say it's basically a culture of collaboration and co-creation. So being able to break down silos and improve the way that your teams work with each other, and they often talk about sort of mission-led, self-organising teams that come together in more than agile manner to solve problems at their individually passionate about is a great way to encourage that collaboration."*

4.4.2 Attributes That Hindered Success

4.4.2.1 Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy was one of the main reasons they felt they could not achieve their digital transformation goals. The limited resources lead businesses to have to choose which digital transformation initiative is more urgent and which isn't, as well as the size of the entity and the red tape that comes with the size of the entity.

> Participant 1: *"Corporate bureaucracy and other agendas, I think, slow digital transformation down."*

> Participant 12: *"You do become scared to put turnover, margin and profits at risk. So, I think it's a culture driven right from the top and from shareholders. Shareholders are expecting certain results. They're expecting certain returns. We would love to think we are entrepreneurial, but we are not; we are a corporate, and that's often why entrepreneurial organisations outperform corporates. There are a lot of barriers in place to your freedom to take chances and do things differently."*

4.4.2.2 Communication and Ownership

Participants considered communication to be a hindrance, especially communication of vision and strategy to middle management. Only one entity that did do this well attributed the success of digital transformation to obtaining buy-in from the people on the floor. Lack of ownership or adoption was a hindrance. This was in the form of users not adopting or taking ownership of the product developed as quickly as intended by the change management strategy.

> Participant 12: *"I think the one thing where our culture is not supporting our digital transformation. That's how we communicate it and how we cascade into the organisation. We are not doing that well. Once again, we are doing well in some departments but not well in other departments. We must probably communicate better with our middle and junior management regarding the digital transformation. We're not very special in the context of being the only ones like that. If you look at the last 30 years, I've been doing consistent surveys 99% of the time. Organisations don't do well at communication because we sit around the executive table and think everybody knows what we're talking about and will understand, but we don't communicate it properly. Organisations are just bad at it, and our employees tell us that we are not good at it either. That's reality."*

> Participant 3: *"You have got to get business to own the transformation as quickly as possible. One of the things we didn't do is I don't think we give them enough support from a central perspective. We expected the businesses to suddenly know everything, and we should have helped them a little bit more and made resources available to make the journey a bit faster."*

4.4.2.3 Collaboration

The question posed to participants was from the perspective of how well business and IT worked and how digital transformation initiatives in the business are carried out.

Participant 7: *"It tends to be quite siloed most of the time I see it. Occasionally, they'll be a centralised unit that focuses on building digital products or providing the underlying IT or operating technology infrastructure, but they often have competing demands and priorities. And that quite often forces separate business units or separate brands to almost operate in isolation."*

Participant 8: *"Digital transformation probably often occurs in silos. It's getting all your systems to work nicely together, and again, once you get used to one system, it's hard as it integrates into another and adapts it to new systems. So probably, a lot of them are in silos. For example, divisions such as e-commerce and marketing should be hand in hand, but they are still working in a silo. I would say we are still probably quite segregated, and again, it comes down to people's egos not wanting this one to take over."*

4.4.2.4 Decision Making

Decision-making was identified as an area that retailers could improve in their culture in order to make their culture a digital organisational culture.

Participant 6: *"What we found is that you have disempowered your functional line in the decision-making process."*

Participant 12: *"I think our current structures have actually made it more difficult for middle and junior management to make quick decisions."*

In conclusion, participants identified a number of organisational attributes that propelled digital transformation, such as tolerance of failure, collaboration, leadership, agility, customer centricity, innovation and curiosity. Organisational attributes that hinder digital transformation are decision-making, collaboration, bureaucracy, communication, and ownership.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The study focused on the role organisational culture plays in digital transformation in the South African retail sector. Twelve participants in the retail sector were interviewed. These participants have adequate exposure to digital transformation and organisational culture, and they have extensive experience working in the retail industry. The participants represented organisations of different sizes and organisations in different stages of their digital transformation journey in order to get a diverse view of the retail sector with a focus on FMCG.

The interviews were conducted over Google Meet, and the researcher used the qualitative analysis tool Atlas.ti in order to analyse the data obtained from the participants.

In terms of the state of digital transformation, many of the participants were aligned in their views. Some of the views were:

> They believed there is still a long way to go in terms of e-commerce adoption by consumers because South Africa is only at 5% while other European countries and BRICS partners were higher.
>
> They also believed retailers had opportunities to explore technologies that are available to provide better data analysis, better customer communication in terms of social media, and more automation opportunities when it comes to their core operations.
>
> Digital transformation was important to strategy, and organisations were on some form of digital transformation journey, but the urgency of the execution differed amongst the organisations. Cascading this communication outside of senior management is something that needs improvement.

In terms of organisational culture, participants identified that organisational culture plays a vital role in digital transformation; however, the quality and frequency of measuring it was inconsistent. Several attributes were identified as important in organisational culture to ensure success.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the data obtained in Chapter 4 through semi-structured interviews in relation to the literature documented in Chapter 2 with the aim of understanding the role organisational culture plays in digital transformation in the South African retail sector.

The discussion follows the format of the research questions that provide the role that organisational culture plays in digital transformation in the South African retail sector.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Participants

A sample of twelve participants was selected in line with the criteria stipulated in Chapter 3. These participants are senior management of retail entities in South Africa with adequate experience and exposure to digital transformation and organisational culture within the entity. The entities ranged from small to large retail entities in order to get a wide range of views of retail in South Africa and not just the leading entities.

The participants were also diverse in terms of age and gender to ensure there was a good representation of the population. The size of the entity was determined using a Google search of the top 10 retailers in South Africa. Those who fall within that category are considered large, and those who do not fall within that category are considered small. Those who are considered mixed had exposure to both large and small entities.

Table 5.1 shows a representation of the participants.

Table 5.1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant	Position	Size of entity	Number of years
Participant 1	Chief executive	Small	23
Participant 2	Group CIO	Small	9
Participant 3	Digital transformation Lead	Large	12
Participant 4	Organisational effectiveness lead	Large	35
Participant 5	VP merchandise, including e-commerce and marketplace	Large	30
Participant 6	Transformation Executive	Small	7
Participant 7	Digital transformation and CX leader	Mixed	12
Participant 8	E-commerce and retail specialist consultant	Mixed	18
Participant 9	VP Group E-commerce	Large	5
Participant 10	CIO	Small	5
Participant 11	Group CFO and corporate stores CEO	Small	8
Participant 12	Group HR Executive	Small	15

5.3 Research Question 1: Discussion Pertaining to the State of Digital Transformation in the South African Retail Sector

In Chapter 2, the literature review showed different uses of the definition of digital transformation. The expanded definition states that it is the use of technology to build new business models, processes, software, and systems that result in more revenue, better competitive advantage, and higher efficiency (Schwertner, 2017).

Participants interviewed used words such as 'internal digital changes', 'transformation of how work is done', 'internal process automation' and 'giving customers a more contemporary'. The participants seemed to have a similar definition of the term even though they might not have used the exact words. The participants focused on examples within the retail sector; therefore, words such as e-commerce were also found to be commonly used. It can be said that there is consistency in the understanding of digital transformation, even though it is considered a broad term.

5.3.1 Digital Capabilities

When it came to digital capabilities, which are the use of digital technologies, many technologies were identified in Chapter 2. This ranged from AI, IoT, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), VR, Internet connection, interactive chatbots and online payment Karthik Ram et al. (2022), with Verina and Titko (2019) adding big data, cloud computing, mobile services, cyber security and apps. Isharyani et al. (2023) stated that retailers in developed countries possess adequate technological adoption capabilities and are forced to adapt their existing technologies. Infrastructure concerns were raised that there is a need for high-speed, low-latency connectivity in order to implement cloud services (Van Dyk & Van Belle, 2019).

In a developing country like South Africa, Van Dyk and Van Belle (2019) identified cloud and data analytics as the most prevalent initiatives in the retail industry.

Participants confirmed the information in the literature. They, too, identified with digital technologies such as data, cloud, AI and social media. When it came to the use of AI and RFID, leading retailers, as determined by the participants, such as The Shoprite group, were used, and when it came to Cloud integration (Moodley, 2022). Pick ‘n Pay (2023), also made use of these technologies. However, these technologies seem to have only been implemented in recent years, from 2020 onwards. RFID technology was also not used at scale. Therefore, based on the results in chapter 4. The retail industry is still in the infancy of using these technologies.

When it came to the discussion of data analytics, participants described that their entities were not proficient in the use of data to make data-driven decisions. Participants described that their entities could gather the data but are not at the stage where they can draw meaningful insights.

Participants also started to explore social media. For both large and small entities, the participants perceived South African retail to not have full social media capabilities as some of the other developing countries, such as China, might have. They also perceived social media to be an expensive exercise. Participants also identified an opportunity for core operations to be automated.

South Africa has infrastructure issues in terms of high-speed, low-latency connectivity, which hampers retail organisations' ability to implement cloud services Van Dyk and Van Belle (2019). The results in Chapter 4 also mentioned infrastructure issues identified in South Africa that could slow down the adoption of digital technologies such as cloud computing. Infrastructure issues were identified related to electricity issues that organisations would not have access to during load shedding. Participants also mentioned connectivity issues and felt that the government was not investing in digital technologies such as Starlink that would combat the connectivity issues experienced in South Africa.

Participants considered the use of digital technologies by comparing the experience they had as consumers on other websites and partners they had in other organisations outside of South Africa. The participants whose organisations were internationally owned were more critical than those that were not when it

came to digital capabilities because of their exposure to international organisations than participants who were not internationally owned.

The participants who worked in larger organisations were a little further along than organisations that were considered small. This is because larger organisations had more budget to invest in the implementation of some of the latest 4IR technologies. Participants also mentioned that this industry is a low-margin industry, sometimes making investing heavily in digital technologies difficult.

5.3.2 Digital Leadership

According to Westerman et al. (2014), leadership is how change is managed. The literature above established that leadership capabilities are essential to digitally transform and mature. Kane et al. (2016) also stated the importance of having a transformative vision that transcends everyone in the entity and getting people behind a digital transformation strategy. Some dimensions identified in the model of digital strategising were communication, leadership, and skills.

Participants all corroborated the importance of having a digital transformation strategy. The participants believed that if their organisations did not have a digital transformation strategy, their organisations would cease to exist because of constantly changing customer needs, which demanded more from retail organisations. This was aligned with the literature that established the importance of having a transformative vision Kane et al. (2016). Participants mentioned that the level of execution of the strategy differed according to the composition of the board. If the board is entrenched in digital transformation, then there is success in digitally transforming an entity. This was regardless of the size of their organisations.

Kane et al. (2016) mentioned that the vision needs to transcend to different levels of management. The majority of the participants did not feel that there was good communication regarding the strategy because it did not cascade well to middle management. The digital transformation strategy is not known company-wide.

Only one participant felt that their organisation transcended the vision all the way to the customer-facing employees. This was done because these employees were supposed to execute it.

Trushkina et al. (2020) conducted a study that considers the type of skills needed for digital transformation and the available digital skills. Van Dyk and Van Belle (2019) identified e-commerce, big data analytics, cloud, and AI as some of the technologies that were in need in South Africa. The skills that would, therefore, be needed are AI, mobile technology, and big data, and all of these digital skills were in short supply.

Participants were all aligned that their organisations were investing in digital skills. Most of the employees identified digital and social media skills as skills their organisations were investing in. There was, however, a shortage of other skills that retailers were not investing in, such as cloud and AI. This is aligned with articles where Shoprite identified that there was a shortage of digital skills such as data scientists, shopware developers and smart technologists, which is why Shoprite X was created (Moodley, 2022). Pick ‘n Pay also echoed this sentiment by saying that getting people skilled in this industry was not easy, and the location of this country also does not assist because South Africa is far from the developed world, and most of these skills gravitate towards developed countries (Pick ‘n Pay, 2023). Attracting these skills in the retail industry is difficult because of the nature of the industry. Participants described this industry as a low-margin industry, unlike other industries such as banking, telecommunication, and tech, which are described as more digitally mature by Sibanda (2019). These industries would be better able to attract digital skills.

5.3.3 Section Conclusion

Westerman et al. (2014) determined, based on digital capabilities and digital leadership, that the retail industry is in the digital mastery of digital maturity. However, this was based on developed countries. In a developing country like South Africa, the information provided by the participants evidenced that most of the participant's entities are starting to use social media, or they have gathered

data but are not at the state of generating true insights, and none of their core operations are automated. When it comes to leadership capabilities, there are transformative visions in place but not well communicated, and there is a shortage of skills in the industry and country as a whole. This concludes that the industry is only at its nascent stages, which confirms Sibanda (2019), who stated that the retail industry is only just beginning to implement its digital strategy.

5.4 Research Question 2: Discussion Pertaining to Importance of Organisational Culture

5.4.1 Definition of Organisational Culture

There are so many definitions of organisational culture that it is important to ensure that the participants of the study have a similar understanding to the definition established for this study. Organisational culture is the existing set of values, underlying assumptions, and usually accepted behaviour. Schein (1983) provides a simple definition of organisational culture, which is the way we do things around here (Tharp, 2010).

Participants used similar words such as "how things are done here" or how the entity functions as an organism to achieve strategic goals. The definition provided by the participants was aligned with the definition outlined by the literature.

Organisational culture plays an important role in the success or failure of digital transformation. This was explicitly illustrated in Vial's (2019) building blocks to digitally transform, which showed how structural changes, which include organisational culture, affect the changes in the value creation plan and either have negative or positive effects. Westerman et al. (2014) also mentioned the importance of building a digital governance culture as one of the attributes of building digital leadership capabilities.

Participants also concurred with the views stated by the authors stated above. The participants expressed that transformation is about people and that the

strength or weakness of an organisation's culture can result in either a successful or unsuccessful digital transformation.

5.4.2 Responsibility of Organisational Culture

Warrick (2017) and Westerman et al. (2019) identified leadership or executives as the roles responsible for building an organisation's culture. Participants also believed that executives and the board are responsible for organisational culture. The tone of culture is set at the top and then filtered down to the rest of the organisation. Participants also mentioned that middle management must reinforce organisational culture with their subordinates. Human resources also have a part to play in the reinforcement of the desired organisational culture. They need to serve as the custodians of organisational culture.

5.4.3 Importance of Culture

Literature also suggested that because of culture's important role in digital transformation, organisations need to measure that culture at least annually to understand the direction in which the culture is moving (Warrick, 2017). Warrick et al. (2016) suggested surveys as one way to assess culture, and Hartl and Hess (2017) suggested the use of an organisational culture assessment instrument.

Participants expressed that their organisations assessed culture sporadically and not on a frequent basis; most of them used surveys, and some did not assess their culture at all. For those organisations that did some form of employee engagement, the feedback could not tell them about their organisation's culture. Perhaps participants felt that organisational culture was important to digital transformation because the topic of the research created an expectation for the participants to say that organisational culture was important in order for organisations to digitally transform because there was not much activity done by senior management to concur with the statement made when it came to the measurement of organisational culture.

5.4.4 Section Conclusion

Organisational culture is an important component that can cause a successful or unsuccessful digital transformation. Transformation is about change, and people are key to enabling it. Retailers in South Africa acknowledge the importance of organisational culture but do not assess or measure their organisation's culture. This suggests that retailers do not prioritise organisational culture as an enabler of digital transformation. Senior management, in the form of the board, is responsible for setting the organisational culture, but middle management is responsible for enforcing that culture for the rest of the organisation. Human resources also have a responsibility when it comes to organisational culture.

5.5 Research Question 3: Organisational Culture Attributes for Digital Transformation

5.5.1 Attributes That Enable Digital Transformation

In section 2.5, an analysis was done to determine the five most common attributes that need to be present in a digital organisational culture in order for digital transformation to be successful. It was determined that the following attributes were the most common attributes: risk-taking, customer centricity, collaboration, innovation, and autonomy (Goran et al., 2017; Hartl & Hess, 2017; Hemerling et al., 2018; Westerman et al., 2019).

An inductive approach was followed in order to gain insight into the attributes the participant considered for a digital organisational culture. The common attributes that participants identified were risk-taking, innovation or creativity and customer centricity. Differences were identified when it came to leadership and decision-making. These were two themes that emerged as a result of allowing an inductive approach. Participants also shared from their own experience attributes they found in their organisational culture that hindered their organisations from achieving some digital transformation goals they had set for themselves.

5.5.1.1 Customer Centricity

The literature considers the importance of understanding customers' changing needs and the fact that customers need to be considered co-creators and not receivers of an end product. Participants mentioned the importance of organisations moving away from considering customers only from a transactional point of view and making them the centre of the architect. Participants were of the view that if organisations deliberate about customer centricity, there would be no debate over digital transformation. The participants interviewed were aligned ~~with regard~~s to this attribute. Participants mentioned customer centricity were participants who were in large organisations. Another participant mentioned that their organisation is currently not customer-led but rather merchant-led and that this needs to change. Other participants regard customer centricity with data centricity because an organisation needs data in order to understand the customer.

5.5.1.2 Risk Taking

Some literature considered risk-taking as tolerance of failure or rapid experimentation (Westerman et al., 2019). Organisations need to allow employees to be bold, take risks and have a culture that tolerates failures. Participants mentioned the importance of allowing employees to make mistakes in order for advancements to occur. Organisations will not surpass their competitors if they do not allow a culture of risk-taking. This is aligned with literature that mentions the importance of creating a culture that promotes boldness. Participants who mentioned this attribute were across both large and not large entities.

5.5.1.3 Innovation

The literature determined the importance of allowing employees to be creative and innovative. Participants also defined being innovative as being creative or curious. Employees need to 'think outside of the box' and rethink the way they

have been doing the same thing over the years. Participants also thought about innovation from the perspective of rapid experimentation. Participants identified this attribute but also mentioned how it is not evident in their current organisations because employees do not want to think about digitising their tasks because they might be considered redundant. One participant mentioned that South African employees worry about unemployment in a country with such high unemployment rates. The risk of unemployment could also be a reason for employees not wanting to adopt technologies that might make their jobs seem redundant. This is aligned with the literature where Isharyani et al. (2023) mention the importance of internal user readiness when it comes to technology adoption.

5.5.1.4 Collaboration

Literature ascertained the importance of creating a collaborative workforce that shares information and does not operate in silos. One participant mentioned self-organising teams that come together in an agile manner in order to solve problems. Literature and participants were aligned when it came to this attribute. This was one attribute participants mentioned regardless of the size of the entity. This is also the one attribute that participants consider to be the attribute that they experience in their organisations that hinders their organisations from achieving digital transformation goals. The structure of some retail organisations did not allow for collaboration to take place.

5.5.1.5 Autonomy

According to Hemerling et al. (2018) and Westerman et al. (2019), employees need to be granted autonomy in order to make decisions. Participants did not specifically identify giving employees a sense of autonomy as an attribute for creating a digital organisational culture. Participants did, however, identify the lack of empowerment of middle or junior management as an area of improvement. Participants felt that middle and junior management was disempowered because of the structure of the company. This is not an attribute

that employees volunteered but rather considered as a result of other questions that came before regarding how the entity's vision transcends to middle management that participants then considered the state of middle management.

5.5.2 Other Attributes

In order to gather data for the attributes, an inductive approach was followed to allow space for other attributes to emerge. The attributes stated below are some of the attributes that participants identified that the literature review did not focus on.

5.5.2.1 Data-Driven Decision-Making

According to the summarised attributes that contribute to digital transformation analysed above, this attribute did not make it in the top five attributes for success. However, this attribute was identified in Figure 4: Digitally ready culture (Westerman et al., 2019). The authors state that organisations need to collect accurate data in order to make data-driven decisions.

This is aligned with the views of the participants, who mentioned that all your decisions need to be empowered by data to some degree. Other participants even described their entity as a data-centric entity. This is triangulated with the investment that organisations make in skills around data management. Organisations do not only believe in the power of data but also affirm this belief by investing in the digital skills needed in the field of data.

5.5.2.2 Leadership

Westerman et al. (2014) identified leadership capabilities as capabilities needed in order to be a digital master. According to Westerman et al. (2014), leadership capabilities include having a digital vision, having the entire organisation in one accord, and having governance and technological leadership capabilities to

become digital masters. In the conceptual framework, leadership capabilities consisted of strategy, people, organisation, and culture.

Participants, on the other hand, identified leadership as a very important attribute. This refers to leaders who are digitally aware of their industry's digital advancements and are able to inspire the organisation and get the organisation, including other members of the board, in one accord.

Bumann and Peter (2019), as part of the author's description of culture is leadership that is committed to the digital strategy. Therefore, the literature and the participant's views are aligned.

5.5.2.3 Agility and Adaptability

Goran et al. (2017) considered being flexible and adaptable as an attribute that is needed in a digital organisational culture. Participants identified the importance of organisations being agile and adaptable as an attribute for success. Organisations need to be able to adapt on their digital journey should the need arise.

5.5.3 Attributes That Hindered Success

5.5.3.1 Bureaucracy

Participants had the view that retail organisations are corporations that are considered bureaucratic in nature. This limits the risk appetite of organisations to be innovative and creative. Bureaucracy is because of the corporate structure where shareholders require certain returns that retail organisations cannot risk in the spirit of being innovative. The amount of red tape that employees had to endure in order to succeed in their digital transformation endeavours. Participants held the view that retail organisations could not be entrepreneurial and that the bigger the organisation, the less entrepreneurial the organisation could be, which is an attribute needed in a digital organisational culture.

A participant in an organisation considered their organisation as entrepreneurial; the founder of the entity was heavily involved in the entity; therefore, the owner instilled an entrepreneurial culture in the organisation's culture. This leads to the conclusion the issue of bureaucracy is more evident in large organisations. Therefore, large organisations need to be cognizant of building channels that make room for entrepreneurship in their organisations.

5.5.3.2 Communication and Ownership

Participants were of the view that strategy and vision are not well communicated to middle and junior management. They identified this as an area for improvement for organisations. They also felt that digital transformation projects developed by IT, for instance, were adopted by users later than the timelines that were determined in the strategy. In the participant's experience, it is paramount that users adopt the transformation, and it moves from IT to business as quickly as possible and shows success in user adoption.

5.5.3.3 Collaboration

Participants were of the view that digital transformation projects are organised in silos and not as one unit. Some participants believed that their organisation had improved over the years, but others believed that IT and business did not work in one accord. A lot of digital transformation projects are administered for the entity as a whole.

5.5.3.4 Decision-making

Participants identified that the lack of communication of the digital strategy and vision to middle management, as well as the structures that are currently in place in organisations, causes middle management to not have the tools to make

decisions speedily. This contradicts the autonomy that needs to be granted to employees, as Hartl and Hess (2017) stated.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The study focuses on the role of organisational culture in digital transformation in the South African retail sector. The questions posed were about the state of digital transformation in retail South Africa, the importance of organisational culture, and the attributes that contribute to the success or failure of a digital organisational culture.

The retail sector was concluded to be in a nascent stage of the journey. Organisational culture contributes significantly to digital transformation, and the attributes identified for success are innovation, customer centricity, autonomy, collaboration, and risk-taking, as based on the literature. Participants contributed leadership, data-driven decision-making, and adaptability, which were other attributes they deemed significant. Participants also offered that bureaucracy, lack of communication, ownership of digital transformation, and autonomy are the attributes of digital organisational culture that currently hinder success in the South African retail sector.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study aimed to understand the role of organisational culture in the South African retail sector, focusing only on FMCG. This study was based on the fact that organisational culture had only been studied in sectors such as the financial sector and in developed countries (Al-Faihani & Al-Alawi, 2020). The retail sector was selected as this is the sector identified as one likely to experience disruption after COVID-19 (Armstrong, 2019).

As stated in Chapter 1, the study explored the state of digital transformation in the South African retail sector, the role of organisational culture and the organisational culture attributes that propelled or prohibited digital transformation. In order to explore this phenomenon, the following research questions were identified:

- What is the state of digital transformation in the South African retail sector?
- What is the role of organisational culture in digital transformation?
- What are the organisational culture attributes that enable or hinder digital transformation?

In Chapter 2, a literature review was conducted in order to understand other author's knowledge of the research questions stated above. In Chapter 3, it was determined that a qualitative approach would be used with a sample of 12 senior managers in the retail sector who have an understanding of digital transformation and organisational culture. Chapter 4 included the results of the participants that were interviewed based on an interview guide, and in Chapter 5, these results were discussed in relation to the literature review in Chapter 2.

This chapter aims to conclude the research questions in Chapter 1 and the findings in Chapter 5. The chapter will be structured in the format of the research questions stated above, and the chapter will conclude with recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

6.2 Research Question 1: The State of Digital Transformation in the South African Retail Sector

The definition of digital transformation was concluded to be quite vast when looking at the literature review, and participants selected to be interviewed considered this definition quite holistically by considering both internal and external views. The internal view was to improve the internal processes of the retail entity, and the external view was to consider how customers experienced the entity as defined by the participants. The unified definition of digital transformation by Gong and Ribiere (2021) was a fundamental change of a whole new form or structure with the use of technology in order to create new value.

Based on a definition by the participants, the implication of that definition was that the entity considered by the participants to be a leader in the field of digital transformation was considered a leader because of the external capabilities that the retailer offered its customers. The participants who mentioned transformation, looking at their internal processes, were not identified by other participants as leaders in the field. This is because participants could judge their peers by the visible customer experience their peers could offer.

When considering the state of digital transformation, the Westerman Framework was considered, which consisted of digital capabilities and leadership capabilities.

Digital capabilities are considered in how retail entities use 4IR technologies to improve their customer experience. Data Analytics, social media, cloud technologies, AI and other technologies were considered (Van Dyk & Van Belle, 2019). It was found that South African FMCG retailers are exploring these technologies and that some of the retailers considered to be leaders within the industry had recently implemented these technologies, and of those that had implemented these technologies, the majority of these were not used at scale. Several participants considered that their core operations were still very manual regardless of the entity's size.

There is room for retailers to implement more 4IR technologies or scale the technologies the retail leaders have implemented to improve the customer experience. In comparison to its peers in BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), China was considered to be further along in how it uses social media in that they do not only use social media on big retail days such as Black Friday but they use social media on daily basis and that they do not only use social media to direct customers to their websites but allow purchases to take place on social media. Participants also eluded that when it comes to data analytics, there were mechanisms that gathered data but did not have mechanisms that analysed data that could give valuable insights that contribute to accurate decision-making. This could be because there is a shortage of digital skills, and data is one of the skills in shortage.

Therefore, South Africa is a developing country and has difficulties that may not be present in developed countries. One of those difficulties identified was infrastructure as identified by the participants. The South African government's lack of investment in infrastructure contributed to the state of digital capabilities when it came to providing connectivity and electricity. The lack of connectivity affects customer adoption of e-commerce, for example, and the lack of a consistent, reliable supply of power affects the level of adoption by retailers when it comes to implementing technologies such as Cloud services. The above comments are based on information provided by the participants.

Digital leadership was concluded to be at the beginner stages as well. This is because several retail entities considered in this study have a transformative vision of a digital future, and the management of those entities acknowledged the importance of having digital transformation goals as part of their strategy. The level of importance, however, varied according to the composition of the board. If senior management believes in and understands digital transformation, there is a likelihood of success.

It was found, however, that the retail entities that participants mentioned were able to transcend this vision of the transformative digital transformation strategy to lower-level employees, and the rest of the participants felt this was an area for

improvement. It was found that retail entities did not communicate and transcend their vision and strategy to middle management.

The South African retail industry, with a focus on FMCG, has not yet mastered its digital capabilities or digital leadership; therefore, the sector is identified as being at the beginner stages. This aligns with previous research on the South African retail sector by Sibanda (2019).

6.3 Research Question 2: The Role of Organisational Culture on Digital Transformation

There are many definitions of organisational culture, from formal to informal. Participants understood this well. The participants considered culture to be very important to the success of digital transformation initiatives. Perhaps this is something that participants felt is something they had to say due to the topic of this study. The main definition of organisational culture was one determined by Schein (1983) as an existing set of values, underlying assumptions, and usually accepted behaviour.

The participants unanimously aligned with the literature that this is the role of senior management to manage organisational culture. Their definition varied from the board to the CEO. The common theme was that organisational culture is set at the top of the organisation.

It was found that while participants believed that organisational culture was important, this was not assessed on a frequent basis, and when organisational culture was assessed, participants did not know if it resulted in the required insights to determine organisational culture. Some organisations did not know how organisational culture within their entity is assessed. Therefore, there is room for improvement for retail entities. This leads to the conclusion that management in retail entities is aware that organisational culture is important; however, this belief is proving to be spurious because there is little evidence that senior

management considers this important. One cannot manage what they do not measure.

6.4 Research Question 3: Organisational Culture Attributes That Enable Digital Transformation and Those That Hinder Digital Transformation

The attributes that were considered to enable digital transformation included customer centricity, risk-taking or tolerance of failure, curiosity or innovation, collaboration, and autonomy for middle management. As well as data-driven decision-making (Goran et al., 2017; Hartl & Hess, 2017; Hemerling et al., 2018; Westerman et al., 2019).

It was noted that there is a shortage of digital skills, which has implications for retailers, such as the ability to implement data-driven decision-making because deriving data insights is not at advanced levels.

The other attributes identified were leadership skills by the participants. In the literature, this was not identified; however, the participants identified this as an attribute. Literature considered this outside of organisational culture. It was found that any initiative driven from the top by the leadership of an entity had a better chance of success.

In conclusion, three additional attributes need to be considered in order to have organisational culture attributes that enable digital transformation. These attributes are leadership, data-driven decision making and agility in the South African retail sector.

Attributes which hinder success were identified as bureaucracy. Several entities considered that their initiatives were not successful due to the red tape within their organisations or the structure of the organisation. Retail entities were not always comfortable putting shareholder returns at risk for the sake of innovation. Organisations are considered very corporate when embracing an entrepreneurial culture.

Communication and ownership, collaboration and lack of data decision-making hindered the success of digital transformation initiatives. Retail entities were considered to have improved when it came to cross-functional collaboration, but there is still room to improve collaboration and move away from being siloed. The lack of data skills hindered organisations from making data-driven decisions.

6.5 Recommendations

The study aimed to contribute to the body of how organisational culture affects digital transformation in the South African retail sector. It was found that senior management does not take organisational culture as seriously as they believe they do. Senior management should conduct assessments on a frequent basis that provide insights into their current organisational culture. Key performance indicators should be established in line with the attributes identified in this report to enable digital transformation. These key performance indicators need to be reported on a frequent basis, as with other key performance indicators such as sales.

Senior management needs to translate their digital transformation vision and strategy to middle management and junior management in order to improve the digital leadership capabilities of the entity.

Leaders in the retail sector need to identify ways to scale the 4IR technologies implemented to improve customer experience and automate core operations. Retail entities that have not yet explored 4IR technologies should be exploring these technologies to find ways to improve customer experience or core operations.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

In order to contribute to the body of work, other areas that can be explored include:

- A quantitative approach to understanding the state of digital transformation in the South African retail sector.
- The study can be expanded beyond FMCG.
- A study on the measurement of organisational culture in the South African retail sector
- A study on how to change organisational culture to align to attributes identified to enable digital transformation.
- A study on leadership in the South African retail sector and the impact this has on digital transformation.

6.7 Study Conclusion

This study aimed to understand the role of organisational culture in the South African retail sector, focusing on FMCG. The research explored the state of digital transformation, the role of organisational culture, and the attributes that propel or prohibit digital transformation. A literature review was conducted, and a qualitative approach was used with 12 senior managers in the retail sector.

The study found that South African FMCG retailers are exploring digital transformation technologies, such as data analytics, social media, cloud technologies, and AI. However, many retailers are not using these technologies at scale, and there is room for improvement. Infrastructure issues, such as lack of investment in infrastructure, also contribute to the state of digital capabilities. Digital leadership is considered at the beginner stages, but retail entities can transcend their vision and strategy to lower-level employees.

The South African retail industry, primarily focused on FMCG, is at the beginner stages of digital transformation. Organisational culture plays a crucial role in this transformation, but it is not often assessed. Attributes that enable digital transformation include customer centricity, risk-taking, innovation, collaboration, and data-driven decision-making. However, there is a shortage of digital skills and leadership skills. To achieve digital transformation, three additional attributes need to be considered: leadership, data-driven decision-making, and agility.

Barriers to success include bureaucracy, communication and ownership, collaboration, and lack of data decision-making. The study recommends frequent assessments, translating digital transformation visions to middle and junior management, and exploring 4IR technologies to improve customer experience and automate core operations. Further research could include a quantitative approach, a study on organisational culture measurement, and a study on leadership impact on digital transformation.

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APPENDIX A: Participation Information Sheet

Wits Business School
Sculpting global leaders

Good day, Sir/ Madam

My name is Malebo Lehabe, and I am a master's candidate in the field of Digital Business at Wits Business School. In order to complete my studies, I am required to write a research report. I have selected to conduct research on the role of Organisational culture in digital transformation in the South African retail sector. The purpose of this research is to determine the prohibitors and propellers to drive digital transformation from the perspective of organisational culture.

In order to conduct this investigation, I would like to interview industry leaders such as yourself in order to understand your views on digital transformation and your organisation's culture. The interview should take no more than an hour. This will be conducted over electronic platforms such as Microsoft Teams and recorded with your permission. Your identity and organisation will remain confidential. The information regarding your identity and entity will only be known by the researcher, and only pseudonyms will be used in the research report.

I would like to invite you to participate in this interview. Participation in this interview is voluntary. Consent to participate can be revoked at any time, even during the interview process. Should you choose to participate, a meeting will be arranged based on your availability and the date and time of the interview.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. My contact details are provided below. Should you have concerns about the ethical concerns of this research investigation, please feel free to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely

Researcher: Malebo Lehabe, malebolily@gmail.com

Supervisor: Erasmus Appiah, erasmus.appiah@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX B: Participation Consent Form



I _____ consent to voluntarily participate in the research investigation: The Role of organisational culture in digital transformation in the South African retail sector. By consenting to participate in this research, I understand that:

- Participation is voluntary
- Consent can be revoked at any time during this process
- The researcher may record the interview
- The researcher will keep personally identifiable information anonymous
- Information provided during the interview may be quoted anonymously
- The research investigation is done in accordance with the ethics guidelines of the University
- The research report will be published should it be accepted by the University
- I have a right to seek further clarity from the researcher should I require it.

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: Malebo Lehabe: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

Topic: The Role of Organisational culture in Digital Transformation in the South African Retail sector

Introduction

- Introduce myself to the participant
- Explain what the purpose of the interview is and the importance of the research
- Explain why they were selected to participate in the research
- Explain how the interview will be conducted
- Clarify once again that this is voluntary, and the participant can withdraw at any time
- Ensure the participant that they and the organisation that they work for will be kept confidential
- Request permission to record the interview
- Thank the participant for their time

Part 1: Ice-breaker

- Please tell me about yourself, i.e., how long you have been working in the retail industry, the position that you hold and your responsibilities.

Part 2: Digital Transformation

1) What is your understanding of the term digital transformation?

2) How will you describe the digital transformation in the retail industry? What do you believe is digital transformation in the retail industry?
3) In your view, how will What does a digitally transformed retail entity look like?
4) How important is digital transformation to your strategy?

Digital Capabilities

5) What technologies has your organisation employed in this digital era? i.e., chatbots, etc
6) How have you used technologies such as data analytics and social media to understand your customers better or give them a better experience?
7) Have you used technology to link customer-facing and operational processes in a new way
8) Do you believe core operations are automated?
9) Have you been able to unlock better decision-making using data
10) Have you been able to use digital technologies to increase performance or add value to existing products and services
11) Have you launched new business models based on digital technologies

Digital Leadership

12) Do senior executives have a transformative vision of a digital future
13) Has this vision transcended to middle management
14) Are there possibilities for everyone in the company to take part in conversations around digital transformation
15) What are some of the challenges encountered in achieving digital transformation goals? What do you believe are some of the challenges that you have experienced in not achieving your digital transformation goals?
16) What are some of the tools that can be used (propellers) for you to achieve your digital transformation goals?

Part 3: Organisational culture

17) What is your understanding of the term Organisational culture?
18) Do you believe organisational culture is important to help achieve your digital transformation?
19) Who in your organisation is responsible for organisational culture?
20) How has your organisation assessed its organisational culture?
21) If your organisation has not assessed its culture, why has it not?
22) Do you believe your organisation has a digital culture? If so, why do you believe so?
23) What are some digital culture traits that you believe are important?
24) What are some of the traits that your current organisation can put in place to be closer to achieving a digital culture?
25) What are some of the challenges experienced in trying to implement digital traits in digital organisational culture?
26) Is the company making necessary culture changes to get the entity to enable digital transformation?
27) Do you believe the company is investing in necessary digital skills?
28) Are digital initiatives coordinated across silos such as functions or regions?
29) Do you have any questions regarding the topic under discussion?

APPENDIX D: Analysis Table

The consistency table below outlines the study's research questions, propositions, data collection and data analysis.

RQ #	State Research Question or Objective	Prop/hyp #	State Proposition or Hypothesis	Data collection detail	Data analysis method	Themes
1	The state of digital transformation in South African Retail	1.1	Digital capabilities	Interview guide questions 5 – 11	Thematic analysis	Data Analytics Core Operations Social media Cloud
		1.2	Digital Leadership	Interview guide questions 12 – 14, 26	Thematic analysis	Strategy and vision Middle management Digital skills
2	The importance of organisational culture	2.1	The importance of organisational culture	Interview guide questions 18	Thematic analysis	Importance of organisational culture
		2.2	The responsibility of organisational culture	Interview guide questions 19	Thematic analysis	Executives Board, CEO

RQ #	State Research Question or Objective	Prop/hyp #	State Proposition or Hypothesis	Data collection detail	Data analysis method	Themes
3	Attributes for organisational culture	3.1	Attributes that enable digital transformation	Interview guide questions 16, 22 -23,27	Thematic analysis	Leadership Customer centricity Innovation or curiosity Agility Tolerance of failure Decision making
		3.2	Attributes that hinder digital transformation	Interview guide questions 15, 24, 27	Thematic analysis	Bureaucracy Communication Collaboration

APPENDIX E: Ethics Approval

Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Wits Business School Ethics Committee
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

Ethics Clearance Certificate

Ethics protocol number: WBS/DB2486018/481
This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below).

Project title The role of organisational culture in digital transformation in the South African retail sector

Investigator / Researcher Ms Malebo Lehabe **Nature of Project** MM (Digital Business)

Decision of the Committee Issue Date of Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentialty.

Certificate 2022-09-02

Expiry date Date of submission of the project / research report

Chairperson Prof Anthony Stacey
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Declaration by Researcher

One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature Date:

turnitin

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