

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
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Business transformation through organisational
ambidexterity and organisational agility

By

Lucratia-Shadi Mathe

Student Number: 22173902

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Abstract

Purpose – Anchored on the theory of continuous change, the purpose of this research study is to offer relevant insights to businesses, by providing an informed case for business transformation facilitated by organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility. The constructs of ambidexterity and agility are explored and defined as business capabilities, resulting in a framework for the effective transformation of large and established organisations through an enhanced comprehension of organisational ambidexterity and agility. In the derivation of the framework, aspects enabling the Transformation through Ambidexterity and Agility framework are examined to provide clarity on how these interrelated competencies contribute to the overall performance of the business.

Design/methodology/approach – Published empirical and research articles were reviewed to study the concepts of organisational ambidexterity and agility as critical factors contributing to business performance. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 research participants to explore organisational comprehension, execution and enablement of ambidexterity and agility as business capabilities.

Findings – Enhanced comprehension and execution of organisational ambidexterity and agility increases an organisation's ability to continuously and proactively respond to volatile market changes. Then with dexterity, speed and prudence, enable a continuous transient advantage. The commitment to continually transform the business through ambidextrous and agile strategies implies shifts at all levels of the organisation, starting with strategic leadership, down to the reward and motivation philosophy of the organisation.

Practical implications – Business leaders should consider the combined enactment of ambidexterity and agility as dynamic capabilities that principally guide strategic, operational and portfolio activities. Fostering ambidexterity-agility enhancing capabilities is paramount to safeguarding a continuous successful integration of ambidexterity and agility as dynamic performance enhancing capabilities.

Keywords

Continuous Change, Environmental Turbulence, Business Transformation, Organisational Agility, Organisational Ambidexterity and Dynamic Capabilities

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Signature: _____

Name of Student: Lucratia-Shadi Mathe

Date: 6 November 2017

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1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

"If the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside, the end is near." Jack Welch ~ CEO of General Electric between 1981 and 2001

1.1. Introduction

The famous quote by Jack Welch accurately captures the ethos of this study. Through organisational capabilities of organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility, this research paper explores how large and established organisations, inhabiting volatile and uncertain environments can transform themselves to appropriately respond to market disruption and remain competitively advantaged.

Characterized by “high-velocity” (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998), “hyper-competitiveness” (D’Aveni, 2010), and “VUCA - Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity” (Horney, Pasmore & O’Shea, 2010; Bennet & Lemoine, 2014), the frequency, rapidness and dynamism of today’s business environmental change necessitates a new conscious evolution and cognitive frame towards business transformation (Doz & Kisonen, 2010; Kotter, 2014; Appelbaum, Calla, Desautels, & Hasan, 2017). Rita McGrath (2013), poignantly calls this, the era of “transient competitive advantage”, where customers and competitors have become too unpredictable, inter-industry competition more prevalent, and barriers to entry virtually non-existent (also cited in Leavy, 2014, p.5). McGrath (2013) posits that in this continuously changing competitive context, the twentieth century operating system (Kortter, 2014) – distinctively marked by ingrained bureaucratic hierarchical structures, and dominantly anchored on the logic of long term sustainable competitive advantage – is an outdated, dangerous liability to organisational survival (McGrath, 2013; Leavy, 2014; Kotter, 2014; Appelbaum et al., 2017). Especially when organisations are faced with multifaceted and fluid contextual variables that require instead, the organisational capacity to surf through waves of short lived opportunities (McGrath, 2013, p.5), and with speed, decisiveness and dexterity, organisational adjustments for change (McGrath, 2013; Leavy, 2014).

Anchored on the theory of continuous change, organisational agility (Dove, 1999; Dove, 2002; Sull, 2010; Appelbaum, Calla, Desautels, & Hasan, 2017) and organisational ambidexterity (Duncan, 1976; Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996) are two constructs that have gained separate, but arguably equal proliferation of interest for the enablement of organisational change and competitiveness within a state of dynamic, volatile and continuous change (e.g. Sarkis, 2001; Gupta et al., 2006; Smith & Lewis, 2011; Nosella,

Cantarello & Filippini, 2012; Tushman & O'Reilly, 2013; Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013; Röder et al., 2014; Papachroni, Heracleous & Paroutis, 2015; Papachroni, Heracleous & Paroutis, 2016). Understandably, both constructs frame a discourse for continuous and turbulent change in organisations, and seek to keep the organisation in a perpetual state of readiness for disruption and disintermediation (Papachroni et al., 2015; Papachroni et al., 2016; Appelbaum et al., 2017).

1.2. Problem Identification

While most organisations accept the dynamic forces propelling environmental volatility: globalization and diverse global players, quick technological changes, new forms of competition, economic unpredictability, evolving customer needs, deregulation, re-regulation, regulatory convergence and market fragmentation (Ilinitch, D'Aveni, & Lewin, 1996; Drew & Coulson-Thomas, 1997, p. 163; Stephen & Colin, 1997; Appelbaum et al., 2017) – most are often ill equipped to resolve the interlinking and paradoxical relational inconsistencies of and between each of these forces (Smith & Lewis (2011). This is particularly true for large and established organisations, who, having successfully honed and crafted their organisational structures, cultures, processes and systems over many years, fear the idea of basing their strategies on new, uncertain and often unknown assumptions (McGrath, 2013; Kotter, 2014; Leavy, 2014). Even more challenging is the undeniable fact that in turbulent industries, “the most substantial threats to any given advantage are likely to arise” from peripheral and unapparent sources (McGrath, 2013 cited in Leavy, 2014, p. 5), while organisational adaptation requires a simultaneous paradoxical focus on strategic discontinuity and business rigidity (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Boisot (1998) aptly captured the essence of this, positing that “in knowledge-intensive industries, the most profitable point in the evolution of business advantage is also its most fragile point” (also cited in McGrath, 2013, p. xv).

Organisational agility is an organisation’s ability to detect and respond quickly, timeously and with dexterity “to proactive and reactive needs of change” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 3; Appelbaum et al., 2017). Organisational agility is enabled through effective adaptation to organisational paradoxes of adaptive and entrepreneurial capabilities (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003; Sheffi & Rice JR, 2005), and deals with strategic, operational and portfolio agility features for quick adaptation to market change as well as self-disruption to the market (Sull, 2010). Organisational ambidexterity is “the simultaneous pursuit of incremental innovation through the exploitation of current knowledge and capabilities, fostering greater efficiency and continuous improvements, while exploring for radical and disruptive innovation through experiment and research that develops and seeks new

knowledge, markets, and possibilities” (Duncan, 1976; March, 1991; Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996; Eisenhardt, Furr, & Bingham, 2010; Martini et al., 2013; O’Reilly & Tushman, 2013, p.3; Lewis, Andriopoulos, & Smith, 2014). Thus combined, these two constructs provide organisations with the ability to “assemble and reassemble, rapidly and decisively, complex networks of resources and relationships capable of taking advantage of short-lived opportunities” (Doz & Kosonen, 2010, p.370; L’Hermitte, Tatham, Bowles & Brooks, 2016; Appelbaum et al., 2017, p.6;). In so doing, unlocking organisational structural inertia, strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, efficiency and resource fluidity for continuous and transient competitive advantage (Doz & Kosonen, 2010, p.370; Boeker, 1989 cited in Mehta, 2016).

1.3. Research Motivation

Baseline capabilities anchored on functional and operational practices that drive competitive success in stable conditions are subject to rapid obsolescence in volatile markets (Felin & Powell, 2016). Felin and Powell (2016) noted that even when organisational advantages are unique due to experience or proprietary knowledge, disruption in volatile markets is multifaceted and can undermine the underlying drivers of industry advantage, rendering conventional advantages irrelevant or out of step with market conditions (p. 4). While most organisations in high-velocity industries know and accept the need for change, in the absence of strong organisational dynamic capabilities, a deliberate and refined organisational framework to foster continuous innovation, as well as properly defined mechanisms to calibrate the required level of organisational agility for continuous change and transformation, dis-improvement traps are inevitable (McGrath, 2013; Teece & Leih, 2016; Felin & Powell, 2016). McGrath (2013) identified seven dangerous organisational misconceptions and traps to this effect:

Table 1: Dangerous Organisational Misconceptions and Traps

#	Trap Name	Trap Description
1	The first-mover trap	The belief that being first to market and owning assets create a sustainable position.
2	The superiority trap	Almost any early-stage technology, process, or product won’t be as effective as something that’s been honed and polished for years.
3	The quality trap	Many businesses in exploit mode stick with a level of quality higher than customers are prepared to pay for.

4	The hostage-resources trap	In most companies, executives running big, profitable businesses get to call the shots. These people have no incentive to shift resources to new ventures.
5	The white-space trap	When opportunities don't fit their structure, firms often simply forgo them instead of making the effort to reorganize.
6	The empire-building trap	The notion that the more assets and employees one manages, the better. This system promotes hoarding, bureaucracy building, and fierce defense of the status quo.
7	The sporadic-innovation trap	A lack of a system for creating a pipeline of new advantages. As a result, innovation is an on-again, off-again process that is driven by individuals, making it extraordinarily vulnerable to swings in the business cycle.

Source McGrath, (2013, p. 5-15) – *The End of Competitive Advantage*

Moreover Röder et al. (2014) postulated that in attempting to radically evolve and transform organisational cognitive frame towards a simultaneous pursuit of ambidexterity and agility, three things occur - (1) entrepreneurial agility impedes exploitative actions, (2) adaptive agility impedes exploratory actions and (3) ambidextrous organisations exhibit structures that allow them to transfer results from exploratory to exploitative activities through agility (p.10). Consequently, the simultaneous pursuit of ambidexterity and agility result in traps of “Success; Failure; Disruption and Improvement” (Röder et al., 2014, p.7).

Thus, predicated on the study by Röder et al., (2014) who unpacked the interaction traps between organisational ambidexterity and agility, and anchored on the theory of continuous change and transient strategy as articulated by McGrath (2013), dual operating systems by Kotter (2014), strong dynamic capabilities by Teece and Leih (2016), and organisational agility by Appelbaum et al., (2017), organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility are used as lenses to gain a clearer understanding of organisational response to market dynamism, volatility and change. More specifically, as a turbulent, knowledge-intensive industry, the banking industry in South Africa is used as the focal point for understanding how large and established organisations navigate transient and continuously shifting competitive landscapes and prepare themselves for the transient advantage economy (McGrath, 2013).

1.4. Research Purpose

The overarching purpose of this research paper is to understand organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility comprehension, practice and adoption in large and established organisations faced with dynamic, turbulent and hyper competitive disruptions.

The purpose of this qualitative study is thus three-fold. Firstly, it seeks to explore the factors that enable and inhibit the effective pursuit of organisational ambidexterity (a simultaneous pursuit of exploitative and exploration activities), and organisational agility (a simultaneous exercise of adapting and creating change in the market) (Tushman & O'Reilly, 2013; Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013; Röder et al., 2014). Secondly, the study seeks to gain greater understanding and establish new insights into what causes organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility frictional traps that result in internal disruptions and dis-improvement (Röder et al., 2014). Lastly, it aims to help organisations unlock dynamic capabilities to overcome the dis-improvement traps to enhance organisational agility and enable the effective implementation of organisational ambidexterity through enhanced agility.

This research seeks to:

1. Determine how organisational ambidexterity is understood and enacted.
2. Determine how organisational agility is understood and enacted.
3. Seek greater understanding of what are considered to be the key enablers and/or inhibitors for the effective implementation of organisational ambidexterity.
4. Seek greater understanding of what are considered to be the key enablers and/or inhibitors for the effective implementation of organisational agility.
5. Determine what organisational antecedents, as well as personal leadership shifts are required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility.
6. Put into practice the learnings and findings from the study to construct a framework for business transformation through the effective implementation of organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility.

1.5. Gaps in Literature

Having extensively reviewed the literature that exists on organisational agility and organisational ambidexterity, it was determined that literature has largely treated these

two constructs as separate to each other with limited points of interaction and integration, except for a few (e.g., Röder et al., 2014; Lee, Sambamurthy, Lim & Wei, 2015).

Literature on organisational agility has to a large extent focused exclusively on Information Technology (IT) agility, agile software capability as an enabler of business transformation and innovation, as well as the Scaled Agile Framework that seeks to scale IT agility to an organisational level (e.g., Meridith & Francis; 2002; Lu & Ramamurthy, 2011; Chakravarthy, Grewal, & Sambamurthy, 2013; Gregory et al., 2015; Appelbaum et al., 2017). It is only in more recent literature that there are indicative studies to suggest a shift towards an analysis of agility as an organisation wide construct dealing with strategy, operations and portfolio requirements (e.g., Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011; Sajdak, 2015; Sull, 2010). On the other hand, literature on organisational ambidexterity has focused largely on *i*) the paradoxical concepts of exploitation and exploration (e.g., Popadiuk & Bido, 2016; Papachroni, et al, 2015; Martini et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2006; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996; March, 1991;) *ii*) the opposing views on whether structural and contextual ambidexterity is the best fit, including the tensions these create (e.g., Papachroni et al., 2016; Corso & Pellegrini 2007), *iii*) organisational ambidexterity as a dynamic capability (e.g., Tushman & O'Reilly; 2008), *iv*) analyses of the relationship between organisational ambidexterity, networks and firm performance (e.g., Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; He & Wong, 2004; Simsek, 2009; Simsek et al., 2009; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996) and more recently, *v*) how organisations can achieve ambidexterity through various integration factors including leadership (e.g., Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008; Jansen et al., 2009; Tushman & O'Reilly, 2013; Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013).

The issue with separately focused studies on organisational agility and organisational ambidexterity is the inadvertent ignorance of the structural friction caused by the interaction points between organisational agility constructs i.e. entrepreneurial agility and adaptive agility (Sambamurthy et al. 2007) to organisational ambidexterity constructs i.e. exploratory and exploitative concepts (March, 1991; Martini et al., 2013; Stettner & Lavie, 2014). Given that different organisational structural alignments are associated with different strategies and environments, the enablement of organisational ambidexterity must be conscious of an organisation's proclivity towards adaptable or entrepreneurial agility, especially since oppositional proclivities result in dis-improvement traps (e.g., Aldrich, 1999; Tushman & O'Reilly, 2002; Sine, Mitsuhashi & Kirsch, 2006; Röder et al., 2014). Moreover, while research has integrated complexity and dynamism with

organisational ambidexterity – viewing the concepts of organisational complexity and dynamism as antecedents, environmental influences, moderators, and performance outcomes of organisational ambidexterity (Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008), findings on other relevant literature that explicitly integrates all four constructs of organisational complexity and dynamism (turbulence), transient advantage, organisational agility and organisational ambidexterity are scarcer.

1.6. Research Differentiation to Existing Studies

This paper is differentiated and supplements Röder et al. (2014) in a couple of ways – Firstly, the geographical location and industry base of the two studies are different. By their own admission, Röder et al. (2014) was a single case study, conducted in a German automotive industry (p.10). With this study, we help test the validity of their findings by extending the case study to the South African Banking industry. The South African context as a differentiated and unique setting is discussed in section (1.2.3), subsequent to this section.

Secondly, the focus of the Röder's et al. (2014) study was on the organisation of ambidexterity through IT enabled agility, while the focus of the study by Lee, Sambamurthy, Lim and Wei, (2015) was on how IT ambidexterity impacts organisational agility. While this study will explore, and evaluate findings on both organisational ambidexterity and agility, the focus of ambidexterity and agility will be organisational wide and not just IT specific. This is an important distinction, because while IT structures within the banking industry could mimic those of other industries such as the automotive industry, the commercial structure of a bank is vastly different and more complex to that of many other industries. For instance, the banking model is a highly regulated and yet highly dynamic business environment (Ciancanelli & Reyes, 2001) with complexities arising not only as a result of a continuous introduction of new regulation, but also due to a multi-level product, segment and transactional model that requires multiple interfaces to create an interrelated view of any change that is implemented. Therefore, while the implementation of agility and ambidexterity in the automotive industry could result in the immediate discontinuation of an auto mobile for example, a discontinuation of a product at a bank triggers multiple processes, systems and resources in multiple divisions some of which could be adversely affected if the change impact is not done properly.

Thirdly, Röder et al. (2014) only went as far as identifying the four interactions traps of Success; Failure; Disruption and Improvement (p.7), but did not offer substantiated

material on the factors that cause the traps and how organisations with a traditional proclivity towards adaptable or entrepreneurial agility could enable and re-organize themselves to overcome the traps. This is one of the focal points of this study. Lastly, while the concept of environmental turbulence - Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) is implied by most studies on organisational agility and organisational ambidexterity (e.g., Röder et al., 2014; Lee, Sambamurthy, Lim & Wei, 2015; Sajdak, 2015; Teece et al., 2016; Najrani, 2016), in this study the concept of environmental turbulence is positioned as an antecedent to understanding the fundamental structures of an organisation as either traditionally entrepreneurial or adaptive agility.

1.7. Research Relevance to South Africa and South African Banking Industry

South Africa is in a state of flux. Challenged with multiple offsetting political, and economic trials, the country battles to recover a sluggish economic growth outlook after two consecutive quarters of economic decline in 2017 (Statssa, 2017); a continuation of skills shortages in skilled and professional services; an increased rate of labour and civil protests; volatility of the exchange rate; political uncertainty that resulted in multiple cabinet reshuffles and four different finance ministers in a three year period; as well as a down grade of South Africa's sovereign rating from investment grade to junk (The PWC Major Banks Report, 2017, p.2-3). The fluidity and turbulence of the South African context provides a decent base for analyzing competitiveness and business survival.

Adding to the country context, is an industry context which is equally volatile and uncertain. According to Capgemini (2016), trends in the banking and financial services sector indicate a move towards digitization of services, with threats from non-traditional banking players such as fintech firms gaining traction (Capgemini, 2016). While it is acknowledged that the degree of disruption differs across various banking services, the threats are posited to be highest in the payments, lending and investment spheres, with cross-border and inter-regional trade increasing both globally and into Africa (The PWC Major Banks Report, 2017, p.2-3). These trends are driven by changing customer demographics, an untethered explosion of access to information through smartphones and social media, a shift in regulatory objectives from pure stability and risk mitigation to driving standardization, competition and innovation (Capgemini, 2016, p 3-7).

Contextually poignant, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) issued its first full operating banking license since 1999, disrupting a fairly stable competitive environment since the inception of Capitec Bank Holdings (Bonorchis, 2017). Even more compelling

is the fact that TymeDigital by Commonwealth Bank SA is a full service digital bank, purposefully designed to disrupt the South African banking industry (eNCA Money, 2017). The digital bank targets emerging middle-class, middle-class consumers, and SMME's, and proposes an offering that provides them with the ability to open accounts and transact securely, digitally and within minutes (eNCA Money, 2017; Writer, 2017). The banking industry has been undeniably disrupted and it is postulated that this is only the beginning. The success of Capitec Holdings, with a record growth of 1.3 million new clients for the financial year to February 2017, taking their total client base to 8.6 million from 7.3 million at year end February 2016 (Capitec Media News Centre, 2017), has been a growing concern to South Africa's four biggest banks (Standard Bank Group, Barclays Africa Group Limited, FirstRand and Nedbank). More especially since a growing client base implies a growth of market share towards Capitec Holdings, effectively eroding the big four's market shares. Even more concerning is the inevitable growth of new entrant, with insurer Discovery and the South African Post Office both said to be in possession of provisional banking licenses as well (Bonorchis, 2017). Referencing McGrath (2013) once again, the most substantial threats to the South African banking industry have indeed risen from a peripheral and unobvious location (McGrath, 2013).

Not only do all of these disruptions directly affect the business strategic decision-making process, unfortunately, the uncertainties and volatility trickle down to the task and individual level (Martini et al., 2013). As such, organisational change is affected at all levels, with disruptions in daily functions occurring at a more alarming rate. The South African banking industry is thus a ripe context for this study.

1.8. Research Scope

This research was conducted within the South African banking industry, with specific focus on change enablement agents of three of South Africa's largest traditional banks, as well as insights from executives of three fintech firms. Two of the three banks are multinational organisations with operations in neighboring African countries including, but not limited to; Angola, Botswana, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. While the focus of the study was to gain insight into how the entire organisation operates and responds to the changing environment, only the South African based change agents were interviewed. This purposive approach was motivated by the fact that all these banks are head quartered in South Africa and thus provide a good base for gaining understanding on how the South African context is interpreted by each of these organisations. Moreover, each of the organisations studied have gone through

major organisational transformations and changes in the last two years, with most of the changes affecting their South African operations the most. It is prudent to note that in alignment with the study requirements for organisation wide impact, the change in each organisation was organisational wide, and impacted people, processes and systems at all levels of operations, the remnants of which continue to be felt by everyone interviewed.

For the context of each construct studied, only components relevant to the study were explored in detail. Accordingly, the scope of the study on organisational ambidexterity is limited to studying the exploration and exploitation constructs of organisational ambidexterity and does not address the dialogue on the opposing views about which ambidexterity model between contextual ambidexterity and structural ambidexterity is the best fit. While results will indicate a clear preference from participants on the matter, the analysis is concluded in the context of informing how best organisational ambidexterity can be achieved as opposed to highlighting the limitations of any of the two approaches to organisational ambidexterity. In a similar view, agility is studied as an organisational capability and not as a software implementation methodology, framework or approach. This was purposefully done to extract the maximum value of understanding agility as an organisation dynamic capability, as opposed to limiting agility to project implementation, agile methodology and agile related frameworks. It must be noted however, that agile methodologies provided insightful comprehension on organisational agility and results on the implications of methodology choice are presented as part of the results of the study.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic by presenting the foundational literature framework as continuous change, transient advantage and business transformation. The chapter progressed to introduce the constructs of organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility as the focal points for the study and proceeded to inform the reader on what is known in literature, what remains as gaps to explore, as well as the value this study adds to the body of knowledge on the subject matter. In particular, the reader was informed of the organisational misconception traps, as well as the combined traps of improvement and disruption that materialize when organisational agility constructs interact with organisational ambidexterity constructs. The chapter concluded by clearly stating the purpose of the study, the research questions to be answered as well as the research scope.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, this study presents a critical review and assessment of the literature completed by scholars in the same fields.

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review anchoring this study comprises four major themes namely: continuous change resulting in business environmental turbulence, disruption and hypercompetition; organisational ambidexterity; organisational agility; and strong dynamic capabilities for the effective adaptation and absorption of organisational change.

2.1. Environmental Turbulence and Continuous Change

The traditional approach to competitive advantage, associated with the punctuated equilibrium model (Sabherwal, Hirschheim, & Goles, 2001), assumes business change and strategy to be a “linear process characterized by long periods of small, incremental change, punctuated by brief bursts of discontinuous, radical change” (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994; Rosenkopf & Tushman, 1995; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; cited in Mehta, 2016). This approach assumes that the environment is either “perfectly predictable, totally benign, or else under the full control of the organization” (Mintzberg, 1985, p.258). Contrary to this view, continuous change theory, supported by complexity theory, dismantles the idea that organizations function in ordered, linear, mechanistic environments where simple cause-and-effect solutions are sought to explain physical and social phenomena and behaviour (Anderson, 1999; Marion, 1999; Regine & Lewin, 2000; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001, 2007; Snowden & Boone, 2007). These theories posit rather, that today’s organisations are complex beings that exhibit surprising, nonlinear behaviour (e.g. Anderson, 1999; Marion, 1999; Regine & Lewin, 2000; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001, 2007; Snowden & Boone, 2007). In fact, in an era where globalization, transparency, continental interconnectedness and new technologies have combined to upend the business environment (Reeves & Deimler, 2011), almost every large organization is complex both externally as an “Open System”, as well as internally due to the nonlinear behaviour of the interconnected parts of the internal system (Cummings & Worley, 2014; Anderson, 1999; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Hence is it said that the modern business industry has is in “a constant condition of disequilibrium” (D’Aveni, 1994, p. xiii and 345; also cited in Thomas and D’Aveni, 2002, p. 8), with competition in this continuously changing environment described as hypercompetitive, meaning “an environment of frequent competence-destroying-turbulence” (D’Aveni, 1994; Bettis & Hitt, 1995; D’Aveni, 1999; Thomas & D’Aveni, 2004, p.8).

Regardless of one's view on the turbulent nature of their particular industry, of interest is an organisations ability to not only survive but to thrive when disrupted and disintermediated. Christensen (2001) cites the importance of understanding the effect of context on the competitive nature of an organisations strategy and business model, especially when contexts are in a constant state of change. He states that practices and models that constitute advantages in one context of equilibrium, may not constitute advantages in other contexts and as such, "organisations need to be sufficiently aware of the factors which underpin their competitive advantage", such that they are made aware of changing competitive advantages and how new ones can be established (Christensen, 2001; cited in Henry, 2008, p. 209).

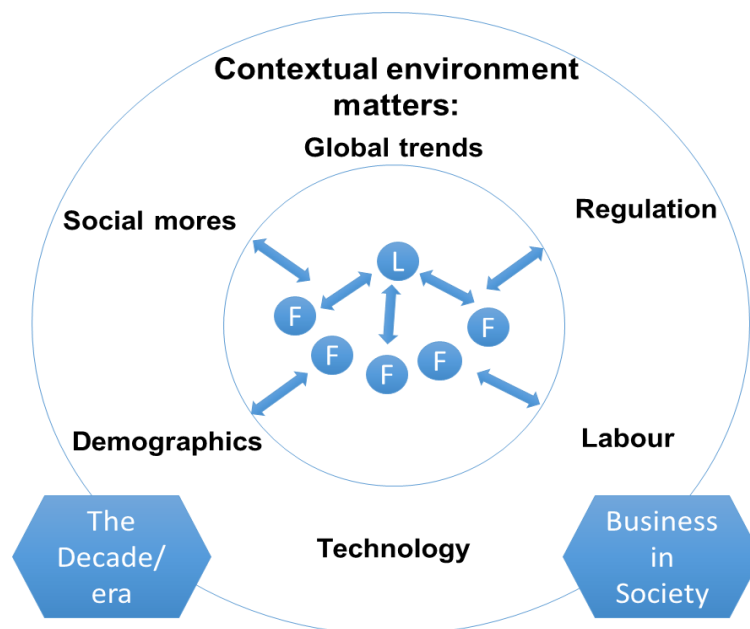


Figure 1: Business Environmental Context

Source: Mayo, A.J., & Nohria, N. (2005). Zeitgeist Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, October, 45-60.

Diagram 1 depicts the business contextual environment and illustrates how a business environment affects and is affected by the environment within which it operates. Mayo and Nohria (2005), teach us that in turbulent and volatile environments, contextual leadership is pertinent not only to comprehend the different forces affecting the organisation, but to also intelligently transform data into useful information, and to transform this knowledge into an assimilated practice within the organisation. This constant state of environmental analysis and awareness is important especially in

knowledge-intensive industries and sectors where the location and source of disruption cannot be clearly determined (McGrath, 2013).

Such industries and sectors include the financial services sector, with banks being particularly disrupted by new entrants into core banking services. Most interesting is the global realisation that banks are only one part of the financial sector, which also includes organized financial markets and non-bank financial intermediaries (NBFIs). It is thus prudent, as stated by Schmidt, Hackethal, and Tyrell (1998) to recognise that while acknowledging the financial sector as important, it does not necessarily imply that banks, as a special type of financial institution, are also important (p. 4). Banks therefore, have a particular requirement to continuously remind the global business environment of their defined and unique value proposition, or else risk being disintermediated.

2.2. Disruption in the Banking Industry

To unpack disruption to the banking industry requires a slight unpacking of why banks exist and why they are deemed important. In their most basic form, banks act as intermediaries, typically collecting deposits from savers, and channelling these as loans to borrowers (Schmidt et al., 1998). In the process of doing so, they “transform the quality of capital with respect to lot sizes, maturities and risks” (Schmidt et al., 1998, p. 6). Banks therefore exist and are deemed important because, “as intermediaries and transformers of capital, they increase the social value of capital by enabling it to be put to more efficient use” (Gurley and Shaw, 1960; cited in Schmidt et al., 1998, p. 6). It is important to note that banks perform other functions to this basic one, but for the purposes of a simplistic comprehension for disruption, this basic form suffices. In critiquing Gurley and Shaw (1960), Schmidt et al. (1998) state that it is prudent to acknowledge that under certain circumstances, such as those that exist today where a whole financial sector exists in and around banks, “capital markets are able to perform the functions of intermediation and transformation”, thus intermediating the requirement for banks specifically (Schmidt et al., 1998, p. 6).

It is from this premise that disruption to large and established banks in South Africa is studied. This is because while banks may lose some of their importance as intermediaries and institutional providers of financial services, given alternative providers of these functions, the importance of intermediation and financial services themselves does not decline or diminish (Schmidt et al., 1998). This introduces the notion of “functional approach to finance” (Gray, Merton, & Bodie, 2007), which states clearly that

while a function may be performed by one institution today, it is perfectly possible that a given function may be taken over by another institution and in fact, with better technology, provide the function more efficiently, more effectively and lot more affordable to the customer segment. In today's Artificial Intelligence and data analytics world, Muirhead (2017) posits that there are multiple ways that AI can be applied to “improve customer service, identify new products, reduce risk, and increase efficiency” (p. 1). In fact, the World Economic Forum (2017) described this as a “seismic shift”, predicting that technology companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon could overturn existing industries, with banking as a start point.

Moreover, newer disruptive technologies such as the blockchain technological infrastructure have made good strides in entering the financial and non-financial industries. A blockchain is fundamentally a “distributed database of records, or public ledger of all transactions or digital events that have been executed and shared among participating parties” (Crosby, Pattanayak, Verma, & Kalyanaraman, 2016, p.8). The main premise is that blockchain establishes a system of creating a distributed consensus of digital records (Crosby, et al., 2016, p.7). Thus allowing “participating entities to know for certain that a digital event has happened by creating an irrefutable record in a public ledger” (Crosby, et al., 2016, p.7). This particular technology disrupts traditional banking as it provides a platform for developing what is called a “democratic open and scalable digital economy” from the current traditional centralized one (Crosby, et al., 2016, p.7). While digital currencies such as bitcoin remain controversial, Crosby, et al. (2016) inform us that the underlying blockchain technology has found a variety of applications in both the financial and non-financial world.

2.3. Organisations as Paradoxes and Complex Adaptive Systems

Organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility require a paradox perspective to enable continuous organisational learning for the management of conflicting and competing organisational demands (March, 1991). Smith and Lewis (2011) define paradoxes as “contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time” (p. 382). With this definition, they highlight two concepts of a paradox: (1) underlying tensions, referring to elements that seem logical individually but inconsistent when contrasted — and (2) the simultaneous embrace of tensions (Lewis, 2000; cited in Smith & Lewis, 2011, p. 382).

Paradox theory has importance in this study as it provides comprehension on how organisations organise, categorise and prioritise activities for learning (knowledge), belonging (identity/interpersonal relationships), organizing (processes), and performing (goals) – Depicted in figure 2 below (Smith & Lewis, 2011, p. 383). More specifically, in identifying that the simultaneous enablement of two paradoxes - ambidexterity and agility- results in an intersection between the paradox demands of both, an organisational learning framework that resolves these tensional demands must be defined. As a result, the organising, categorising, prioritising and learning capabilities of an organisation can be enhanced with insightful solutions to resolving similar emerging tensional demands.



Figure 2: Categorization of Organisational Tensions

Source: Smith & Lewis (2011, p. 383)

Organisational ambidexterity requires organisational learning and organisation for exploitation and exploration (March, 1991). Exploration necessitates new knowledge or departure from existing knowledge sources and involves the “experimentation with new alternatives that produce returns that are uncertain, distant, and often negative” (March, 1991, p. 85; Jansen, Vera, & Crossan, 2009, p. 7). Exploitation broadens existing

knowledge and skills and is associated with the “refinement and extension of existing competences, technologies, and paradigms that produce returns that are positive, proximate, and predictable” (March, 1991, p. 85; Jansen, Vera, & Crossan, 2009, p. 7). This schizophrenic requirement is understandably difficult for most organisations. In fact, March (1991) states that given the option between exploring and exploiting, most leaders are inclined to invest in exploitative alternatives as these have a shorter return on investment, since they exploit existing competencies for existing alternatives (O’Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Similarly, organisational agility requires organisational learning and organisation for two competing demands to the organisation, namely: resilience and quick adaption to environmental change (adaptive agility), while simultaneously conducting strategic experiments with new business approaches and models (entrepreneurial agility) (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003; Sheffi & Rice JR, 2005; Röder et al., 2014).

Therefore, unless organisational leaders are deliberate and active (Doz & Kosonen, 2010) in altering established intra-organisational and/or extra-organisational systems of activities and their relations to environmental changes (Bucherer, Eisert, & Gassmann, 2012), the idea of finding a balance for the optimal pursuit of ambidexterity and agility is a dream. In particular, the trade-off between exploration and exploitation, as well as adaptation and entrepreneurship, involves conflicts between short-run and long-run goals and investments, and between performance gains and losses to individual’s knowledge within the organisations, as well organisational collective knowledge (March, 1991). Figure 3 distinguishes organisational tensions, highlighting comprehension for tension management when making choices.

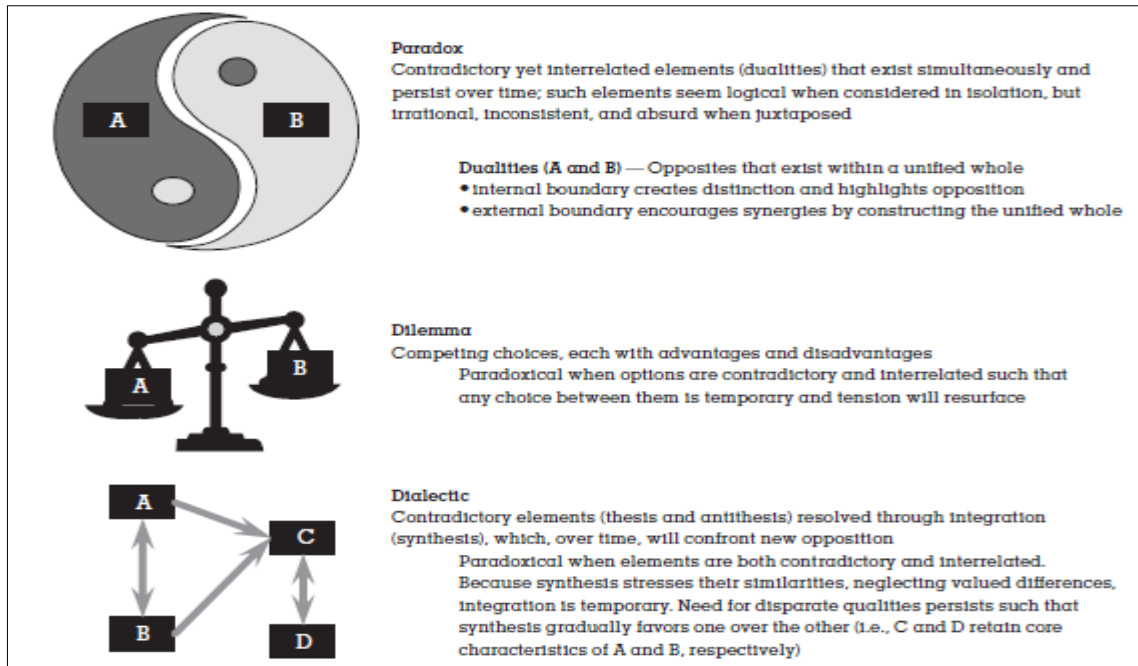


Figure 3: Paradoxical Tensions

Source: Smith & Lewis (2011, p. 387)

The paradox view sheds light on how easy or difficult it would be for an organisation to adopt ambidexterity and agility given the compounded paradoxical focus required to resolve four different kinds of tensions, as well as the constancy and opacity of change environmental change. The graphical representation of this study is depicted in figure 3 below. Anchored on the theory of continuous change, and supported by the theory of Complex Adaptive Systems, environmental turbulence is taken as a given and is represented by VUCA – Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (Lemoine & Bennet, 2014). As per literature already discussed, this turbulence affects and is the cause of organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility, both represented with their paradoxical components and factors. In identifying that these constructs live within an organisation, which is a living being with its own structure, culture and organisational design, organisational diversity influences and is influenced by organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility.

In fact, March (1991) put forward that due to the interdependent links between environmental turbulence, organizational diversity, and competitive advantage, “the evolutionary dominance of an organisational practice is sensitive to the relation between the rate of exploratory variation reflected by the practice and the rate of change in the environment” (p. 72). Thus, the significance of this graphical depiction lies in the comprehension that in turbulent markets, almost every large organization is complex

both externally as an “Open System” as well as internally owing to the nonlinear behaviour of the interconnected parts of the internal system (Cummings & Worley, 2014; Anderson, 1999; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

Marion & Uhl-Bien (2001), highlight that the continuous state of change within business organizations is a result of micro-dynamic forces (correlation, interaction, and randomness) and macrodynamic forces (physics, autocatalysis, selection, and need). According to Marion & Uhl-Bien (2001:392). Micro-dynamics represent the bottom-up behaviours that occur when individuals interact, leading to both coordinated behaviour and random behaviour, while macro-dynamics represent the emergence of the larger systems from the interactions at the micro level (p.392). Thus, as issues become more complex; strategies that simplify analysis and enable formulaic prescription but ignore the significant influence of interactive dynamics are unable to adequately address the “non-linearity” of the problem (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001:392). Given the interactive dynamics of ambidexterity and agility, influenced and influencing organisational performance, this study posits that ambidexterity and agility are “non-linear” problems.

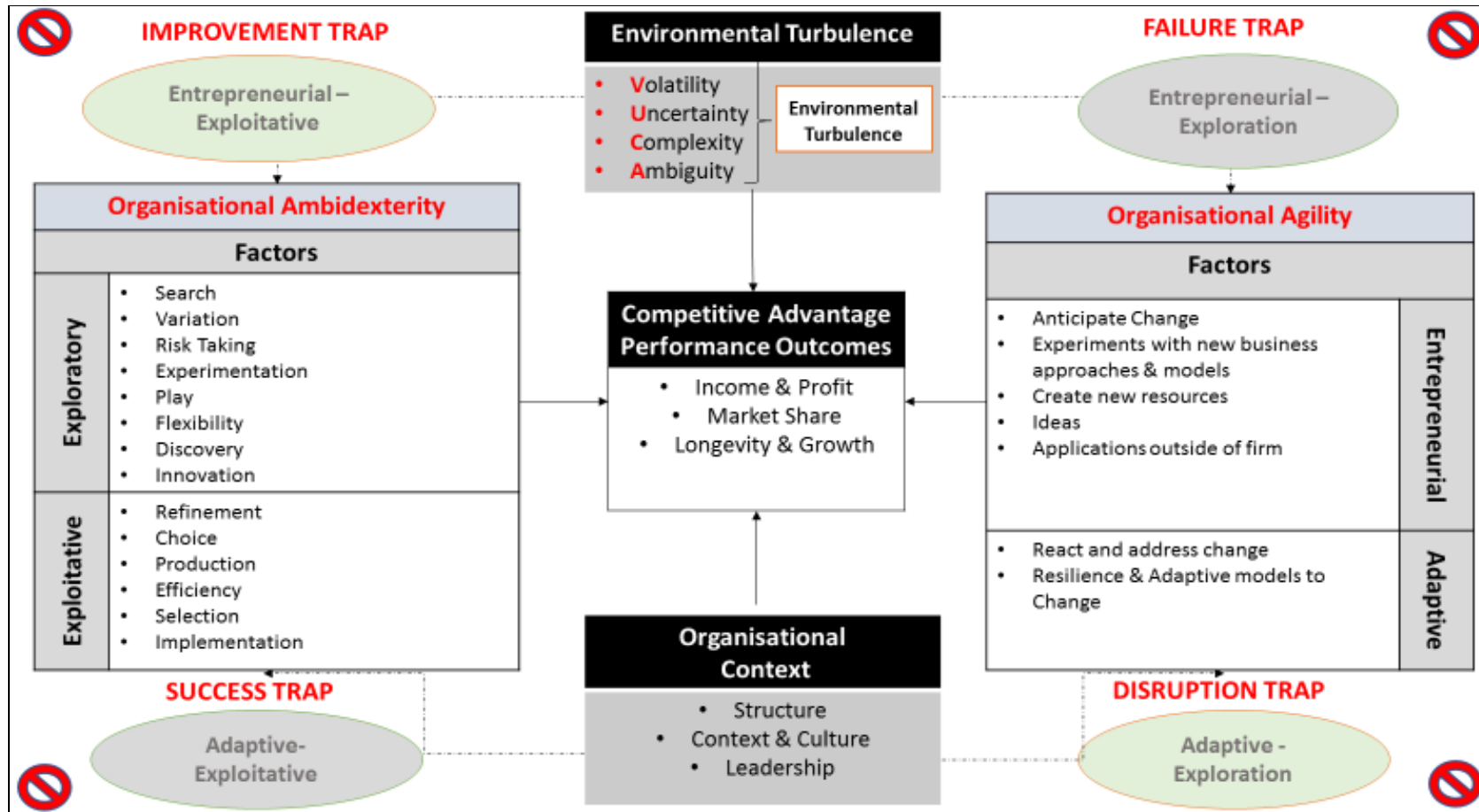


Figure 4: Organisational Ambidexterity and Agility in Turbulent Markets

Source of Data: March (1991); Meridith and Francis, (2002); Raisch and Birkinshwa (2008); Lu and Ramamurthy, (2011); Tushman & O'Reilly, 2013; and Röder et al., (2014).

2.4. Organisational Ambidexterity: Exploitation and Exploration

Organisational ambidexterity is defined as the “simultaneous pursuit of incremental and discontinuous innovation through the exploitation of existing competencies and the exploration of new opportunities” (Duncan, 1976; March, 1991; Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996; Eisenhardt, Furr, & Bingham, 2010; Martini et al., 2013; O’Reilly & Tushman, 2013, p.3). The ‘Ambidextrous’ term was first applied to organisational settings by Duncan (1976), who suggested that organisational ambidexterity can be achieved through a sequential shifting of organisational structures as a means to enable organisations to deal with contradictory elements (Martini et al., 2013; O’Reilly & Tushman, 2013). However, the article by March (1991) is arguably, the very seminal foundational basis for ambidexterity, explained through the paradoxical forces of exploration and exploitation.

March, (1991) describes exploration activities as those that encompass terms such as “examination, experimentation, variation, discovery, innovation and flexibility” (p.71; Röder et al., 2014), also see Figure 3. As a defined term, exploration refers to the process of learning - acquiring new knowledge and innovation - a new way of doing things (Gupta et al., 2006, p.693). In contrast, exploitation is concerned with terms such as “refinement, choice, production, efficiency, selection, implementation and execution” (March, 1991, p.71; Röder et al., 2014), but is slightly ambiguously defined within literature, an issue first observed by (Gupta et al., 2006). In this paper, we accept the definition that suggests that exploitation is about the refinement of existing competencies and knowledge to enable organisational adaptation (March, 1991, Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996; Gupta et al., 2006).

March (1991) observed that while every organisation seeks to find the appropriate balance between exploiting for existing alternatives and exploring for new alternatives, finding the correct and appropriate balance for a specific organisation is complicated. Noticeably, when resources are a constraint and the paradoxical interconnection too complex and uncertain, previous success in the pursuit of specific competencies naturally reinforces more exploitation along the same trajectory (Christensen, 1997; Gupta et al. 2006; Un, 2007; Jansen, Vera and Crossan, 2008; Röder et al., 2014). Consequently, when leaders are faced with the choice between prioritizing for the exploitation of existing competencies over exploring for new opportunities, the obvious choice results in the short-term value of exploitation (Gupta et al. 2006). Moreover, and as observed by March (1991), in the simultaneous paradoxical pursuit of exploitation

and exploration, a focus on exploration for new competencies and opportunities reduces the focus and speed for the improvement of skills at existing competencies and in contrast, when the focus of improvements is on existing competencies, success in these makes exploration experimentation with new alternatives less attractive (March 1991, p. 72; Levitt & March, 1988).

It follows then, that unless an organisation organizes itself to resolve the contradictory needs between exploration and exploitation, any attempt at organisational ambidexterity will be impaired. This is especially important given that an organisations business model drives and influences how value is provided to customers (Demil, Lecocq, Ricart, & Zott, 2015). Literature suggests two dominant modes to resolve this conflict: one structural and the other contextual.

2.4.1. Contextual and Structural Ambidexterity

Structural ambidexterity theorists advocate for the establishment of spatial separation, where dual and autonomous subunit structures for exploitation and exploration are formed and coordinated by top management (e.g., Tushman and O'Reilly, 1996). This mode suggests that dual and autonomous structures achieve optimal ambidexterity as the separated structures with autonomous teams, processes, systems and cultures do not compete for resources with existing forces (Papachroni, 2015). On the other hand, advocates for contextual ambidexterity argue that organisations can achieve ambidexterity through the use of behaviour and social means, where feature designing is created to enable and permit individuals to split their time between exploratory and exploitative activities (e.g., Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008; Raisch, Birkinshaw, Probst & Tushman, 2009). The two schools of thought were later supplemented by a third, which argues for punctuated equilibrium (e.g., Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003; Gupta et al., 2006). Predicated on the biological theory of punctuated equilibrium, the punctuated equilibrium theory argues against the notion of continuous change by suggesting that change exists within periodic segments of calm and disruption, starting with a calm state which is later punctuated by a sudden shift in radical change. Therefore, organisational ambidexterity can be achieved by enabling organisations to alternate between long periods of static change, emphasizing exploitation and shorter spasmic periods of radical change, emphasizing exploration activities (Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003; Gupta et al., 2006; Papachroni, 2015). Since the focus of this study is on change that happens continuously, a market environment that is not only turbulent but is also highly competitive, the punctuated ambidexterity model

is dismissed as an optimal model to address ambidexterity in a continuously changing market environment (Raisch et al., 2009; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013).

Given that both contextual and structural ambidexterity models have an existing and viable relational basis, but a differing configuration, prudence informs that neither should be dismissed as the optimal structure for ambidexterity. More specifically, the structural solution is anchored on the classical behavioural decision theory of the firm, conceptualised by Cyert and March (1963), and the contextual solution is founded on the notion of paradox management by (March, 1991). Thus, both ambidexterity models have validity and limitations. The structural model allows for separate subunit orientations, suited across multiple dimensions at the unit level, but fails to create transfer of knowledge between organisational units (Markides, 2013; Papachroni, 2015; Papachroni, Heracleous & Paroutis, 2016). While the contextual model, though consistent with the systems process of transfer across multiple organisational units, is contradictory to discrete choice (Markides, 2013; Papachroni, 2015; Papachroni et al., 2016). In acknowledging the validity and limitations of each model, prudence requires a selection of a type of model as a foundation basis for the structuring of ambidexterity as dynamic business capability. As such, while accepted as highly complex and time consuming, this study examines organisational ambidexterity through the lens of contextual ambidexterity. The primary reason for this is because the structural ambidexterity limitation that results in the model's failure to appropriately transfer knowledge between organisational units is counter intuitive and contrary to this research study. In positioning ambidexterity and agility as continuous dynamic capabilities to facilitate business transformation in volatile and complex environments, it is expected that the rate of change within and without the organisation will require contextual decision making on the fly, leaving very little time for transfer of knowledge should the dynamic capability sit outside of the task teams involved with the change.

It should be emphasised once again though that of the two models of ambidexterity, contextual ambidexterity is identified as more complex, and thus requires a bottom-up approach which emphasizes the active involvement and participation of individual team members as part of the organizational culture and context (Wang & Rafiq, 2014, p.61). Amit and Schoemaker (1993) actually offered that even while viewed as a unique organisational capability, contextual ambidexterity is complex, time consuming to develop and is extensively dispersed (also cited in Wang & Rafiq, 2010, p. 61). This point is particularly relevant for this research study as this study accepts that due to multiple dimensions of entrenched values, structures, processes and technical know-how, many

organisations struggle with contexts that negatively affect the pursuit of ambidexterity (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004). Given that this study positions ambidexterity with agility as dynamic capabilities to facilitate business transformation, the contextual dimensions of an organisation task environment are of importance. In fact, the identification of contextual ambidexterity as complex has dimensional value for the comprehension of the compounded complexity when ambidexterity is positioned with agility, another complex business capability. To this point, the next section discusses the concept of an ambidextrous organisational culture to facilitate transformation through contextual ambidexterity.

2.4.2. Ambidextrous Organisational Culture

According to Schein (2010), organisational culture is both a dynamic phenomenon and a function of organisational dimensional factors. Schein (2010) argues that as a dynamic phenomenon, culture surrounds us all the time and is constantly created and enacted by individual's interactions with each other. As an organisational dimension, it is shaped by leadership behaviour, as well as "a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms", that both guide and constrain behaviour (Schein, 2010, p.1). It is on this premise that culture is positioned as forming part of both the formal and informal part of the business (Denison, 1996), both as a behavioural part of the organisational context, as well as the structural component represented by processes and systems (Wang & Rafiq, 2014).

Wang and Rafiq (2014) position the concept of an ambidextrous organisational culture as one that focuses on two sets of organizational values and norms, namely 'organizational diversity' and 'shared vision' (p. 61). They offer the concept of organisational diversity as a business unit level concept that reflects the organisational cultural norms that respect "task-related differences in information, knowledge and perspectives (Wang and Rafiq, 2014, p.61). Similarly, they offer the concept of shared vision, as a combined set of "organisational values and norms", promoting active involvement and participation of task level members, "in the development, communication, dissemination and implementation of organizational goals" (Wang and Rafiq, 2014, p.61). This study has interest in the concept of an ambidextrous organisational culture as it offers a bottom-up learning approach that is consistent with individual and task level organisational mechanisms of learning. Thus providing a foundational basis for the effective transformation of business facilitated and enacted through two constructs that requirement involvement and participation at all levels of the business.

2.5. Organisational Agility

At its conceptual phase, organisational agility was defined as “the ability of an organisation to thrive in a continuously changing, unpredictable business environment” (Dove, 1999, p.19). This definition, as pointed out by Dove (1999), was conceptualized on the basis that technology and globalism were the only principle drivers of this changing environment (p.19). However, with the realization that business environments have become more global, interconnected, fast paced, and competitive (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011), and as internal organisational processes, knowledge management and change proficiency (Dove, 1999) become more complex, the salient increase of such contradictory and often paradoxical demands on an organisation’s resources have given rise to debates about the nature and construct of organisational agility. To that effect, the current descriptions of organisational agility encompass, i) a firm’s ability to detect and “respond quickly, timeously and with dexterity to proactive and reactive needs of change” (Röder et al., 2014, p.3) ii) with a view to enable an organisation to thrive in a turbulent and competitive environment (Goldman & Nagel, 1993; Dove, 1999; Dove 2002; Vazquez-Bustelo, Avella, & Fernández; 2007).

2.5.1. Strategic, Portfolio and Operational Agility

Sull (2010) defines organisational agility as “the capacity to identify and capture opportunities more quickly than rivals do”, and positions it in three distinct forms – Strategic, Portfolio and Operational (p.1). According to Sull (2010), organisational agility cannot be constructed through a single type form, as overreliance on a single type of agility places organisations at risk when market needs shift. Citing Complex Adaptive Systems interaction, Sull (2010) argues that in turbulent markets companies face a steady flow of small opportunities, often in periodic midsize segments and through these have a rare chance of creating significant value (p. 2). Prasad (2015) aptly identified that adaptability and agility, while supportive of each other, are two different concepts often misdiagnosed and articulated as the same thing. Prasad (2015) posits that while adaptability “is about slow change”, agility “is about quick response” (p.1), making a distinction between reacting to change over time and quickly ceasing market opportunity. This distinction is important in the context of Strategic Agility, since given high volatility and unpredictability of change in turbulent markets, compounded by “uneven distribution of golden opportunities”, strategic agility relies on a combination of “patience” and “boldness” (Sull, 2010, p. 2). Patience in this instance is described as – waiting for the right time to strike, and boldness as – acting swiftly when the time arises (p.2). Therefore, in order to cease the opportunity within its lifetime, Sull (2010) postulates that

organisations require the ability to 1) probe for opportunities – probing for small scale opportunities to help explore potential opportunities (p.3), fittingly coinciding with the ambidexterity exploration. McGrath (2013), built on this with her take on transient competitive strategy, stating that advantages have to be created and re-created continuously in “wave after wave” of change (Cited in Leavy, 2014, p. 5). McGrath posited that the strategic approach to remain relevant and competitive in today’s transient economy is to identify opportunities very quickly, mobilize for the opportunity and capitalize on the opportunity while the window of opportunity is still open (McGrath, 2013; cited in Leavy, 2014, p. 4).

Secondly, Sull (2010) advocates for risk mitigation, cautioning against recklessness and imploring instead for the systematic minimization “of the downside risk of upside bets” (p. 3). Lastly, Sull (2010) argues in favour of “staying in the game”. He argues that sometimes, the ability to prudently stay in the game until an opportunity emerges positions prepared companies correctly for opportunity ceasing when opportunities emerge. The distinct requirement for “remaining in the game” being a combination of strong structural organisational attributes such as a good balance sheet; diversified cash flow; low fixed costs; strong brands and; a powerful patron such as regulator.

Operational agility is positioned as the ability to “exploit both revenue-enhancing and cost-cutting opportunities within the core business more quickly, effectively, and consistently than rivals do” (Sull, 2010, p. 6). Thus, operational agility correlates with ambidexterity exploitation. Christensen (1997) argued that while weak-managed organisations stumble because of “bureaucracy, arrogance, tired executive blood, poor planning, short-term investment horizons as well as inadequate skills and resources”, it is not only these organisations that stumble in the face of market and technological change and disruption (p.7). He argued that even well-managed giants that have their “competitive antennae up, listen astutely to their customers and invest aggressively in new technologies”, still stumble and lose market dominance (Christensen, 1997, p. 7). It thus begs the question, why?

There have been multiple answers to this question, starting with Christensen (1997) himself citing what he termed “The innovator’s dilemma” (p.9). Christensen’s innovator’s dilemma basically states that the logical decisions and practices taken by management, previously critical to the success of organisations, are also often the reasons why these organisations lose their market leadership positions when faced with disruptive

technological change (Christensen, 1997, p.9). While most well-managed organisations excel at developing “sustaining technologies that improve the performance of their products” to their customer’s satisfaction, “disruptive technologies change the value proposition in a market” (Christensen, 1997, p.175). Thus, decision-making and resource-allocation processes previously key to the success of established organisations, within the first context, are the very processes that reject disruptive technologies when the context changes (Christensen, 1997, p. 86). Given that in turbulent markets, market prediction is rendered ineffectual, operational agility requires an organisational mindset, systems and processes for continuous self-disruption. Organisations therefore, need to put in place systems for continuous exploration, dissemination of information and solutions explored and a systematic construction of processes to “translate corporate priorities into focused action” (Christensen, 1997; Sull, 2010, p. 6). In agreement, McGrath (2013) posits that for a continuous creation of transient advantages, organisations must reconfigure their advantages, keeping the existing source of competitive advantage “fresh” as more and more competitors enter the fray, and to ultimately disengage and replace, moving on in a timely and strategic fashion before the original advantage is completely eroded (Leavy, 2004, p. 4).

To conclude, Sull (2010) advocates for prudent and agile business diversification, describing this as portfolio agility. Sull (2010) asserts that without portfolio agility, seasoned executives, when faced with the decision to protect established businesses or invest in portfolio choices for new risky bets, will choose to protect established businesses. The risk to the business is redundancy and death in the face of disruptive technological disruption (Christensen, 1997). Therefore, to effectively enable portfolio agility, Sull (2010) argues for the cultivation of versatile general managers who can dynamically move from business to business, cultivating both exploitation and exploration of new and old through diversification when required.

Table 2 has been constructed to provide the differing perspectives between entrenched resource, processes and strategic thinking of established organisations vs. what Christensen (1997) suggests. As observed in the table as well as the preceding literature, organisational agility has its roots not only on the ability to quickly cease opportunities when they arise, but also on the strategic ability to know when and how to change direction when the requirement calls for it.

Table 2: Established Business Approach vs Innovation Model

	Established Organisations	Christensen's Approach
Resource Allocation	Planned cycles for competitive advantage, established within annual and bi-annual strategy sessions define resource capacity requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customers effectively control the patterns of resource allocation, allocate resources based customer segment needs (Strategic Agility). - Utilise some of the resources of the mainstream organization to address the disruption, but be careful not to leverage its processes and values. - Create different ways of working within the organization and turn values and cost structure to the disruptive task at hand (Operation Agility)
Market Penetration & Growth	Technology supply must equal market demand. Small markets don't solve the growth needs of large companies, thus explaining why established organisations prefer developed markets. Or why they prefer to wait until emerging markets become large enough or interesting enough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology supply may not equal market demand. - Place projects to develop disruptive technologies in organizations small enough to get excited about small opportunities and small wins (Portfolio Agility).
Commercializing Disruptive Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapt to market changes already visible - Adapt based on established patterns, processes and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find or develop new markets that value the attributes of the disruptive products, rather than search for a technological breakthrough so that the disruptive product can compete as a sustaining technology in mainstream markets (Strategic Agility).
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Static and lethargic organisational capabilities - The very processes and values that constitute their core capabilities within the current business model also define their disabilities when confronted with disruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dynamic capabilities, forged to be attuned with markets served. - Capabilities that exist independently of the capabilities of the people who work within organisation. - Capabilities reside in their processes and values (Strategic Agility)
Attitude towards Failure	Failure is unacceptable and should be planned for and avoided at all cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure is an intrinsic step toward success (Strategic Leadership). - Plan to fail early and inexpensively in the search for a market for disruptive technology. - Markets generally coalesce through an iterative process of trial, learning, and trial again (Operational Agility).

Figure 5: Established Business Approach vs. The Innovation Approach

Source of information: Christensen (1997, p.87)

2.5.2. Adaptive and Entrepreneurial Agility

Organisational agility has consistently been put forth as the dynamic capability upon which competitive advantage rests (Ireland et al., 2003; Sheffi & Rice JR, 2005; Gupta et al., 2006). At opposite ends of the spectrum of organisational agility are the concepts of entrepreneurial agility and adaptive agility. Entrepreneurial agility concerns itself with functions of seeking and identifying new opportunities followed by the proper planning and execution of the opportunities (Ireland et al., 2003). While adaptive agility deals with organisational resilience and adaptation to “environmental change in order to maintain competitive parity and leadership” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 3). Adaptive agility concerns itself with functions that enable the organisation to cope with uncertainty and recover quickly to disruption “without fundamentally changing products or processes” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 3).

Christensen (1997) identified two types of innovations that organisations can engage in: disruptive innovation and sustaining innovation. Disruptive innovation is the kind of innovation that leads to new markets and new business models (Christensen, 1997; Ireland et al., 2003). This is the kind of innovation more closely aligned to the notion of entrepreneurship (Ireland et al., 2003) and as such, entrepreneurial agility. Sustaining innovation is incremental innovation implemented through improvement and refinement cycles (Christensen, Johnson & Rigby, 2002). This is the kind of innovation that enables organisational adaptation and resilience and is more aligned to adaptive agility (Sheffi & Rice JR, 2005; Röder et al., 2014).

While they sit on opposite ends of the spectrum, adaptive and entrepreneurial agility are two different, but very effective organisational capabilities to anticipate, plan for and respond to market disruption. The agility component of both concepts highlights and enforces that the response must be executed in the quickest and swiftest manner, permitting a quick time to market while the opportunity is still within its lifetime (Sambamurthy et al., 2007).

2.6. The Economic Value of a simultaneous pursuit of Organisational Ambidexterity and Agility – Why should businesses care?

Two points are important to answer this question, of primary importance is the provision of purpose on why organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility are positioned

together to enable business transformation. Second, is the obvious acknowledgement that unless it has a bottom line effect, business organisations will not take it seriously.

To answer the first point, Heracleous et al. (2016) observed that literature considers ambidexterity particularly relevant to business organisations inhabiting conditions of environmental volatility and uncertainty. In more technical terms, since exploitation is relational to efficiency and productivity through the refinement of existing solutions, and yet existing cognitive learning and knowledge tend to hinder disruptive innovations, - in the absence of disruptive innovation which facilitates knowledge creation, a business remains in a constant loop of refinement for short term benefits and never makes breakthroughs towards disruptive innovations for long term financial gains (Hughes, Hughes and Morgan, 2007; Wung & Rafiq, 2014, p. 63). Similarly, adaptive agility, concerned with resilience and maintaining the status quo for competitive parity, facilitates organisational learning towards protection of the known. In the absence of entrepreneurial agility, which unlocks experimentation with new approaches and new learning, a single view of organisational agility disintermediates learning for the unknown. Thus, it is prudent to relate and connect ambidexterity with agility since organisational ambidexterity helps organisations to “maintain their strategic agility, by being both aligned to the existing environment and adaptive to possible turbulence” (Heracleous et al., 2016, p. 4), and vice versa, agility helps ambidexterity to capture the market with opportunities within the lifetime of the exploited or explored opportunities.

Consequently, literature also acknowledges that the simultaneous resolution of the exploration and exploitation, “capability-rigidity” paradox (Wung & Rafiq, 2014, p. 63), is associated not only with innovation adaptation, but also with superior commercialization of innovation over the long term, especially in knowledge intensive industries (Junni, Sarala, Taras, & Tarba, 2013; cited in Heracleous et al., 2016, p. 4). Since this literature has already positioned the banking industry as a knowledge -intensive industry, it is thus deemed prudent for leaders in the banking industry to consider the simultaneous pursuit of organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility as an antecedent to effective business transformation.

The second point is answered by Sull (2010), quoting a McKinsey survey that suggested that nine out of 10 executives surveyed consider “higher revenues, more satisfied customers and employees, improved operational efficiency, and a faster time to market” (p.1), as benefits of organisational agility. Given that literature has already informed the importance of ambidexterity to agility, these benefits can only be enhanced when

business organisations can simultaneously exploit and explore competencies and opportunities and with speed and dexterity, take solutions to market.

2.7. Organisational Agility and Ambidexterity Traps

Röder et al., (2014) offered that suggests that when organisations simultaneously focus on organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility, conflicting structures that result in endless cycles of dis-improvement occur (p. 6). These conflicting structures are as a result of the dichotomy approach and paradoxical interplay points when organisational agility constructs i.e. entrepreneurial agility and adaptive agility (Sambamurthy et al. 2007) are executed alongside oppositional organisational ambidexterity constructs i.e. exploitative and exploratory concepts (March, 1991; Martini et al., 2013; Stettner & Lavie, 2014; Röder et al., 2014;6).

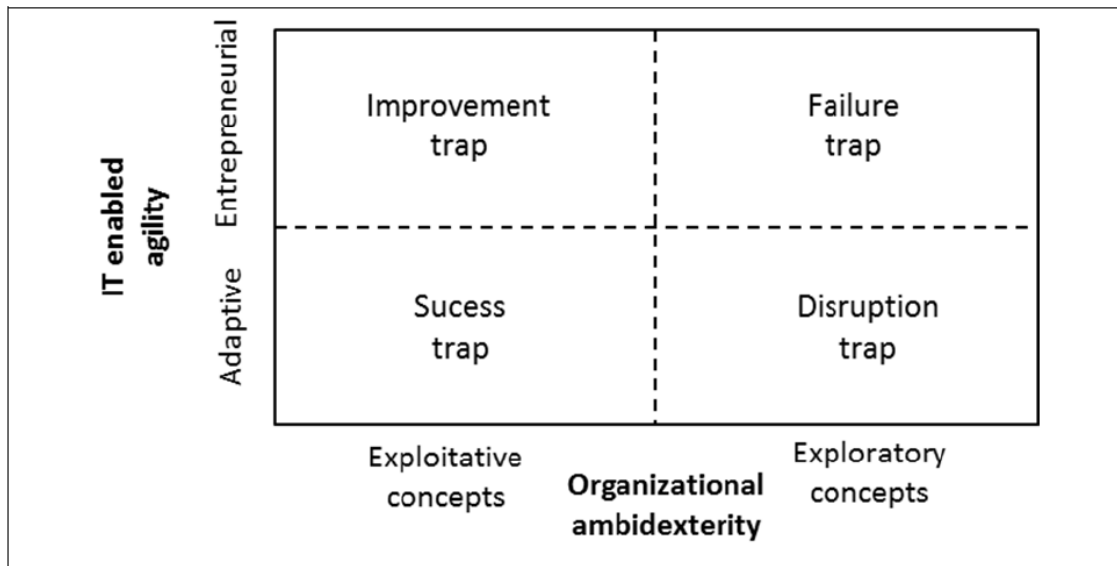


Figure 6: Ambidexterity Agility Model

Source: Röder et al., 2014

2.7.1. Success and Failure Traps

According to Röder et al. (2014), when organisations focus exclusively on exploitative activities (ambidexterity-exploitation and agility-adaptive), the exploitative focus can trigger a ‘success trap’ in which exploitation drives out exploration (p. 6). They argue that this is because once success is achieved in a specific competence, that success reinforces exploitation along the same trajectory as extraction of more value is expected. Unfortunately, this success drives out the appetite for further exploration of new competencies, thus resulting in a what is called the “success trap” (Röder et al. (2014;

Gupta et al. 2006). In fact, Wang and Rafiq (2014) linked this to an issue with structural ambidexterity and re-enforced organisational learning towards a single trajectory. Citing seminal authors Hughes, Hughes and Morgan (2007), they posited that under the traditional (structural) view of ambidexterity, exploitation, associated with efficiency and productivity through the utilisation of existing solutions, facilitates and reinforces learning and knowledge refinement towards the known and as such, hinders breakthrough innovations (Wang & Rafiq, 2014). Therefore, an unchecked organisational reliance on exploitative activities results in increased incremental product innovations but hinders radical innovation (Christensen and Bower, 1996; cited in Wang & Rafiq, 2014).

Conversely, when organisations focus exclusively on explorative activities (ambidexterity-exploratory and agility-entrepreneurial), exploration results in a ‘failure trap’ (Röder et al. (2014, p. 6). They argue that is because when exploring and experimenting with new capabilities, new ideas and new competencies, the wider the range of alternatives, the higher the probable rate of failure with some of the options. To an explorer, failure provides an opportunity to search further for newer ideas and opportunities, thus resulting in more probable failure, a loop cycle towards a “failure trap” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 7). Similarly, Wang and Rafiq (2014) put forth that exploration encourages learning through knowledge creation, “potentially creating higher but uncertain returns, but often at the expense of efficiency” (p. 64). Therefore, exploration increases radical product innovations but impedes incremental innovations (Atuahene-Gima, 2005; cited in Wang & Rafiq, 2014).

While these two specific failures are concerning, they actually validate ambidexterity, informing decision makers that balancing conflicting and paradoxical activities is a continuous, deliberate and prudent strategic exercise. Mastering a competence is the haven sought by all organisations, however, in turbulent environments, McGrath (2014) suggests instead that organisations ought to search multiple and smaller havens to protect themselves. To this effect, it would be beneficial to organisations inhabiting turbulent environments to create organisational thresholds for exploiting and exploring. The two most concerning interaction traps are those between ambidexterity exploratory and adaptable agility as well as those between ambidexterity exploitation against agility entrepreneurial. (Refer to Figure 1).

2.7.2. Improvement and Disruption Traps

Improvement trap is the organisational trap that occurs between entrepreneurial agility and exploitative ambidexterity (Röder et al., 2014). Entrepreneurial agility, concerned with scanning the environment for new opportunities, threats and potential change impedes exploitative ambidexterity, which is concerned with the effective selection and refinement of forms, routines, and organisational practices (March, 1991; Röder et al., 2014). Essentially, the two are starkly juxtaposed because while exploitation is an activity based on certainty, speed, proximity, and clarity of feedback, entrepreneurship, by its very nature is about uncertainty, variation, search and development.

Improvement trap is a concern for the effective simultaneous pursuit of ambidexterity and agility, since it is known that given the choice between exploitation and entrepreneurial activities, individuals will create defensive routines of learning towards self-repeating patterns (Röder et al., 2014). These routines ultimately result in resistance, thus favouring exploitation over entrepreneurial agility (Brady and Davies 2004; Röder et al., 2014). Consequently, in the perceived pursuit of organisational change and transformation, automation of existing processes and practices will inadvertently result in static dis-improvements – since success in previously improved activities leads to a repetition of said activities until they become standardized, procedural, and non-value adding (Röder et al., 2014). Because of this, organisations are prevented from adapting to a changing environment and are unfortunately led to stagnation (Brady & Davies, 2004; Röder et al., 2014, p.7-8).

Disruption trap is the organisational trap that occurs between adaptive agility and exploratory ambidexterity. Adaptive agility, concerned with incremental improvements, impedes exploratory ambidexterity (Röder et al., 2014, p.10). This is because in most instances, disruptive growth opportunities reside outside of a company's current competencies and technology base (Assink, 2006; Röder et al., 2014). Therefore, due to embedded values and a culture of performing functions in a certain way and equally learning in a certain way, when disruptive activities are introduced, they challenge the status quo and create discomfort in the business (Assink, 2006; Röder et al., 2014). The challenge to organisations seeking to organize themselves for ambidexterity through agility is to enable a quick recovery process.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature studies from four major themes namely: environmental turbulence and continuous change; organisational learning and paradox theory; Organisational ambidexterity; and organisational agility. The literature basis of this study is anchored on the theory of continuous change and as such, environmental turbulence was used as the lens through which organisational disruption occurs. Organisational ambidexterity and agility provided good perspectives to understanding how organisations, in acknowledging the shifting environmental context, as well as their eroded competitive advantages, can introduce multilevel, complementary tactical, and synergised organisational learning for change.

In the next chapter, Chapter 3, the five questions answered from the study are presented.

3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the preceding literature review as well as identified gaps in the body of existing literature, the objective of this qualitative research was to gather non-empirical evidence of the factors that influence the interaction between organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility constructs. In addition, this study aimed to build a practical framework that can be used for the effective implementation of organisational ambidexterity through the enhancement of organisational agility. To that effect, the research study answered these five specific questions:

3.1. Research Question 1: How is organisational ambidexterity understood and enacted?

Research Question 1 sought to gain greater clarity on the perceived factors of organisational ambidexterity. Predicated on research findings by Röder et al., (2014), this question sought to understand how organisational ambidexterity is understood within business organisations, factors that drive exploration and exploitation activities within the organisation, as well as the perceived experience and enactment of ambidexterity in the organisation.

3.2. Research Question 2: How is organisational agility understood and enacted?

Similarly, Research Question 2 sought to gain greater clarity on the perceived factors of organisational agility. Specifically, this research question sought to understand how organisational agility is understood, factors that drive adaptation and entrepreneurial agility within the organisation, as well as the perceived experience on the enactment of agility in the organisation. In exploring and unpacking the comprehension of each of these factors, it was interesting to note how organisational agility and the agile methodology and framework are convoluted as meaning the exact same thing. This in turn, established a follow up exploration on how methodologies shape organisational approach towards change and vice versa.

3.3. Research Question 3: What are the enablers and/or inhibitors of organisational ambidexterity? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?

This research question sought to gain understanding on the factors that enable or inhibit organisational ambidexterity. In addition, this research question sought to gain better understanding about the dimensional factors that influence organisational ambidexterity

the most, with the purpose of highlighting this for resolution. According to Birkinshaw & Gibson (2004), due to multiple dimensions of entrenched values, structures, processes and technical know-how, many organisations struggle with contexts that negatively affect the pursuit of ambidexterity. The study sought identify if the sample group organisations have the same struggle.

3.4. Research Question 4: What are the enablers and/or inhibitors of organisational agility? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?

Research Question 4 sought to gain understanding on the factors that enable/inhibit organisational agility in an organisation. Similarly, the research question sought to gain better understanding about the dimension that influences organisational agility the most, with the purpose of highlighting this for resolution. Given that the business community has been shown to have a better grasp on the concept of organisational agility, this question aimed to expound the agility construct, with the contextual focus on methodology, as well as the perceptive interpretations of an organisation as either adaptive or entrepreneurially agile.

3.5. Research Question 5: What are the organisational transformational shifts required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility?

Research Question 5 sought to explore and gain enlightenment on the perceived tensional relationship between organisational ambidexterity and agility. This question was particularly concerned with the relational interaction traps between ambidexterity and agility concepts, and sought to explore how each of these can be avoided, completely eradicated or overcome for the effective transformation of the business through organisational ambidexterity and agility. This was a particularly complex research question as it did not rely on participant's direct answers to a specific question, but relied on understanding of the perceived organisational benefit factors and shift drivers for ambidexterity and agility. In addition to the two interview questions, the research question sought to understand whether ambidexterity and agility are perceived as relational by participants and if so, what attributable perceptive insights can be observed relating to the paradoxical tensional traps identified by Röder et al., (2014).

4. CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research paradigm, methodology, and design strategies underpinning this research study. Furthermore, the chapter unpacks the design instruments, data collection and analysis methods, and explains the assumptions and limitations accepted in the choice of each. In highlighting the limitations, measures to clarify ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study are also discussed.

4.2. Rationale for the Research Paradigm, Design and Methodology

In order to establish organisational comprehension and individual perceptions of ambidexterity and agility, as well as the enabling and inhibiting factors of both, the research paradigm and design for this study is interpretive and explorative in nature and is analysed through the inductive qualitative research methodology.

4.2.1. Interpretive Paradigm

According to Reeves and Hedberg (2003), interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is experienced and perceived from subjective individuals. Since strategic qualitative research is embedded in context, the interpretive paradigm is suitably qualified to enable the narrative and interpretive nature of qualitative strategy research (Mamabolo, 2009, p. 41; Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). Thus, allowing for discovery and interpretation of research participant's world views during the interaction between the researcher and the research participants (De Vos 2002, p.360).

Anchored on the philosophical study called phenomenology, the interpretive paradigm uses meaning and context and focuses on the complexity of human sense-making within emerging situations (Thomas, 2010). Hence, it is posited as being the most effective at highlighting and articulating participant's experiences and perceptions from their own perspectives (Lester, 1999; cited in Thomas, 201., p. 297). Moreover, since Deetz (1996) posited that interpretive studies provide research with a larger scope for addressing issues of influence and impact, this paradigm is suitably qualified for comprehension of organisational experiences and perceptions of ambidexterity and agility. In addition, it also enables the proper evaluation or estimation of the nature, ability, and quality of the information gathered (cited in Thomas, 201., p. 297).

4.2.2. Explorative Design

Research design is defined as “a framework for carrying out research activities in different fields of study” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The research design strategy adopted for this study was exploratory, and sought to discover thoughts and ideas to provide new insights and to shed new light on the topic of organisational transformation through ambidexterity and agility. Marshall and Rossman (2014) describe a qualitative exploratory study as one that i) investigates little understood phenomena, ii) identifies or discovers important categories of meaning, and iii) generates hypotheses for further research (p. 33). While ambidexterity and agility are known phenomena in strategic literature, they have rarely been juxtaposed together. As such, the level of organisational learning required to enable an effective simultaneous pursuit of both has little understanding – resolving for point i). Furthermore, while each construct has identifiable characteristics and meaning, together, ambidexterity and agility create new categories of meaning for organisational change, transformation and even survival. Particularly in the identification and resolution for ambidexterity and agility dis-improvement traps as articulated in chapter two – resolving for point ii). Lastly, in identifying gaps in literature for the clear construction of business transformation through effective ambidexterity and agility, this study highlights a requirement for quantitative research that translates the contextual narrative to a scientific conclusion.

4.2.3. Qualitative Methodology

Research methodology is described as a “strategy of enquiry”, which transitions from assumptions to research design, and data collection (Meyer, 2009; Thomas, 2010, p. 301). It basically refers to how data is obtained, organised and analysed as well as the representation and generalisations derived from the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The research method adopted for this study is qualitative in nature, cross-sectional, and purposefully selected for the interpretive and naturalistic approach to the subject matter (Thomas, 2010). The study is cross sectional as the data gathered represents what is going on at only one point in time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the opinion of Denzin and Lincoln (2003), qualitative studies are interpretive and naturalistic as they sense-make and interpret phenomena based on perceptive meaning from participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Thomas, 2010). Since the nature of the study

For relevancy to the business context, Zikmund et al. (2013) allege that qualitative exploratory research is useful within the business context when the study wishes to clarify problem comprehension or business concepts exploration through the use of techniques independent of numerical measurements (Zikmund et al., 2013, p. 132). In addition, Zikmund et al. (2013) posit that the qualitative method is ideally suited to uncover leaderships' multiple dimensional views, as it allows contextual analysis that is both probing and observative aiding depth and nuance (Zikmund et al., 2013). Thus, In seeking to uncover how large and established organisations perceive and organise themselves for disruption, it was apt to uncover leadership's perceptions and approach to ambidexterity and agility, with a particular focus to the strategic enablement of quick and nimble decision making not only to capture the market, but to also change direction swiftly should the requirement call for it.

4.3. Population and Sample Group

Saunders and Lewis (2012) define a population as “the complete set of research participants”, with the sample defined as a “subgroup of the whole population” (p.132). The population group for this research study included executive, senior, middle and lower management change ambassadors, as well as change agents employed in any national or/and multinational financial services organisation with banking operations or activities in South Africa. The sample group is comprised of executive, senior, middle and lower management change ambassadors and change agents within three of South Africa's largest and most established banks, as well as executives from three financial technology firms. Bank 1 foWhile the large and established banks each employ more than ten thousand employees, research indicates that fin-tech firms employ an average 425 employees per company (Venture Scanner, 2015). It is important to highlight that while consumer perception is largely that all three of the large and established banks operate identically, they each have a different organisational structure (centralised vs federated models), different innovation cultures (adaptive vs entrepreneurial) and way of work (operational agility vs operational rigidity) to each other (Christensen, 1997; Smith & Lewis, 2011; Röder et al., 2014).

The sample group was purposefully selected for multiple reasons. To start off, the banking industry provides analysis for a dynamic and turbulent business environment with technological disruption enforcing incremental and disruptive innovation. Organisational ambidexterity is a function of the paradoxical enablement of both incremental and disruptive innovation while agility is informed by the organisations ability to adapt to the change and to create or entrepreneur the change. To this effect, large

and established banks were contrasted to smaller financial technology firms to enable a clear understanding of how organisations perceive innovation (incremental and disruptive) and environmental turbulence, both as the disrupted (the large and established banks), as well as the disruptor (Fin-Tech Firms). Moreover, in anticipating and organising for the change, each of the three large banks have gone through multiple organisational changes in the last three years and have adopted one or more methodologies for agility. The different and sometimes conflicting perceptions and experiences from these two sample groups enriched and validated some of Christensen's (1997) postulated views on why disruption destabilises large and established organisations while propelling smaller firms to newer heights. Thus, the following criteria for organisation selection was used:

- (1) First, the companies must belong to the financial services sector with operations in one or more banking services offerings.
- (2) Second, in providing service technology must be involved, defined as storage, receipt, transmission, and the algorithmic transformation of any type of information that can be "digitized-numbers, text, video, music, speech, programs, and engineering drawings, to name but a few" (Yu, Chen, Nguyen & Zhang, 2014, p.87);
- (3) Third, the banking services provider must either be a new technology firm (Fin-Tech), thus anchored on newer technology or an established banking services provider requiring newer technology for survival. When defining new technology-based firms, six years was an acceptable age limit (Yu, et al., 2014, p.87).

4.4. Unit of Analysis

A unit of analysis is described as the major entity under analysis in a study, meaning, the 'what' or 'who' that is being studied (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.138; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The unit of analysis under this study has been at an individual level. More specifically, the unit of analysis was the perceptions and experiences of change agents, managers and executive sponsors working with change in large and established organisations as well as executives in financial technology firms seeking to disrupt the banking environment.

These individuals were selected as the unit of analysis because most of them are custodians or vehicles for organisational change implementation in the bank and as such, have the right level of exposure, insight, and interaction/experience with change

to enrich the data collection process. Also, because most of them have seniority, perceptive insight into the rationale behind the change requirements could be gathered and used to improve comprehension.

4.5. Sampling Method and Size

A two layered non-probability sampling technique was used, involving both judgmental and quota sampling (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Creswell, 2013). These specific sampling methods were selected to ensure that various subgroups (executives, managers and change agents) were properly represented in the sample and that the distribution across all subgroups was equitable to provide good insights. Convenience, availability and willingness to partake in the study was the selection method applied for each participant's interview. As such, some previously identified candidates could not be interviewed while new participants were identified during the data gathering process. Accessibility to the sample groups was also enhanced by the researcher's affiliation with one of the sampled organisations, with the study supported due its potential for enabling ambidexterity and agility in said affiliated organisation.

Due to the fact that this was a cross-sectional qualitative study, the sample size was relatively small (in comparison to quantitative study methods), totalling 25 interview participants across the three large banks, as well as the two Fin-tech firms. According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), 12 interviews are sufficient to reach saturation for in-depth interviews, thus qualifying this study's 25-interview participation. Data saturation occurs when no new data about a phenomenon is being heard by the interviewer (Morse, 1995).

The sample comprised of Chief Information Officers, Lead Technology Partners, Product Managers, Project & Programme Managers, Change managers, Business Executive Sponsors as well as IT development squad team members. The below table outlines the proposed business clusters and the level of representation in each:

Table 3: Sampled Sub Groups and Demographics

Organisation	Organisational Structure	Size of Organisation	Role	Count
Bank 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large and established > 10 000 Employees 	Executive Director	7
			Senior Management	3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditionally Managed 		Change Agent: Consultant	6
Bank 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralised • Traditionally Managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and established • > 10 000 Employees 	Senior Management	3
Bank 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federated • Owner/Manager Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and established • > 10 000 Employees 	Senior Management	3
Bank 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralised & State Owned • (Hybrid) State and Traditionally Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small but > 10 years • > 10 000 Employees 	Chief Executive Officer	1
Fin Tech 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fin Tech • Entrepreneurial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small < 6 years • Approx 425 Employees 	Founder and CEO	1
Fin Tech 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fin Tech • Entrepreneurial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small < 6 years • Approx 425 Employees 	Executive Director	1
TOTAL				25

4.6. Interview Guideline

According to Marshall and Rossman (2014), a good interview guide is one that is cognizant of human social interactions that influence what interviewees are likely to say. These include the fact that too often people will tell you what they espouse for and not necessarily what they do; testimony, while good, is often a weak form of evidence. This was often observed during management interviews in the established banks, confirming the existence of affirmation biases when questions that challenge the status quo were asked. It is important to note though that most interview participants consciously strived for transparency and open dialogue, regardless of their stature within their respective organisations.

In addition, since interviews are in themselves social occasions, the interviewer was cautioned from delving too deep into the social element (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). It is on this basis that the interviews were deliberately structured to be conducted in a formal office setting, and instructed formally through a semi-structured questionnaire to delineate the purpose and form of the interviews from social elements. Furthermore,

while it is accepted that it is not possible to fully detach yourself from the data collection process, especially one done through interviews, Marshall and Rossman (2014) put forth that every interviewer must ensure that they can deal with candour during interviews and that they have the correct level of self-deployment when interviewing participants. In preparation for the interviews, participants' functions within each organisation were studied to enable comprehension of the level of engagement and directness expected. The preparations became especially useful when engaging and interacting with Fin-Tech executives, the level of astuteness observed from these participants affirmed the requirement for rigour.

Depicted in table 4, the interview questionnaire consisted of 10 interview questions derived from the 5 main Research Questions answered in the study.

Table 4: Interview Questionnaire

Research Questions as presented in Chapter 3	Interview Questions as explored with participants
Research Question 1: How is organisational ambidexterity understood and enacted?	1. What do you understand organisational ambidexterity to mean? 2. How is organisational ambidexterity implemented and experienced in your organisation?
Research Question 2: How is organisational ambidexterity understood and enacted?	3. What do you understand organisational agility to mean? 4. How is organisational agility implemented and experienced in your organisation?
Research Question 3: What are the enablers and inhibitors of organisational ambidexterity? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?	5. What do you believe enables and/or inhibits ambidexterity in your organisation? 6. Of the factors that enable and/or inhibit ambidexterity, which do you believe are the most influential? And why?
Research Question 4: What are the enablers and inhibitors of organisational agility? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?	7. What do you believe enables and/or inhibits agility in your organisation? 8. Of the factors that enable and inhibit ambidexterity, which do you believe are the most influential? And why?
Research Question 5: What are the organisational shifts required to enable business transformation through	9. What do you believe are the organisational shifts required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility?

organisational ambidexterity and agility? Furthermore, what are the organisational antecedents for both ambidexterity and agility	10. What personal leadership shifts do you believe leaders in established organisations need to make to enable ambidexterity and agility?
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Given that this study sought to understand factors from two constructs, it was important to avoid clumsiness and chunkiness in the derivation of the questions, opting instead for clarity and purposefulness as opposed to a shorter number of interview questions. The questions were structured in such a way that they could be an end to themselves or could elicit more questions, hence the semi-structured interview approach. Consequently, some interviews took longer than the expected prescribed time, while others were shorter – it often depended on how elaborate and articulate an interview participant wished to be.

4.7. Data Collection

According to Creswell (2013), data collection techniques allow the researcher to systematically collect information about objects of study (people, objects, phenomena) and about the settings in which they occur. Thus, in the collection of data, systematic prudence is required, else if data are collected haphazardly, it becomes difficult to answer research questions conclusively (Creswell, 2013). It is for this reason that the data collection techniques adopted in this study systematically included secondary data in the form of articles, documents and literature; observations (unstructured and structured); as well as face to face interviews.

To elaborate, given that the researcher herself is a change agent within the observed environment, unstructured direct observations also formed part of the data collection process (Zikmund et al., 2013). These observations were done during change implementation sessions in the course of business as usual by the researcher. The second layer included a structured observation process where the researcher visited development and project teams and observed their way of work and approach to the agile methodology. Lastly, data collection was done through semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth and face-to-face interviews with the 25 change ambassadors of the sample organisations selected (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Creswell, 2013).

Creswell, Hanson, Plano & Morales (2007) assert that semi-structured, open-ended interview methods are the most suitable methods when interview structure is sought, while also seeking discretion about the order in which questions are asked, answered

and explored. The design was purposefully simple to enable an open and clear dialogue between the researcher and research participants, and ensured that conversations could occur around the relevant subject matter whilst being able to address specific issues when needed. The interview questions were extrapolated directly from the research questions set out in Chapter 3 of this research paper and documented in both the Consistency Matrix as well as the Interview Questionnaire (See Appendix XX).

As per Saunders and Lewis, (2012), the interviews were structured on a one to one basis between this researcher and the participant and lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews were conducted at the participant's convenient location and time (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Prior to the interviews, a standard email was distributed to the selected participant to explain the purpose of the research and to request for their participation. However, given the seniority of some of the individuals, a phone call to explain the purpose as well as structure of the interviews preceded the e-mail. Post the initial research introduction email and phone call, potential participants were given the opportunity to review the consent form and once agreeing to take part, a confirmation email was sent along with a meeting request for a proposed time. An example of the invitation is given in Appendix XX.

Prior to commencing the interview, adequate information on the participant was gathered and studied to enable contextual questioning. Cohen and Crabtree, (2006) caution against inadequate interviewer preparation and state that an interviewer's skills affect qualitative investigation and has an effect on the results. Supporting them are Pope et al., (2002), who go as far as saying that because "high quality analysis of qualitative data depends on the skill, vision, and integrity of the researcher; it should not be left to the novice" (p.114). To this effect, the interviewer prepared adequately to ensure that the necessary level of interviewing skill is developed and used during the interview. In order to test the flow of interview questions as well as the interviewer technique, a pilot interview with a close colleague was conducted, lasting an hour and a half long (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

To guarantee the ethicality of the study, each participant was asked to complete and sign a consent form (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The proposed consent form is shown in Appendix XX. Each interview was recorded, with permission from the interviewee, using a voice-recording device. The semi-structured interview questionnaire used can be seen in Appendix XX. According to Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000) to allow for a continuous

refinement of questions, participants must be encouraged to answer questions openly and freely, and for data analysis to take place alongside data collection. They assert that this sequential analysis process allows the researcher the opportunity to “go back and refine questions, develop hypotheses, and pursue emerging avenues of inquiry in further depth” (Pope et al., 2002, p.114). To that effect, openness and a seeking of clarity was the theme of the interview style applied. To capture discussion points, hand-written notes were taken during the interview discussion.

The interview was formally concluded when necessary and participants were invited to provide any final thoughts or ask any additional questions (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Once the interviews were completed, the recordings, along with the hand-written notes were submitted for transcription to form part of the data set. Word processing was conducted to guarantee that recording conventions were used consistently (Saunders & Lewis, 2012;167). While the formal transcripts did not include contextual details about the research setting as well as the interviewer’s and participants’ non-verbal behaviour, these were observed and included as part of the analysis in the chapters that follow (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; 167).

The structure and tone of the interview was formal in nature to maintain and respect the seriousness of the process (Creswell, 2013). To that effect, the researcher formally requested permission to record the interviews, properly explain the purpose of the study to the participants, inform all the participants about relevant ethical issues pertaining to the research, inform the participants of their voluntary participation and the right to end the interview at any point they deem it necessary, as well as address all confidentiality matters regarding the use of the interviewee’s personal details during analysis and publication of results (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Given that this is a semi-structured interview, Cohen & Crabtree (2006) caution against over familiarity. They assert that even while asking unstructured questions as a result of the flow of conversation, the tone and ethical conduct of the interviewer must always remain respectful and free of biases and judgement. Accordingly, even during the course of the interviews, the interviewer consciously and continuously self-examined to ensure that respect and objectivity are maintained throughout the interview. Though it must be noted that sometimes even giving a voice or re-articulating an opinion “involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments” (Fine, 2002, p. 218).

4.8. Data Analysis

According to Creswell et al. (2013), qualitative research is inductive, as it does not require a hypothesis for the research to commence. This study employed the inductive data analysis method. In support, and based on a construction of related themes as a basis for analysis, thematic analysis was employed to identify, examine, analyse and record patterns (themes) for each question (Braun & Clarke, (2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes capture the importance of the data gathered in relation to the research question, and “represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” (p.82). The thematic approach was well suited to this study as it allowed the researcher to form an early tentative proposition that could be explored further (Creswell, 2005:2013), but with prudence to the flexible nature of the semi-structured interview process, the researcher could also divert the exploration of propositions to other forms.

The inductive analysis method was employed for three reasons. Firstly, given that this study seeks to explore an emerging area within the disciplines of organisational ambidexterity and agility, the inductive approach enabled the researcher to make initial observations of each organisations' pattern of behaviour towards innovation, and then proceeded to detect organisational specific themes in relation to perception, adoption and enablement of ambidexterity and agility. Secondly, this analysis method provides a better illumination of the interacting realities and experiences of both researcher and participant (Thomas, 2010), providing a better understanding of the interaction of what are deemed “mutually shaping influences” (Thomas, 2012, p. 303). Lastly and most importantly, this analysis method allows for an evolving design, overcoming the burdensome and impossible need to predict the outcome of interactions between researcher and participant (Stake, 1995). This is an important point for this study as ambidexterity and agility are both complex and dynamically understood phenomena with diverse perspectives, thus requiring an interplay of value systems between the researcher and the participant and the understanding of how both influence the interpretation of reality and the outcome of the study (Thomas, 2010).

While initial coding was done through the ATLAS.ti qualitative research analysis software, thematic coding was continued and concluded utilising Microsoft Office Excel tool. The following steps were followed during the data analysis process as guided by Saunders & Lewis (2012):

4.8.1. Step 1: Transcription Cleaning

Having solicited the services of an external transcriber, the first step in the process was to read through the transcripts to ensure that the correct recording conventions were used consistently and that the transcriptions reflected the interviews as recorded (Pope et al., 2000). The transcriptions were also swept to for consistency and to eliminate any residual errors.

4.8.2. Step 2: Manual creation of Codes and Categories

Given this researcher's proclivity towards an old-school paper format, the data categories were created manually, assembled for interrelation and only once the researcher was satisfied with the data categorizations, the data set was uploaded on Atlas.ti software for coding. Given the complexity of the study and the interrelation trap factors, this process assisted the researcher in the development of meaningful categorizations that are not automatically prompted by the system, helped define the unit of data appropriate for the analysis and assisted in creating clarity of data description for future use (guided by Saunders & Lewis, 2012; 199).

4.8.3. Step 3: Transcription Transfer to ATLAS.ti and Microst Excel

Once the manual codes and categories were created, the 25 transcripts were uploaded on ATLAS.ti project. The groupings of the data were based on the sample group representation between the different banks, the functional identification of each person within the sample banking group, as well as; the level of seniority of member participants, their frequency of interaction with change enablement, their familiarity with the agile methodology and their interaction with the enablement of business strategy. These groupings enable for ease of analysis and comparison between the change agents. This is particularly so since depth and richness were required to inform strategic decision making within the organisations and how that relates to market turbulence, ambidexterity and agility (guided by Saunders & Lewis, 2012; 199).

4.8.4. Step 4: Data Coding

Coding is an analytical process where data from the interview transcripts is categorized to enable analysis (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Woolf (2007) noted that based on effective analysis of the evolving meanings in the data and the themes, codes are related to the research questions (p.1). As such, the coding process involved organizing data into smaller units that began to give a clearer picture of the puzzle and translated the data

into meaning. Based on the initial manual categorizations created, similar codes began to appear, validating some of insights expected. However, even while the excitement of similarities in code themes propelled the researcher forward, prudence was still required to ensure that researcher affirmation bias does not influence the study negatively.

4.8.5. Step 5: Creation of Code families through ATLAS.ti

In this step, the list of codes was reviewed, with those containing similar meaning grouped into families. Woolf (2007) notes that “when codes are grouped together into a code family, two things are possible: (a) the family can be used as a filter, so that only the codes in the family are visible, with all other codes hidden; and (b) the family can be used as a short cut, allowing you to operate on a group of codes all at once” (p.3). This study used the families as both a filter, to highlight visibility as well as short cuts for ease of reference in results and analysis chapters.

4.8.6. Step 6: Thematic analysis

As guided by Woolf (2007), the code families created provided the foundation for the identification of recurring themes within the data. This step involved analysing the data within the context of the research objectives, literature reviewed and research questions asked ensuring that the arguments offered, and the findings presented support claims made clearly and logically (Saunders & Lewis, 2012;199). Results will be presented in the next chapter.

4.9. Data Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research can be considered subjective by nature (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Qualitative research can be affected by a number of different biases (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2013). Interviewer bias, interpreter bias and response bias could take effect when conducting interviews and analysing data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2013). In order to limit this and ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the semi-structured interview questions will only be used as a guide and the respondents will have ample freedom to explore the topic and concepts that develop through the interview process. Furthermore, a strict application of the specified criteria will be used when selecting the chosen sample will be applied.

4.10. Research Limitations

Saunders & Lewis (2012) caution against drawing definitive conclusions based on a qualitative study. They reason that to make qualitative research findings conclusively usable, the qualitative research study must be followed up with quantitative analysis to provide more dependable results (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.111). As such, given that the qualitative exploratory study method was pursued, the following limitations were observed and every attempt at avoiding them was made:

- Expert interview training: While all attempt was made to adequately prepare for the interviews, the researcher is not expertly trained in data collection or interviewing. As such, this limitation observes that study results could be affected.
- Results credibility: It is noted that congruency of findings with reality may be impaired (Lincoln, 1995). This is because the study sample consisted mostly of opinions and experiences from senior people within organisations. While change agents in the form of consultants were sampled, it is noted that the limited input from people in lower level positions could have broadened the population sample results, especially given that the comprehension of a need for change by senior individuals could result with them providing answers that they deem appropriate as opposed to those accurately reflecting reality.
- Transferability - The extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other situations (Lincoln, 1995). Given that only a limited number of individuals from Johannesburg, Gauteng; and only one person from Kwa Zulu Natal represented the sample group; the individual's geographical area could present a bias of responses. This is especially since all three large banks are Head Quartered in Johannesburg, and as such, represent the natural focal point of the organisation.
- Dependability – Citing geographical limitations as well, it should be noted that the extent to which someone else can repeat the study and find similar results could be affected by where their research is done (Shenton, 2004). However, given that the study was less focused on the geography, but rather on the perceptive views relating to organisational ambidexterity and agility, it is the researcher's belief that comprehension of the constructs is universal.
- Confirmability – This limitation is concerned with ensuring that there is no researcher bias. The limitation guards against the subjectivity of qualitative exploratory studies and cautions the researcher to remain objective when collecting and analysing the data. However, Fine (2002) grants that sometimes even giving a voice or re-articulating an opinion “involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative

evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments” (Fine, 2002, p. 218). Thus, while all attempt at being objective was made, the researcher acknowledges the possibility that findings could include reflection points of the researcher (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.11. Conclusion

This chapter introduced, defined and defended the methodology followed by this research study. It commenced with an introduction, followed by a detailed rationale for the study method selected, population and sample group of the study, the unit of analysis, the sampling method and size, the interview guide, as well as the data collection process. The chapter concluded with a detail of the analysis approach to be followed by the study as well as cautionary notes on possible study limitations, validity and reliability.

The next chapter, chapter 5, presents the results from the data gathered.

5. CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study as per Research Questions formulated in Chapter 3. The research questions were answered through open-ended and in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one, face-to-face and tele-communication, interviews. Telecommunication was used in instances where participants were either out of town on work travel, or in the case of the one individual residing in KZN. In the sample group of 25 interview participants, 4 of the interviews were conducted via telephonic medium. To ensure consistency between the literature focus, Research Questions, data collection and methods of analysis, a consistency matrix was constructed mapping each Research Question to its related literature (Appendix XX). This helped support the underlying objectives for each question in relation to the literature reviewed, and also helped guide the interview process especially when structure and detail were in conflict.

5.2. Description of the Sample

A list of the interview participants, their role function within the banking organisation, their seniority as well as the reasons for being selected as part of the sample study, are presented in Table 4 below. Judgmental and quota sampling techniques were used to select the 25 participants. Since the study focuses on the enablement of business transformation through two technically focused constructs, the insights required were not only technically related – comprehension of constructs, but were also experience and perception related as change enablement is often a personal as well as an organisation activity (March, 1991). As such, expert knowledge and experience was part of the selection criteria for the participant selection. In order to determine expertise and knowledge, the following attributes were considered: participant's current position and the level of seniority and influence the position yields; participant's past industry work experience, as well as previous roles especially within the banking industry and; participant's perceived depth and breadth of knowledge on change enablement in large organisations especially within banking.

The sample consisted of 9 females and 16 males, all currently employed within the banking industry either as permanent employees or consultants. Most participants have seniority, with the sample group consisting of 2 CEOs, 8 Executive Directors, 9 Senior Managers, and 6 Consultants (1 internal consultant and 4 external consultants). Table 4 provides the motivation for the selection of each sample group.

Table 5: Sample Groups Selection Criteria

Functional Role	Seniority Level	Sample Unit	Selection Criteria
Chief Executive Officer	Managing Executive	2	As industry experts, Managing Executives provide illumination on the manner in which organisational transformation and change is conceptualized, implemented and communicated. Given the clear correlation between ambidexterity and agility comprehension to organisational change, executive management's views provide insights on how aligned or misaligned change initiatives are to organisational strategy. A clear comprehension of organisational strategic intent (strategic and portfolio agility), and each is directly enacted through change initiatives, with clear focus areas for exploitation and exploration, provides insight on an organisation's potential for a simultaneous pursuit of ambidexterity and agility.
Director	Executive Management	8	Similarly, Executive Directors not only have the direct responsibility for strategy formulation, but are often also directly responsible for strategic change implementation. In contrast to Executive Managers, Directors often play the part of Executive Sponsors for large strategic initiatives. Thus, directly influence the direction of change implementation through the allocation of funds, resources and tools. Directors are therefore directly responsible for operational agility, given that through their guidance and influence organisational processes, systems and structures are evaluated, changed and focused.

Heads of Departments	Senior Management	9	Senior Managers act as the liaison officers between strategy formulators in the form of executive management and lower to non-management employees. Strategic decisions are disseminated to operational teams through them, and operational difficulties resolved by them. Senior Manager are thus the custodians of operational agility. While Executive Directors influence and guide processes, systems and team structures, Senior Managers often own these functional responsibilities and have the day to day task of managing them.
Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. External Consultants to banks – Mostly Senior & Executive Managers within their consultancy firm and ii. Middle & Junior internal management 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Consultants were specifically selected to provide perceptive and experiential insights. As implementers and enablers of technologies that enable business transformation and change, consultants’ experience the good, the bad and the ugly of change. As ‘experts’ of the particular consultant change service provided, they are either treated with awe or contempt. Correspondingly, as outsiders, they are either properly included in the dissemination of the change or completely excluded. ii. Since they normally work closely with both management and lower level position employees, they are often very well exposed to the organisational dynamics at both levels and as such, are well positioned to provide perceptive insights and experiences at both levels with an outside in view. iii. Given that most consultancy firms consult with more than one bank at a time, with most consultants having working experience with at least 3 of the 4 large banks, these consultants enable a comprehension of similarities, differences and nuances of operations between the 3 large banks studied.

5.3. Presentation and Analysis of Results

Presentation and analysis of results is done as per Research Questions presented in Chapter 3. Accordingly, the interview questions, also mapped as per Research Questions are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Interview Questionnaire

Research Questions as presented in Chapter 3	Interview Questions as explored with participants
Research Question 1: How is organisational ambidexterity understood and enacted?	1. What do you understand organisational ambidexterity to mean? 2. How is organisational ambidexterity implemented and experienced in your organisation?
Research Question 2: How is organisational ambidexterity understood and enacted?	3. What do you understand organisational agility to mean? 4. How is organisational agility implemented and experienced in your organisation?
Research Question 3: What are the enablers and inhibitors of organisational ambidexterity? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?	5. What do you believe enables and/or inhibits ambidexterity in your organisation? 6. Of the factors that enable and/or inhibit ambidexterity, which do you believe are the most influential? And why?
Research Question 4: What are the enablers and inhibitors of organisational agility? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?	7. What do you believe enables and/or inhibits agility in your organisation? 8. Of the factors that enable and inhibit ambidexterity, which do you believe are the most influential? And why?
Research Question 5: What are the organisational transformational shifts required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility?	9. What do you believe are the organisational shifts required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility? 10. What personal leadership shifts do you believe leaders in established organisations need to make to enable ambidexterity and agility?

5.4. Research Question 1 Results

Research Question 1: How is organisational ambidexterity understood and enacted?

Research Question 1 sought to identify and understand how organisational ambidexterity is understood, and what organisational factors are perceived to be associated with it. More specifically, the two interview questions expanding Research Question 1 sought to assess organisational comprehension of ambidexterity, factors that drive exploration and exploitation actions within the organisation, as well as the perceived success or failure of the enactment of ambidexterity within organisations, illuminating the potential hurdles when attempting to transform a business through organisational ambidexterity.

5.4.1. Understanding Organisational Ambidexterity

To ensure that the researcher and the participants were aligned, the first interview question sought to understand how organisational ambidexterity is understood by each research participant. The metaphorical identification of exploitation and exploration, while widely defined as organisational ambidexterity within strategic literature theorists (e.g. March, 1991; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013), is not as widely defined and understood within the business community. In unpacking the understanding of this construct, it became clear early within the data gathering process that the term is unfamiliar, with research participant 3 stating unequivocally that he doesn't "have a clue", participant 6 laughing out loud at the foreignness of the term, participant 7 politely asking "can I ask you what you mean by it first...before I respond", and participant 23 amusingly exclaiming "what the hell is that?". Interestingly, these responses were provided even after the research construct definitions had been shared with the participants. Of the 25 research participants, only 8 participants seemed to have a clear grasp of the term, while 4 could somewhat identify that it had something to do with either incremental or disruptive innovation, and an overwhelming 13 either had absolutely no idea what the term actually meant, or could not provide some definition resembling similarities to the one provided in literature. With relevance to the hyperlink between organisational ambidexterity and agility, it was interesting to note that some participants, while defining organisational ambidexterity, actually provided the definition for organisational agility. Research participant 2, when asked what she understood organisational ambidexterity to mean, stated that "*it speaks to being able to absorb change. But not only just absorb change but to also be able to change direction based on where customer strategy and external*

factors are pushing you towards". In highlighting the first point, the participant went on to elaborate that *"So, it is being able to be flexible with whatever is going on around you, whatever your drivers are"*.

While incorrect as a definition for organisational ambidexterity, the participant's definition illuminates a common mistake made within the business change community; agility is often interchanged with being ambidextrous and vice versa. It is assumed that the ability to absorb market change, or adapt to market needs, is tantamount to actively seeking and deliberately searching for market opportunities. This is particularly true within organisations who identify and acknowledge the need for change, but have either not quite defined the change framework, capabilities and tools to be leveraged to create and implement the change, or have identified a framework or capability but struggle with its complexity. Reiterating literature, ambidexterity is a complex and unique organizational capability that is extensively dispersed and time consuming to develop (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; cited in Wang & Rafiq, 2010, p. 61). Therefore, it is imperative that this study positions the understanding of organisational ambidexterity not as a complex and foreign term, but rather as a complex but required organisational capability for competitive parity both in the short and long term.

Table 6 provides a graphical illustration of the descriptions provided by the 8 participants whose understanding of ambidexterity was slightly more aligned to literature. It should be noted that to maintain the authenticity of the representation of understanding, the table contains exact quotes from participants and as such, could contain grammatical, syntax or construction errors. The reader is advised to only pay attention to the crux of the message the statement wishes to convey.

Table 7: Organisational Ambidexterity Understanding

Participant	Examples of Organisational Ambidexterity Definitions	Fully or Partially explained
5	I can see ambidexterity within the business being, this is your specific capability but you are equally good at adapting to a new capability. It is quite a new concept for me.	Fully
9	A change that changes the base, so you're looking at your platforms, your back office, are we streamlined, are we integrated, you know, what brings efficiency in our processing environment. And a change that asks how do we get	Fully

	disruptive? So, how do we implement change for our client, how do we bring in a new way of doing things	
11	It is the ability of the bank to deal with and implement change in fundamental areas, quickly, decisively and very importantly that that change is adopted by the users of that change.	Partially
16	Emerging technology teams whose job it is to sit and actually look at the market, look at what the market is doing, what tautologies are out there and, if they are going to work for bank then they are actually socialised, businesses are asked to actually try them out, and these businesses are helped by the emerging tech team to make those things align and if they actually have value, they are taken through to bank operations.	Fully
17	Incremental delivery of innovation	Fully
18	Exploitation also means I spread my resources to the main coherent within the environment. I am not saying I am exploring new ways of doing it and exploration is very important because I am the first one to do this kind of thing. I explore the market, I set the standard. If I am setting the standard, then I am setting the rules for the game.	Fully
19	The organisation is definitely not exploratory, definitely not. As far as incremental efficiencies and improvements are concerned, I think that is for some reason, that is the biggest focus area for everyone. But everyone wants to incrementally change. No one wants to or a limited number of people want to radically change.	Fully
21	Most organisations follow the “command and control” management style, that leads to very low on the scale ambidextrous in my view. Then you have a couple, I have heard especially the newer ones, that follow a structure of looking for opportunity accurate and they, I can say, learned and at the same time follow agile methodologies. I think in my view you need to have enough agile into adopt another agile methodology to open the path forward for it, for ambidexterity.	Fully

In analysing the definitions provided, it is observed that organisational ambidexterity is understood as concerned with: enabling existing and new capability refinement and seeking, incremental efficiencies and improvements, incremental and disruptive

innovation, as well as creating efficiency and coherent extraction of value within existing resources while exploring the market for new resources to enable market leadership.

Table 8: Organisational Ambidexterity Partial Descriptions

Participant	Examples of Organisational Ambidexterity Definitions	Fully or Partially explained
1	Exploration... basically I think experimenting and actually not being afraid to try out approaches that others have mentioned in passing.	Partial
3	Before researcher definition: "I have no idea" After the researcher defined the term: it was about core competencies, it was based on core competence research and how you can exploit your core competencies better than others and so forth. I think today, there's a different definition of that, the latest research shows that organisations that can make decisions faster than others and execute on those decisions, are the organisations that win.	Partial
15	I definitely think we exploit but do not explore. We exploit our people's competencies but even then, it is not fully. We also do not have a culture to enable disruption as Discovery does, our culture is very much exploring new ways of doing the same thing	Partial
17	Incremental delivery of innovation	Partial
22	After the researcher provided clarity: That's a tough one. It's a combination of harnessing what you have as well as exploring new alternatives.	Fully

5.4.2. Organisational Ambidexterity Enactment

This interview question sought to gain insight on whether organisational ambidexterity is perceived as existential within the organisation. Furthermore, the interview question sought to provide clarity on the perceived organisational activities associated with exploitation and exploration. Depicted in Table 9 – the summary results for organisational ambidexterity understanding and perceived existence are presented. As a reminder, March (1991) theorised that exploitation is concerned with “refinement, choice, production, efficiency, selection, implementation and execution” (March, 1991,

p.71). While exploration activities encompass “examination, experimentation, variation, discovery, innovation and flexibility” (March, 1991, p.71).

Findings indicate that none of the sampled banks are perceived or perceive themselves as ambidextrous. While most note that there are clear attempts at being both exploitative and explorative, established banks (with the exception of bank 3) tend to be more exploitative, while financial technology firms tend to be more explorative.

Research participant 11 cited “waking up too late” as the reason why banks still lag behind others with exploratory functions, noting that:

“I think the bank is having a look at the skills that it does have available. There is a lot of work around are our current processes efficient, do we need to redesign them to become more efficient? I think that speaks to your exploitation. From an exploration perspective, I think that that’s being done more so in a technology space than in the product or a customer engagement space. I think they’re probably lagging behind other banks in terms of being forerunners in things such as digital interactivity, that kind of thing. So, I think they’re still trying to catch up. They woke up quite late”.

Table 9: Organisational Ambidexterity – Results Summary Table

Organisational Ambidexterity							
Participant	Bank	Functional Level	Clear understanding of Organisational Ambidexterity	Is it a new concept to participant	Is it perceived or observed as properly implemented	Acknowledged as a required organisational capability	Participant's Perception on whether their organisation are naturally exploitative or explorative
1	1 & 2	Consultant	Partial	Yes	No	Yes	Exploitative
2	1	Director	No	Yes	No	Yes	Attempts to be both, but not successful at either
3	1	Director	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to do both
4	1	Director	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Explorative
5	1	Director	Yes	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative
6	1	Director	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative
7	1	Director	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to be both
8	1 & 2	Consultant	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to be both, but not successful at either

Table 10: Organisational Ambidexterity – Results Summary Table

Organisational Ambidexterity							
Participant	Bank	Functional Level	Clear understanding of Organisational Ambidexterity	Is it a new concept to participant	Is it perceived or observed as properly implemented	Acknowledged as a required organisational capability	Participant's Perception on whether their organisation are naturally exploitative or explorative
9	3	Senior Management	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to be both, but more exploitative on the investment side and explorative on the core banking side
10	1	Consultant	No	Yes	No	Yes	Exploitative
11	1	Consultant	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to be both
12	1	Senior Management	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to be both
13	1 & 3	Consultant	No	Yes	No	Yes	Exploitative
14	3	Senior Management	No	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Attempts to be both, but more explorative
15	1	Consultant	Partial	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative
16	3	Director	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Ambidextrous
17	1	Director	Partial	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative, but starting to dab into the exploration space

Table 11: Organisational Ambidexterity – Results Summary Table

Organisational Ambidexterity							
Participant	Bank	Functional Level	Clear understanding of Organisational Ambidexterity	Is it a new concept to participant	Is it perceived or observed as properly implemented	Acknowledged as a required organisational capability	Participant's Perception on whether their organisation are naturally exploitative or explorative
18	1 & 3	Consultant	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative
19	1 & 3	Senior Management	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative
20	F2	CEO	No	No	No	Yes	Fin tech is Explorative and Established banks Exploitative
21	F1	CEO	Yes	No	No	Yes	Fin tech is Explorative and Established banks Exploitative
22	1 & 2	Consultant	Partial	Yes	Attempting to be	Yes	Exploitative
23	2	Senior Management	No	Yes	No	Yes	Attempts to be both, but not successful at either
24	2	Senior Management	No	Yes	No	Yes	Attempts to be both
25	F3	Executive Manager	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Fin tech is Explorative and Established banks Exploitative

5.5. Research Question 2 Results

Research Question 2: How is organisational agility understood and enacted?

Research Question 2 sought to identify and understand how organisational agility is understood, and what organisational factors are perceived to be associated with it. More specifically, the two interview questions expanding Research Question 2 sought to assess organisational comprehension of agility, factors that drive adaptive and entrepreneurial activities within the organisation, as well as the perceived success or failure of the enactment of agility within organisations, illuminating the potential hurdles when attempting to transform a business through organisational agility.

5.5.1. Organisational Agility Understanding

The first interview question sought to understand how organisational agility is understood by each research participant. Organisational agility is defined as “the capacity to identify and capture opportunities more quickly than rivals do” (Sull, 2010, p.1). Organisation agility encompasses, i) a firm’s ability to detect and “respond quickly, timeously and with dexterity to proactive and reactive needs of change” (Röder et al., 2014, p.3) and ii) with a view to enable an organisation to thrive in a turbulent and competitive environment (Goldman & Nagel, 1993; Dove, 1999; Dove 2002; Vazquez-Bustelo, Avella, & Fernández; 2007).

While some descriptions were narrow and a little more focused, organisational understanding of agility was a lot more accurately reflective to its literature definitions than organisational ambidexterity. With some varying degrees, the descriptions of organisational agility broadly and accurately recognised the construct as an organisational capability concerned with responding to market demands with speed, flexibility and swift adaptation. Table 9 illustrates 5 shared descriptions of organisational agility as positioned by research participants. The most comprehensive understanding shared amongst 13 of the participants recognised that agility is a function of how quickly the “system within the organisation is able to respond to demand, either market demand or internal demand and in a time-appropriate period, to meet the demand”. This description identifies that demands from the systems arise both from within and without the organisation, and whether or not the demand was created by the organisation, quick response remains pertinent.

Table 12: How organisational agility is understood

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	How the system within the organisation is able to respond to demand, either market demand or internal demand and in a time-appropriate period, to meet the demand. In identifying that there's a need for change or new thing, how quickly does the system within the organisation change to meet the demand, while there's still a demand.	13
2	Ability to change, to adapt quickly to market changes. Quick turn-around times when expanding line of business, and how soon the organisation is able to market a solution for the new technologies or the new domains.	7
3	Agility is a transformation of the mindset towards a way of work that is more collaborative and that enables teams to have open and honest conversations	3
4	Organisational agility is about the ability to collaborate broadly across the organisation, across different disciplines towards a single opportunity or goal and that requires a slightly different mindset because it is not just collaboration in terms of "I will collaborate with you as of when I'm available", it is about collaboration that is proactive towards the end goal.	2
5	Ability to change direction based on where customer strategy external factors are pushing them towards and the ability to be flexible with whatever is going on around you.	1

In fact, research participant 8 summarised it nicely stating that agility is "Some of the changes are created by the fact that you are trying to bring new products into the market, but others are forced on you, so you have to be able to adapt to either". This implies that agility is first and foremost, i) a market sensing capability, ii) concerned not only with responding to contextual change, within and without the organisation, iii) but also with the appropriate preparation for change, iv) to enable a quick response when the contextual change happens. These features of organisational agility were highlighted by a couple of respondents with research participant 18 firmly stating that "First and foremost, find out what is happening around you", followed by the asserting if you are quick to make sense out of it, you will be quick to act. With research participant 19 affirming that "Organisational agility is two things: One is how quickly you can respond to a situation and the readiness to respond to a situation". It is thus accepted that organisational agility, in the context of flexibility, adaptation, speed, capturing market

changes and pre- planning for market changes, is an understood construct. A graphical depiction of this point can be viewed in Table 11 below.

5.5.2. Organisational Agility Enactment

This interview question sought to gain insight on whether organisational agility is perceived as existential within the organisation. Furthermore, the interview question sought to provide clarity on the perceived organisational activities associated with adaptation and entrepreneurship. As a reminder, entrepreneurial agility concerns itself with functions of seeking and identifying new opportunities followed by the proper planning and execution of the opportunities (Ireland et al., 2003). While adaptive agility deals with organisational resilience and adaptation to “environmental change in order to maintain competitive parity and leadership” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 3). Adaptive agility concerns itself with functions that enable the organisation to cope with uncertainty and recover quickly to disruption “without fundamentally changing products or processes” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 3).

While adaptation as a definitive concern for organisational agility was commonly recognised, the idea of entrepreneurship as part of the description of agility was not as widely articulated. In fact, it was only 1 research participant who described organisational agility as consisting both adaptive and entrepreneurial agility, with some participants mentioning opportunity seeking inconsistently. Research participant 1 described:

“adaptive agility as responding to what your competitor is doing. while great, it is not ingenious. It is just an industry move. While entrepreneurial agility basically does a Bottom Up. They reverse engineer the customer and implement their strategy based on that. They do what is called customer focused business”.

Depicted in Table 10, findings indicate that 2 of the sampled 3 established banks are not perceived or do not perceive themselves as fully agile (with the exception of bank 3). While most participants note that their organisations have attempted to be organisationally agile, the description of the aspired agility is still one sided, leaning towards adaptive agility. While an entrepreneurial mindset is highlighted as required to transform bank 1 and 2, neither of the participants could directly identify how organisational entrepreneurship can be achieved.

Table 13: Organisational Agility – Results Summary Table

Organisational Agility							
Participant	Bank	Functional Level	Clear understanding of Organisational	Is it a new concept to participant	Is it perceived or experienced as properly inacted in	Acknowledged as a required organisational	Participant's Perception on whether their organisation or banks in SA are naturally
1	1 & 2	Consultant	Yes	No	No	Yes	Adaptive
2	1	Director	Yes	No	No	Yes	Lean more towards adaptive, but still not agile
3	1	Director	Somewhat	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Adaptive
4	1	Director	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	A Hybrid of both adaptive and entrepreneurial
5	1	Director	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	A Hybrid of both adaptive and entrepreneurial
6	1	Director	Somewhat	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Not agile at all, there is a spoken commitment to be agile, but it is not enabled
7	1	Director	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Clear attempts at being adaptive, not entrepreneurial as yet
8	1 & 2	Consultant	Yes	No	No	Yes	Not agile at all, there is a spoken commitment to be agile, but it is not enabled

Table 14: Organisational Agility – Results Summary Table

Organisational Agility							
Participant	Bank	Functional Level	Clear understanding of Organisational Agility	Is it a new concept to participant	Is it perceived or experienced as properly inacted in banking organisations	Acknowledged as a required organisational capability	Participant's Perception on whether their organisation or banks in SA are naturally adaptive or entrepreneurial
9	3	Senior Management	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Entrepreneurial
10	1	Consultant	Yes	No	No	Yes	Not agile at all, there is a spoken commitment to be agile, but it is not enabled
11	1	Consultant	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Not agile at all, there is a spoken commitment to be agile, but it is not enabled
12	1	Senior Management	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Clear attempts at being adaptive, not entrepreneurial as yet
13	1 & 3	Consultant	Yes	No	No	Yes	Clear attempts at being adaptive, but rarely entrepreneurial
14	3	Senior Management	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Entrepreneurial
15	1	Consultant	Yes	No	No	Yes	Adaptive
16	3	Director	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Entrepreneurial
17	1	Director	Yes	No	No	Yes	Adaptive

Table 15: Organisational Agility – Results Summary Table

Organisational Agility							
Participant	Bank	Functional Level	Clear understanding of Organisational Agility	Is it a new concept to participant	Is it perceived or experienced as properly inacted in banking organisations	Acknowledged as a required organisational capability	Participant's Perception on whether their organisation or banks in SA are naturally adaptive or entrepreneurial
18	2	Senior Management	Yes	No	No	Yes	Adaptive
19	1 & 3	Senior Management	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Adaptive
20	F2	CEO	Yes	No	No	Yes	Not Agile at all
21	F1	CEO	Yes	No	No	Yes	There are attempts at being both, but most banks are adaptive
22	1 & 2	Consultant	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	There are attempts at being both, but most banks are adaptive
23	2	Senior Management	Somewhat	No	No	Yes	Not Agile at all
24	2	Senior Management	Somewhat	No	No	Yes	There are attempts at being both, but mostly adaptive
25	F3	Executive Manager	Yes	No	Attempting to be	Yes	Clear attempts at being adaptive, but rarely entrepreneurial

5.6. Research Question 3 Results

Research Question 3: What are the enablers and/or inhibitors of organisational ambidexterity? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?

5.6.1. Organisational Ambidexterity Enablers and/or Inhibitors

This research question sought to gain understanding on the factors that enable/inhibit organisational ambidexterity. In addition, this research question sought to gain better understanding about the dominant dimensions perceived to influence organisational ambidexterity the most, with the purpose of highlighting this for resolution. According to Birkinshaw and Gibson (2004), due to multiple dimensions of entrenched values, structures, processes and technical know-how, many organisations struggle with contexts that negatively affect the pursuit of ambidexterity. The study sought identify if the sample group organisations have the same struggle.

Depicted in Table 12 in varying degrees of frequency, the multiple dimensions affecting organisational ambidexterity do indeed include organisational culture, strategic leadership, and technical know-how in the form of both processes as well as technology and systems. The top three enablers/inhibitors for organisational are observed as Organisational Culture that enables, distils and infuses innovation & breaks down a fear of failure, Customer and Market Focused Planning, Prioritisation & Discipline as well as Empowered, self-organising, accountable and collaborating Teams. In agreement with the importance of organisational culture as the most dominant enabler/inhibitor of organisational ambidexterity, research participant 1 observed that:

“There is an industry myth about Google giving 20% of its time to explorative projects and Google basically said Fridays are exploratory days. The reason why it is a myth is because it has not been officially confirmed or disputed, but the fact that Google was brave enough to actually get the motion going shows that there is a culture to support and enable exploration of new solutions”.

While research participant 25 aptly observing that:

“there is an old saying of culture trumps strategy and I think that is incredibly true, where you have an environment that celebrates the can do, that says it is okay to make mistakes, that goes out and tries stuff, you have a far better chance of succeeding than an environment where failure is regarded as not an option, so culture trumps strategy number one”.

Table 16: Organisational Ambidexterity Enablers/Inhibitors

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Organisational Culture that enables, distils and infuses innovation & breaks down a fear of failure	10
2	Customer and Market Focused Planning, Prioritisation & Discipline	8
3	Empowered, self-organising, accountable and collaborating Teams	8
4	Leadership & clear strategic vision, alignment and mechanisms to filter the strategy across the entire organisation	6
5	Reward and Motivation Philosophy	4
6	Integrated Architecture, Technology and Systems	2
7	Organisational Structure	2

One additional dimension found through this interview research question was that a properly structured organisational rewards and motivation philosophy enables or detracts from organisational attempts towards ambidexterity. Recognising this, research participant 17 said that *“And for me the fourth one is that whatever you do, your performance management component of the organisation must be aligned to rewarding collaboration, rewarding listening, rewarding you know [those ambassadors and change agents that are able to pick up opportunity and bring it the fore”*.

Actually, often linked as a driver to infuse an organisation innovation culture, the rewards and motivation philosophy was highlighted as an enabler for both ambidexterity and agility constructs, particularly punted to motivate explorative/entrepreneurial activities at both a strategic level as well as at a team level. At a strategic level, research participant 4 noted that:

“I feel one of the inhibitors is how we have our PNL’s structured. Because they are product house based. Quite frankly if I had a PNL target on my back I’m not sure my behaviour would be any different”. Similarly, and a lot more direct,

While reward and motivation incentivise behaviour towards a good balance between creating efficiency, and finding new ways of doing things, creating an environment where

people are allowed to experiment and explore was also highlighted as very important. Google was one specific organisation cited to be advanced in its recognition that exploration must be given space to live and breathe, without exploitation requirements inhibiting its flow. In fact, research participant 16 noted that:

“I also like the Google model where in the culture, if you look at Google, what they have done is in the day-to-day working, they have actually given the IT people personal time that the company pays for, where they are not allowed to do operational projects, they are supposed to think differently and come up with concepts that can actually give Google the extra edge. So, it is not talking about the culture, is it also allowing and giving them time and space for the people to adopt or start changing into the new culture and that way you can have a whole organisation change”

5.6.2. Organisational Ambidexterity Dominant Enabler and/or Inhibitor

The dominant organisational ambidexterity enabler/inhibitor has been observed as: Organisational culture. This enabler/inhibitor is concerned with more than just the creation of an enabling culture, this factor is concerned with creation of an innovation organisational culture more specifically. It highlights the requirement to infuse this culture with the organisational fibre and DNA to galvanise all organisational activities towards the single goal that is innovation.

5.7. Research Question 4 Results

Research Question 4: What are the enablers and/or inhibitors of organisational agility? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?

Research Question 4 sought to gain understanding on the factors that enable/inhibit organisational agility in an organisation. Similarly, the research question sought to gain better understanding about the dimension that influences organisational agility the most, with the purpose of highlighting this for resolution. Similar to Research Question 3, both questions for Research Question 3 will be answered in one section with a frequency table clearly depicting the dominant factors identified. Given that the business community has been shown to have a better grasp on the concept of organisational agility, this question aimed to expound the agility construct, with the contextual focus on methodology, as well as the perceptive interpretations of an organisation as either adaptive or entrepreneurially agile.

5.7.1. Organisational Agility Enablers and/or Inhibitors

Table 13 depicts the research findings for the perceived enablers/inhibitors of organisational agility. With varying degrees of frequency, organisational agility enablers/inhibitors are relational to those identified for organisational ambidexterity. However, while organisational culture is revealed strongly as an influencer for ambidexterity, organisational agility is strongly influenced by leadership & clear strategic vision, alignment and mechanisms to filter the strategy across the entire organisation, Integrated architecture technology and systems as well as customer and market focused planning, prioritisation and execution. This is actually not surprising since all top 3 agility influencers are concerned with the enablement of change in one form or another.

Starting with the most dominant enabler/inhibitor, leadership plays a very important role in influencing the speed through which organisational change initiatives are implemented and executed. This is particularly so, in environments where strategic and operational initiatives are implemented such as the project space. As executive sponsors for change initiatives, leaders influence organisational agility through the strategic decision-making process involving change initiative prioritisation, funding, execution support for stakeholder management as well as strategic decision making for resolution of risks and issues during the implementation cycle. This view was shared by a majority of the participants with participant 18 asserting that:

“Leadership then has to say, what is out there. We have to ask ourselves and look back to banking, money, how central banks have evolved. How to better the products that we have had. Ask ourselves, what we can learn from them. The role of a leader is to stimulate this kind of conversations in the organisation and give direction”.

Table 17: Organisational Agility Enablers/Inhibitors

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Leadership & clear strategic vision, alignment and mechanisms to filter the strategy across the entire organisation	12
2	Integrated Architecture, Technology and Systems	11
3	Customer and Market Focused Planning, Prioritisation & Discipline	10
4	Empowered, self-organising, accountable and collaborating Teams	10

5	Organisational Culture that enables, distils and infuses innovation & breaks down a fear of failure	9
6	Organisational Structure	8
7	Reward and Motivation Philosophy	4

Furthermore, organisational leaders are the ones who set and drive the tone for innovation enablement across the entire organisation. As such, when difficult strategic trade-off decisions are to be made in the balance between strategic entrepreneurial agility initiatives and run-the-bank efficiency activities, leaders are the ones with the final decision-making power. Highlighted by research participant 12:

“So I think to enable agility, from your organisation it’s important that we have the support of the top executives. If they are on the agile journey, which I understand they are, like I know that (name removed) of the world, so and so (name removed) our CEO, they actually run Kanban boards. So, if they are doing it from on top and it’s filtering down, I think we will have the support to have it a bit easier to transform with in departments because they will see. Unfortunately, human psychology is “why should we do it if the tops are not doing it?” So that’s where we start. If they are doing it, which they are, it will enable us at the departments to start transforming and show examples and say “Look, so and so (name removed) team is doing it so we also want to go with the journey”.

Most participants, more especially those consulting to bank 1, highlighted a strong disconnect between strategic leadership and vision, with day to day operations in the bank. In fact, a majority of these research participants indicated that if the strategic vision could be clearly defined and aligned to operational priorities, clearly communicated at all levels of the organisation and regularly re-iterated, alignment on the importance of change initiatives would be a seamless translation for prioritisation, execution and enactment.

To this effect research participant 11 noted that:

“I think your biggest inhibitor is not to take the end-users, of whether it’s a new product, system, methodology, or process, not to take them along the journey. They are very often only informed post-fact. It very often affects completely the way they work. And you must remember a lot of people have been at the bank for many years, so it’s very threatening when it comes at that stage for them. It makes them feel very uncertain. They’re not sure if

this is going to replace what they're doing. So, it's really a severe lack of proper change management, consultation, education. It's sorely lacking".

While research participant 19 had this to say:

"There is largely speaking a disconnect, largely speaking. So, if we take a simple example of Home Loans. Where in the top leadership of Home Loans wants to increase market share for example. And they want to be competitive etc. But as go through the ranks to the bottom of the pyramid, people believe differently. They do not want to change, they do not want to move, they do not want a different way of doing things. Yet everyone wants to become a more competitive bank".

Another highlight for organisational agility, since it is concerned with speed both for the development cycle as well as the organisational ability to speedily take solutions to market, is an organisational Integrated Architecture, Technology and Systems. In an era where financial technology firms can churn out solutions within three to six months from conceptualisation, technology has become the anchor upon which agility resides. This view was highlighted by research participant 10 who stated that

"It's an IT era. So, nothing can be achieved without IT, so that's the basic foundation of the agility or efficiency of an organisation. At the moment we talk about efficiency we talk what automation optimisation, which eludes to eradication of manual intervention. So immediately we are talking about systems replacing the manual work. And the moment we talk the word systems, we talk the word IT. So, IT is the basic foundation through which we can achieve the efficiency and agility".

However, even with the acknowledgement that new technological platforms are the foundational basis for agility, established banks still maintain very old and aged technology non-reflective of the agility era. Highlighting this issue, are research participant 21 and 11. Research Participant 21 stated that *"of what is actually required to release agility and ambidexterity because they also, at the same time, sit on a massive traditional main frame and their innovation times are too long and that contrasts agility as a methodology for activating line functions".*

While Research participant 11 had this to say:

"Just to give you an example as to what is happening here currently, which I think might explain a little bit, is that even though there are teams delivering, for example new technological software, the coding, the front-end of the system, those things are being managed in an agile way. But at the same time, the underlying infrastructure that these

technologies need to operate from and be supported from, and the governance that goes with launching a new technology into the bank, the governance and the infrastructure is completely old, it's completely prohibitive to NVP delivery. So, they are operating as opposite forces against each other, even though you're talking about the same area, which is technology"

5.7.2. Organisational Agility Dominant Enabler and/or Inhibitor

The dominant organisational enabler/inhibitor has been observed as: Leadership. This enabler/inhibitor is concerned with more than just leadership and strategic direction, the factor is concerned with the ability of leaders to provide a clear strategic vision that is clearly understood at all levels of the organisation. Create an aligning strategic plan that inculcates the vision into operational plans that are not only understood but those that create focus for team and task level activity. Lastly, this factor is concerned with organisational STRATCOM that continually updates the organisation with changing context for the purpose of infusing and enabling the strategy.

5.8. Research Question 5 Results

Research Question 5: What are the organisational transformational shifts required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility?

Research Question 5 sought to explore and gain enlightenment on the perceived foundational dimensional shifts that organisations must make to resolve not only the tensional relational aspects between the factor concepts of ambidexterity and agility, but to also unlock ambidexterity and agility as dynamic capabilities through which business transformation can be facilitated. Particularly concerned with the resolution of the relational interaction traps between ambidexterity and agility concepts, this research explored how each of these can be avoided, completely eradicated or overcome. This was a particularly complex research question as it did not rely on participant's direct answers to a specific question, but relied on understanding the perceived organisational benefit factors and organisational dimensional shifts as foundational values for the existence of the traps. In addition to the two interview questions, the research question sought to understand whether ambidexterity and agility are perceived as relational by research participants.

5.8.1. Organisational Shifts

Since this study is anchored on continuous change and the idea of turbulence and volatility in the business environment, banks must acknowledge that while past financial contexts largely protected established banking institutions in South Africa, the rate of change and the face of competition are eclipsing the banking industry. This point was not lost on any of the research participants with the majority highlighting the acknowledgement for a shifting landscape as important, both for transformation as well as the requirement to be entrepreneurial, more explorative and a lot faster at responding to market changes. Observing this point, research participant 20 said that

“Commonwealth Bank of Australia acquired Time Capital, I don’t know if you know them? And Time Digital, has got a full banking license and actually today, they’re actually in the business day, they’re starting a fully digital bank. Now this is a clean sleight. And the reason I was trying to say a lot of legacy, you can get trapped in your legacy, this particular bank is starting as a digital bank. And there is your disruptor. There is your... These are guys who probably come at lower cost structures, cost income ratios, compared to even Capitec. So, yes, there is that living example that SARB, until probably today, which I thought was a closed game, is not a closed game”.

In fact, while other research participants were willing to offer some time for transformation and change, research participants 23 said that transformation and change is no longer a choice can make, the choice was made by the market, as such banks must change or risk death:

“It’s the time to change, they will have to do it now. So, who’s on board and who’s not is not important anymore, if they want to survive”.

Similarly, research participant 24 stated that:

“My take is that we don’t want a Kodak moment, whereby you highlight things 50/50 but continue doing what you know...I believe that we will be majorly impacted in the future based on the face of the competition that is coming through as well as the competition that we currently have. We are going into tough times and unless those difficult decisions are made we might be the next in line to die”.

In addition, the need to change the organisation for a shifting context, and the contextual intelligence to know when to hold on, and when to let go were also suggested. Research participant 5 said that organisations can no longer blame legacy for everything:

“We blame our legacy a lot for why we have to go and exploit. We have not seen the legacy in terms of seeing we have invested so much money in this current paradigm, we have to squeeze every last cent out of it rather than saying well at some cost, get over it and move on, and then go and explore what the new opportunities. We often hear the word “the art of the possible” but I do not think we ever get there properly”.

As identified by research participants, Table 14 depicts the foundational factors required for the effective adaptation and facilitation of organisational ambidexterity and agility. While some of the foundational dimensional factors had already been highlighted in Research Questions 3 and 4, the summary on Table 14 portrays a clear theme of important factors that must be examined to provide clarity on how these interrelated competencies contribute to the overall business transformation facilitated by ambidexterity and agility. While some of the themes were expected, such the dominant factors of leadership, organisational culture, as well as technology and systems, some of the newer factors have been a source of revelation. These newer revelations include the frequency at which collaboration was highlighted, the requirement for teams to be self-reliant, empowered and most importantly accountable as well as the previously highlighted concept of organisational reward as a motivational factor for the acceptance and enactment of an innovation culture.

5.8.2. Personal Leadership Shifts

The dominant themes highlighted by this research question were that leaders in established banks are very comfortable with the status quo, have a command and control approach to management, do not articulate the organisational strategic vision and plans clearly and assume a continuing business environment where they personal are still at the helm. A majority of the participants surveyed shared these views and highlighted that in order for the banks to transform for the better, they will not be able to do it themselves and as such will have to insource the disruption. Highlighting the need for leaders to shift their perspectives, research participant 3 noted that:

“I think one of the most important things that kills organisations like ours is leaders with egos. So, it is a soft thing, not a hard thing. So, you need egoless leadership so that people...because if egoless leaders work together better”

Concurring, research participant 6 added that:

I think leaderships going to be really different in the future, it's not going to be "I say, you do", it's not going to be "you come and ask me for permission" or "do you think this is the right thing to do?" Because most of the time, it is the right thing to do. Why don't you just do it? I think the leadership piece is more around thinking more strategic more about the future and how then you're going to get there and how do you encourage the team to learn and develop to get there?

This research question highlights a great deal about the kind of leadership required to transform dominant created, crafted and infused over many years. If the leaders of established banks themselves highlight that their command and control logic is going to be made redundant in the future, then leadership dominant logic change must occur. The conclusiveness of this finding is reflected by the number of people who when asked just said, "ego, command and control, letting go"...a frequency of 11 out of 25 participants is a lot.

Another highlighted view was the identification that leaders need to provide more strategic direction to their teams. To this point, research participant 22 noted that:

"I think the leadership needs to maybe provide a little bit more dedicated time to the staff which allows them to learn. I think the problem we've got in most I.T. environments, and specially the big corporates, because costs are such a big thing and time to market is such a big thing. There's no time for anybody to sit down and actually read an article on something interesting or something new. It's like we're the race horses with the blinkers on and that's all we see. The current set of problems in the home lines projects and we move from one fire to the next fire, from one sprint to the next sprint. When are those people actually getting any time to go learn about something new? Like you said, how are we going to change or capitalise on new opportunities when we don't know what those new opportunities are?"

Table 18: Organisational Ambidexterity and Agility Dimensional Antecedents

	Accountability	Collaboration	Leadership	Organisational culture	Organisational structure	Reward and Motivatio	Strategy and Visio aligmet	Techology and Systems	Tools
Participant 1			1	1				1	
Participant 2			1	1	1		1	1	1
Participant 3		1	1	1			1	1	
Participant 4		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Participant 5	1	1	1					1	1
Participant 6		1	1	1	1	1		1	
Participant 7	1		1				1	1	1
Participant 8				1	1			1	1
Participant 9	1		1	1	1			1	1
Participant 10		1	1	1				1	1
Participant 11	1		1					1	1
Participant 12	1	1	1	1			1	1	1
Participant 13		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Participant 14		1	1		1	1		1	1
Participant 15			1	1	1		1	1	1
Participant 16	1		1	1	1	1		1	
Participant 17		1	1	1	1	1	1		1
Participant 18	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
Participant 19	1		1	1		1	1		
Participant 20			1	1	1		1		
Participant 21	1		1	1	1			1	1
Participant 22			1		1			1	1
Participant 23		1	1		1				1
Participant 24			1	1	1			1	
Participant 25	1			1		1	1	1	
TOTAL	10	11	23	19	16	8	12	21	16

5.9. Conclusion

Results from the five interview questions were presented in this chapter. It was found that the constructs that emerged during the in-depth interviews and through the analysis of the data collected were supported by existing literature for ambidexterity and agility. Furthermore, new discoveries and insights were developed through the process and contribute to the understanding of the factors that influence business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility.

The next chapter, chapter 6, discusses the research study results in a lot more detail within the context of both Chapter 2, as well as research findings and insights from this chapter. A proposed model framework for business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility is presented.

6. CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

In Chapter 6, research findings from the study are discussed in detail, with context and relation to the literature review presented in Chapter 2. In addition, this chapter will utilise research findings as detailed in Chapter 5, to compare, contrast and answer research questions as presented in Chapter 3. The contextual basis of the analysis will be constructed through the constructs and concepts offered in current literature as per Chapter 2, and with new research findings and insights, offer an enhanced understanding of the paradoxical and tensional relationship between organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility concepts. Through this illumination, the research study seeks to provide an enhanced understanding on the possibilities of resolving for these tensional organisational demands, and craft a path towards a development of a Business Transformation model through both constructs.

6.2. Research Question 1: Discussion of Results

Research Question 1: How is organisational ambidexterity understood, enacted?

Research Question 1 sought to identify and understand how organisational ambidexterity is understood, and what organisational factors are perceived to be associated with it. More specifically, the two interview questions expanding Research Question 1 sought to assess organisational comprehension of ambidexterity, factors that drive exploration and exploitation actions within the organisation, as well as the perceived success or failure of the enactment of ambidexterity within organisations, illuminating the potential hurdles when attempting to transform a business through organisational ambidexterity.

Exploration refers to the process of learning - acquiring new knowledge and innovation - a new way of doing things (Gupta et al., 2006, p.693). March (1991) describes exploration activities as those that encompass terms such as “experimentation, examination, discovery, variation, innovation and flexibility” (p.71; Röder et al., 2014). In contrast, exploitation is about the refinement of existing competencies and knowledge to enable organisational adaptation (March, 1991, Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996; Gupta et al., 2006). Exploitation is concerned with terms such as “selection, choice, refinement, implementation, production, efficiency, and execution” (March, 1991, p.71; Röder et al., 2014).

6.2.1. Understanding Organisational Ambidexterity

Interview question one was concerned with understanding how individual participants understand organisational ambidexterity as both a construct as well as an organisational capability. The findings from the interviews highlighted gaps in the understanding of organisational ambidexterity, with only 8 research participants able to identify with the concept of organisational ambidexterity as well as its concepts of exploration and exploitation, and 4 participants partially understanding what the term meant, but unable to describe its concepts until expanded on. The research findings relevant to this research interview question were depicted in Tables 7, 8 and 9 in Chapter 5. Given that only 8 out the 25 research participants could identify with ambidexterity, the findings were presented as actual definitions and descriptions from research participants, with an additional 4 partial definitions of the term. Since this particular research interview question was asked to elucidate the particular recognition of ambidexterity as an organisational capability, findings from the data were consistent with the concept as being concerned with “fixing or changing the base” on the one end of the spectrum, while “looking for new markets”. It was observed that while all attempts were made to explain or describe this construct, it was perceived as very complex, both in terminology as well as in construction. This view was actually consistent with the declaration by Wang and Rafiq (2014), that organisational ambidexterity, as a contextual construct, is a “distinctive organisational capability that is complex capability” (Wang & Rafiq, 2014, p.61).

It was further observed that of the two concepts of organisational ambidexterity, exploitation was more commonly understood and expanded, with the majority of the 8 participants identifying with the idea of incremental improvements, efficiency, changing the base, spreading resourcing within the coherent environment and streamlining. These descriptions are consistent with March (1991) terms of “selection, choice, refinement, implementation, production, efficiency, and execution” for exploitation (p.71). In contrast, explorative terms of “experimentation, examination, discovery, variation, innovation and flexibility” were not very clearly identified, creating a concern both for the clear comprehension of ambidexterity, as well as for lack of identification with explorative terms of ambidexterity.

6.2.2. Organisational Ambidexterity Enactment

This interview question sought to gain insight on whether organisational ambidexterity is perceived as existential within the organisation. Furthermore, the interview question sought to provide clarity on the perceived organisational activities associated with exploitation and exploration. Once organisational ambidexterity was defined to research participants, exploration on its construction and enactment within the organisation could be explored. The research outcomes relevant to this research question were depicted in Chapter 5's Table 9.

While O'Reilly and Tushman (2008) argue that ambidexterity is at the core of an organisation's dynamic capability, they equally accede that ambidexterity is a complex organisational capability, that is extensively spread and requires a lot of time for its development (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2011). In fact, they posit that the enablement of ambidexterity requires organisational leaders to accomplish two critical tasks: First, leaders need the ability to accurately sense potential disruption and changes in their competitive environment, shifts in regulation, customers, competition, customers, and technology (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2011). Secondly, by reconfiguring "both tangible and intangible assets to meet new challenges" leaders must quickly act on these market opportunities, and seize them (p. 6). In comprehending the complexity of ambidexterity enablement, it was interesting to observe that while all participants highlighted ambidexterity as an organisational capability required, none of the participants could claim that their organisation is ambidextrous, but indicate the willingness and organisational attempts at being ambidextrous. This view is consistent with most research on ambidexterity as a paradoxical tensional demand concerned with capability – rigidity. Because as observed by O'Reilly and Tushman (2011), without an intellectually compelling strategic justification for ambidextrous activities, no rationale leader would give up resources from pressured profitable exploitive units to fund small, uncertain experimental efforts. Thus, while leaders often accept it as a requirement, the complex requirements of its enablement especially given that it has to be a deliberate compromise of resources from one functional profitable unit to another, remains elusive. The findings in this research study thus confirm that established organisations, unless compelled to make high investments in uncertain and risky opportunities, will almost always choose to exploit in the same trajectory as the proven success from the exploitation activities makes new and uncertain opportunities unappealing.

6.3. Research Question 2: Discussion of Results

Research Question 2: How is organisational agility understood and enacted?

Research Question 2 sought to identify and understand how organisational agility is understood, and what organisational factors are perceived to be associated with it. More specifically, the two interview questions expanding Research Question 2 sought to assess organisational comprehension of agility, factors that drive adaptive and entrepreneurial activities within the organisation, as well as the perceived success or failure of the enactment of agility within organisations, illuminating the potential hurdles when attempting to transform a business through organisational agility.

6.3.1. Organisational Agility Understanding

The first interview question sought to understand how organisational agility is understood by each research participant. Organisational agility is defined as “the capacity to identify and capture opportunities more quickly than rivals do” (Sull, 2010, p.1). Organisation agility encompasses, i) a firm’s ability to detect and “respond quickly, timeously and with dexterity to proactive and reactive needs of change” (Röder et al., 2014, p.3) and ii) with a view to enable an organisation to thrive in a turbulent and competitive environment (Goldman & Nagel, 1993; Dove, 1999; Dove 2002; Vazquez-Bustelo, Avella, & Fernández; 2007). Depicted in Table 10, in Chapter 5, findings from this research question were analysed based on the frequency and aggregated counts of the thematic identification with agility terms. Contrary to the lack of a clear comprehension of ambidexterity, agility is a widely accepted and recognised organisational capability. The popularity of agility propelled by the plethora of agile frameworks and methodologies currently inundating the business community. Table 10 presents the five common understandings of the concept of agility within the context of being able to adapt to change, seeking and sensing the market for change, with speed, time-appropriate flexibility.

While some descriptions were narrow and a little more focused, organisational understanding of agility was a lot more accurately reflective to its literature definitions than organisational ambidexterity. With some varying degrees, the descriptions of organisational agility broadly and accurately recognised the construct as an organisational capability concerned with responding to market demands with speed, flexibility and swift adaptation. Table 9 illustrates 5 shared descriptions of organisational agility as positioned by research participants. The most comprehensive understanding

shared amongst 13 of the participants recognised that agility is a function of how quickly the “system within the organisation is able to respond to demand, either market demand or internal demand and in a time-appropriate period, to meet the demand”. This description identifies that demands from the systems arise both from within and without the organisation, and whether or not the demand was created by the organisation, quick response remains is pertinent. This description is consistent with adaptive agility definition which deals with organisational resilience and adaptation to “environmental change in order to maintain competitive parity and leadership” (Röder et al., 2014, p. 3).

The second highest construct with a frequency of 7 also highlights the ability to change and to adapt quickly to market changes. However, this construct went further and highlighted quick turn-around times when expanding line of business, and how soon the organisation is able to market a solution for the new technologies or the new domains. This particular construct is more closely aligned with the full definition of organisational agility that includes both terms for adaptation as well as entrepreneurial agility. In noting this point,

As positioned in Chapter 2, entrepreneurial agility concerns itself with functions of seeking and identifying new opportunities, followed by the proper planning and execution of the opportunities (Ireland et al., 2003). Thus, the second construct accurately identifies the seeking for new opportunities as an organisational capability for agility.

6.3.2. Organisational Agility Enactment

This interview question sought to gain insight on whether organisational agility is perceived as existential within the organisation. Furthermore, the interview question sought to provide clarity on the perceived organisational activities associated with adaptation and entrepreneurship.

Depicted in Table 10, findings indicate that 2 of the sampled 3 established banks are not perceived or do not perceive themselves as fully agile (with the exception of bank 3). While most participants note that their organisations have attempted to be organisationally agile, the description of the aspired agility is still one sided, leaning towards adaptive agility. While adaptation as a definitive concern for organisational agility was commonly recognised, the idea of entrepreneurship as part of the description of agility was not as widely articulated. In fact, it was only a few research participants who described organisational agility as consisting both adaptive and entrepreneurial agility, with some participants mentioning opportunity seeking inconsistently. While an

entrepreneurial mindset is highlighted as required to transform bank 1 and 2, neither of the participants could directly identify how organisational entrepreneurship can be achieved. This finding with the established organisation proclivity

6.4. Research Question 3: Discussion of Results

Research Question 3: What are the enablers and/or inhibitors of organisational ambidexterity? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?

6.4.1. Organisational Ambidexterity Enablers and/or Inhibitors

This research question sought to gain understanding on the factors that enable/inhibit organisational ambidexterity. In addition, this research question sought to gain better understanding about the dominant dimensions perceived to influence organisational ambidexterity the most, with the purpose of highlighting this for resolution. According to Birkinshaw and Gibson (2004), due to multiple dimensions of entrenched values, structures, processes and technical know-how, many organisations struggle with contexts that negatively affect the pursuit of ambidexterity. The study sought to identify if the sample group organisations have the same struggle.

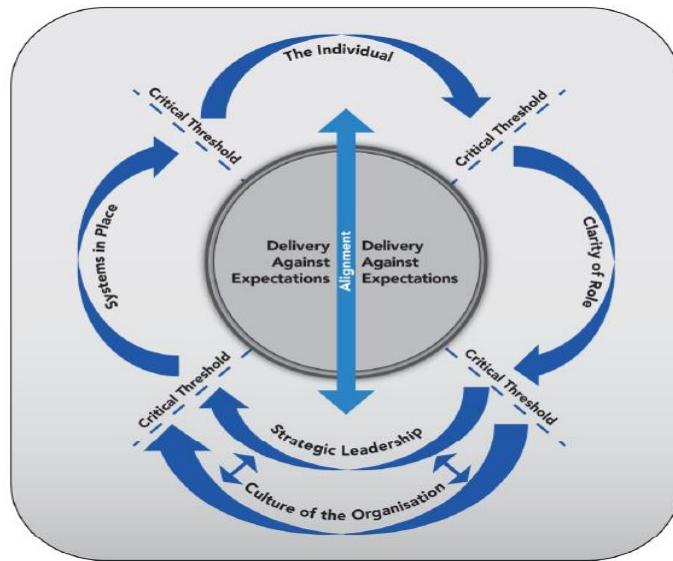
Depicted in Table 12, in varying degrees of frequency, the multiple dimensions affecting organisational ambidexterity do indeed include organisational culture, strategic leadership, and technical know-how in the form of both processes as well as technology and systems. The highest ranked construct for organisational agility, with a frequency of 10, is organisational culture. More specifically, this construct deals with the enactment of an innovation culture that is enablement, distilled and infused throughout the organisation, breaking down organisational silos and dis-improving structures. The second and third constructs, with an equal frequency of 8, were concerned with Customer and Market Focused Planning, Prioritisation & Discipline, as well as Empowered, self-organising, accountable and collaborating Teams.

Wang and Rafiq (2014) created what they termed an “ambidextrous organisational culture”, addressed in Chapter 2 of this research study. As articulated in chapter 2, Wang and Rafiq (2014) position the concept of an ambidextrous organisational culture as one that focuses on two sets of organizational values and norms, namely ‘organizational diversity’ and ‘shared vision’ (p. 61). They offer the concept of organisational diversity as a business unit level concept that reflects the organisational cultural norms that

respect “task-related differences in information, knowledge and perspectives (Wang and Rafiq, 2014, p.61). Similarly, they offer the concept of shared vision, as a combined set of “organisational values and norms”, promoting active involvement and participation of task level members, “in the development, communication, dissemination and implementation of organizational goals” (Wang and Rafiq, 2014, p.61). It is interestingly observed that findings from this study are very consistent with Wang Rafiq (2014), with 2 of the top 3 highest ranking constructs dealing with consistent with an “ambidextrous organisational culture”.

It must be noted though, that while teamwork was expected to come out very strongly as a dominant influencer of ambidexterity, the dimension and accountability as an empowering mechanism for task level teams was an unanticipated surprise. The concept of accountability is described as stemming from the act of an individual having to justify, explain or give reason for their actions or behaviour based on an implicit or explicit expectation that has been placed upon them (Owens, 2015, p.1). Owens further offers that ‘accountability’ has four main aspects that drive it and that affect behaviour in the workplace, these four drivers include self, peers, managers and systems (p. 1). In reviewing this definition and considering the strong organisational ambidexterity requirement for team involvement and participation, it makes sense that in requiring more involvement from individuals, accountability would be a dimensional factor requirement. In addition, since accountability was positioned an empowering mechanism for team level involvement and participation, is equally apt to recognise that organisational requirements are often a relational multi-dimensional view, with no one factor succeeding in isolation. Interestingly, in Owen’s Systems Accountability model both leadership and organisational culture feature as strong influencing factors for accountability.

Figure 7: Systems Accountability



Source: Owens (2015)

6.4.2. Organisational Ambidexterity Dominant Enabler and/or Inhibitor

As previously discussed, the dominant organisational ambidexterity enabler/inhibitor has been observed as: Organisational culture. This enabler/inhibitor is concerned with more than just the creation of an enabling culture, this factor is concerned with creation of an innovation organisational culture more specifically. It highlights the requirement to infuse this culture with the organisational fibre and DNA to galvanise all organisational activities towards the single goal that is innovation.

6.5. Research Question 4: Discussion of Results

Research Question 4: What are the enablers and/or inhibitors of organisational agility? And, what is the most dominant enabler or inhibitor?

Research Question 4 sought to gain understanding on the factors that enable/inhibit organisational agility in an organisation. Similarly, the research question sought to gain better understanding about the dimension that influences organisational agility the most, with the purpose of highlighting this for resolution. Similar to Research Question 3, both questions for Research Question 3 will be answered in one section with a frequency table clearly depicting the dominant factors identified. Given that the business community has been shown to have a better grasp on the concept of organisational agility, this question aimed to expound the agility construct, with the contextual focus on

methodology, as well as the perceptive interpretations of an organisation as either adaptive or entrepreneurially agile.

6.5.1. Organisational Agility Enablers and/or Inhibitors

Table 13 depicts the research findings for the perceived enablers/inhibitors of organisational agility. With varying degrees of frequency, organisational agility enablers/inhibitors are relational to those identified for organisational ambidexterity. However, while organisational culture is revealed strongly as an influencer for ambidexterity, organisational agility is strongly influenced by leadership & clear strategic vision, alignment and mechanisms to filter the message throughout the organisation.

Leadership plays a very important role in influencing the speed through which organisational change initiatives are implemented and executed. This is particularly so, in environments where strategic and operational initiatives are implemented such as the project space. As executive sponsors for change initiatives, leaders influence organisational agility through the strategic decision-making process involving change initiative prioritisation, funding, execution support for stakeholder management as well as strategic decision making for resolution of risks and issues during the implementation cycle.

6.5.2. Organisational Agility Dominant Enabler and/or Inhibitor

The dominant organisational enabler/inhibitor has been observed as: Leadership. This enabler/inhibitor is concerned with more than just leadership and strategic direction, the factor is concerned with the ability of leaders to provide a clear strategic vision that is clearly understood at all levels of the organisation. Create an aligning strategic plan that inculcates the vision into operational plans that are not only understood but those that create focus for team and task level activity. Lastly, this factor is concerned with organisational STRATCOM that continually updates the organisation with changing context for the purpose of infusing and enabling the strategy.

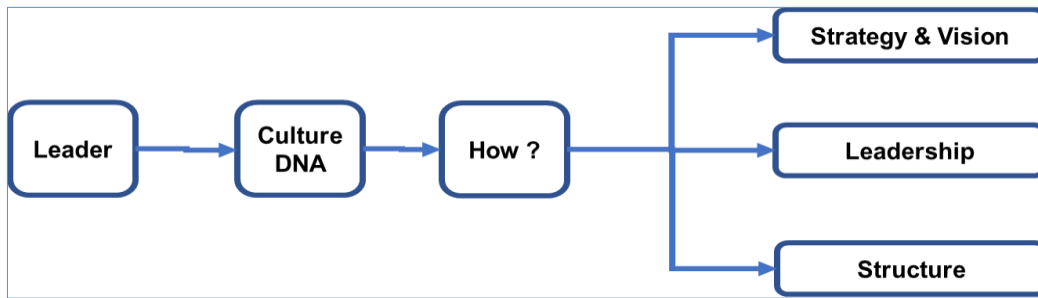
6.6. Research Question 5: Discussion of Results

Research Question 5: What are the organisational transformational shifts required to enable business transformation through organisational ambidexterity and agility?

Research Question 5 sought to explore and gain enlightenment on the perceived foundational dimensional shifts that organisations must make to resolve not only the tensional relational aspects between the factor concepts of ambidexterity and agility, but to also unlock ambidexterity and agility as dynamic capabilities through which business transformation can be facilitated. Particularly concerned with the resolution of the relational interaction traps between ambidexterity and agility concepts, this research explored how each of these can be avoided, completely eradicated or overcome. This was a particularly complex research question as it did not rely on participant's direct answers to a specific question, but relied on understanding the perceived organisational benefit factors and organisational dimensional shifts as foundational values for the existence of the traps. In addition to the two interview questions, the research question sought to understand whether ambidexterity and agility are perceived as relational by research participants.

In discussing the findings from this research question, we revert back to the study anchoring this one, Röder et al. (2014). This is because in identifying organisational and leadership shifts required to transform businesses through organisational ambidexterity and agility, as well as the organisational enablers and inhibitors for ambidexterity and agility, it was identified that the organisational culture and the leadership are the vehicles upon which organisational transformation rides. While it was recommended to established organisations that indeed the landscape has changed, it is equally highlighted that in this changed landscape, organisational culture will have to change, leadership will equally have to change, organisational structure will be affected, team empowerment and accountability will have to be viewed differently and finally the organisational reward and motivation philosophy will have to change to enable the entire change of the business context. In the next section we position the findings through some of the literature and offer some findings.

Figure 8: Innovation DNA Infusion



Source: Researcher's own

6.6.1. Organisational Agility Dominant Enabler and/or Inhibitor

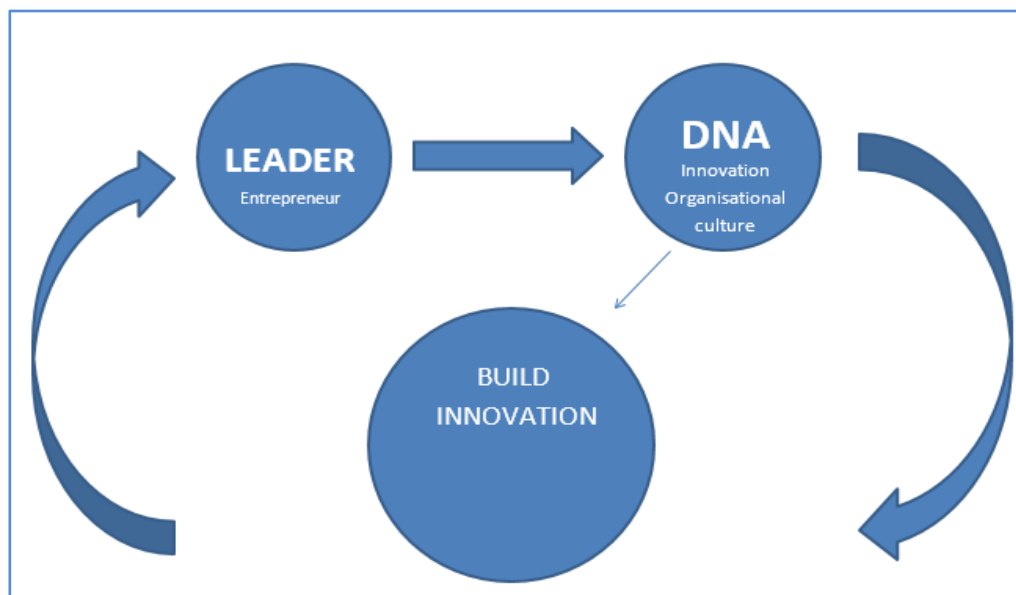
This study has already positioned the business environment as turbulent and volatile. Similarly, the study has positioned that in this turbulent environment, frameworks for the enablement of a continuous market and business transformation are required. To this effect, organisational ambidexterity and agility were positioned as the dynamic capabilities to enable business transformation. Similarly, the organisational culture to enable ambidexterity and agility as dynamic capabilities was identified as the “ambidextrous organisational culture” which equally encourages organisational diversity and a shared vision (Wang & Rafiq, 2014). This section highlights:

- First, it is recognised that organisational leadership creates and infuses the organisational culture required to enable organisational ambidexterity and agility. Positioned within the frame of contextual leadership in Chapter 2, it was highlighted that Mayo and Nohria (2005), offered that in turbulent and volatile environments, contextual leadership is pertinent not only to comprehend the different forces affecting the organisation, but to also intelligently transform data into useful information, and to transform this knowledge into an assimilated practice within the organisation. This constant state of environmental analysis and awareness is important especially in knowledge-intensive industries and sectors where the location and source of disruption cannot be clearly determined (McGrath, 2013).
- Second: An ambidextrous culture, anchored on organisational diversity and a shared vision infuses the very culture leaders seek. This was highlighted in Chapter 2, where it was offered that according to Wang and Rafiq (2014) positioned the concept of an ambidextrous organisational culture as one that focuses on two sets of organizational values and norms, namely ‘organizational

diversity’ and ‘shared vision’ (p. 61). They offered the concept of organisational diversity as a business unit level concept that reflects the organisational cultural norms that respect “task-related differences in information, knowledge and perspectives (Wang and Rafiq, 2014, p.61). Similarly, they offered the concept of shared vision, as a combined set of “organisational values and norms”, promoting active involvement and participation of task level members, “in the development, communication, dissemination and implementation of organizational goals” (Wang and Rafiq, 2014, p.61).

- This study has interest in the concept of an ambidextrous organisational culture as it offers a bottom-up learning approach that is consistent with individual and task level organisational mechanisms of learning for both ambidexterity and agility. It also through this lens that an innovation culture can be built and enabled

Figure 9: Leader – DNA Graph



Source: Researcher’s own

6.7. Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, it is offered that the Chapter will present a concise view of the findings and present the ultimate research finding model for business transformation facilitated through enhanced organisational ambidexterity and agility.

7. CHAPTER 7: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the consolidated outcomes of the study in alignment to the main study objectives articulated in Chapter 1. In this chapter, the ‘Transformation Through Ambidexterity and Agility’ framework is presented and discussed. The conceptualisation of the model is predicated on known literature presented in Chapter 2 and enriched by observatory findings through the data gathering process as presented in Chapter 4. Finally, the framework was solidified by insightful discoveries that emerged in Chapters 5 and 6. Based on the model developed as well as the plethora of findings and learnings, recommendations for implementation are presented to the business community, and ideas for future research proposed.

7.2. Research Background

Literature review highlighted that in turbulent and volatile business environments, the rate of change as well as the opacity of the nature of change eclipse businesses too slow to transform and adapt to the changing context (Leavy; 2014; Appelbaum et al., 2017). In identifying a shifting competitive landscape, McGrath posited that in continuously changing competitive contexts, the twentieth century operating system (Kortter, 2014) – distinctively marked by ingrained bureaucratic hierarchical structures, and dominantly anchored on the logic of long term sustainable competitive advantage – is an outdated, dangerous liability to organisational survival (McGrath, 2013; Leavy, 2014; Kotter, 2014; Appelbaum et al., 2017). To maintain their competitiveness and continued survival, business organisations must create organisational capabilities that enable them to continuously manage complex networks of resources and relationships, and with speed, decisiveness and dexterity, take advantage of short-lived opportunities (Kotter, 2014; McGrath 2013; cited in Leavy, 2014).

To effectively enable what McGrath calls a “transient competitive advantage”, this research study positioned two contextual and paradoxical organisational capabilities for effective and continuous business transformation in volatile and turbulent markets. Anchored on the theory of continuous change, organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility were the focal constructs of this study and have been explored in detail not only for comprehension as individual constructs, but also as relational paradoxical constructs capable of creating frictional traps when juxtaposed together.

7.3. Research Findings

The results from this research study highlight three organisational factors that have a direct impact on an organisation's ability to transform from one dominant logic of either exploitative or explorative, to an ambidextrous logic continuously enhanced by adaptive and entrepreneurial agility. The factors identified encompass: i) Organisational leadership with a shorter tenure demonstrate higher levels of individual and organisational performance, ii) organisational culture is an organisational DNA created by leadership and inculcated through structural dimensions that encourage organisational diversity and shared vision, and iii) an organisation's reward and motivation philosophy is the enabling vehicle upon which continuous galvanisation is achieved.

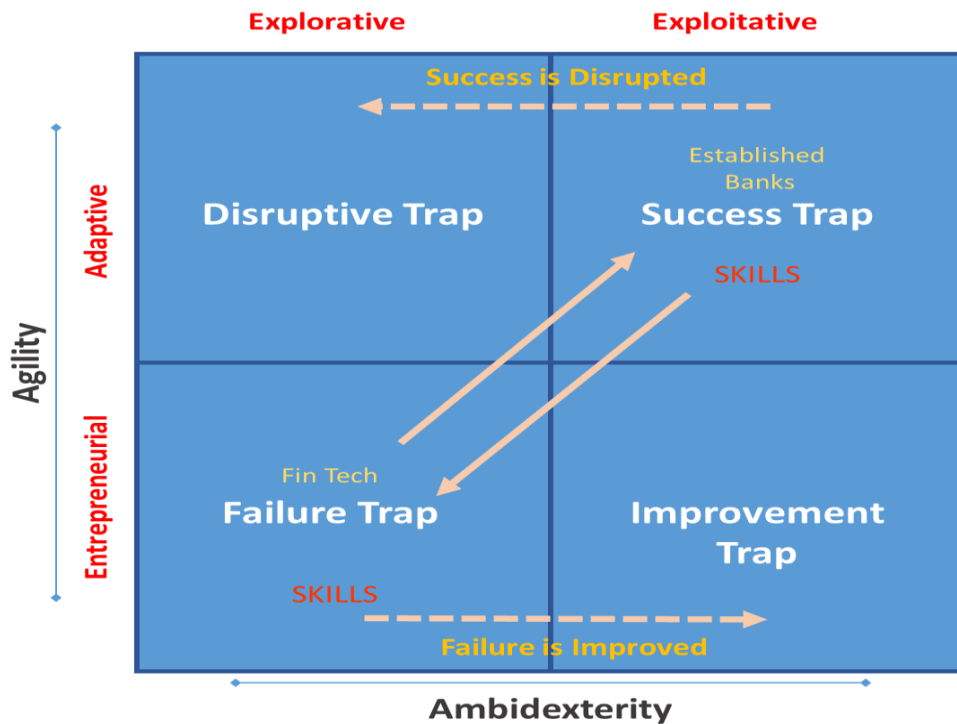
As a basis, the link between increased ambidexterity and agility with business performance was well presented in Chapter 2, highlighting the importance of the relational influence between organisational ambidexterity and agility in today's volatile, turbulent and unpredictable business environment. To present insights from the research findings, this research study presents a Business Transformation through Ambidexterity and Agility framework. The framework highlights that through a process of continuous reinforcement of organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility, firm's reaction to unpredictable market changes is made faster, swiftly and more appropriate.

7.3.1. Resolving Organisational Ambidexterity Agility Traps

Predicated on Röder et al. (2014), the Ambidexterity Agility Model depicted in figure XX, presents the four traps resulting when ambidexterity concepts of exploration and exploitation contrast with organisational agility concepts of entrepreneurial and adaptive. To reiterate current literature, Röder et al. (2014) offered that when organisations simultaneously focus on organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility, conflicting structures that result in endless cycles of dis-improvement occur (p. 6). These conflicting structures are as a result of the dichotomy approach and paradoxical interplay points when organisational agility constructs i.e. entrepreneurial agility and adaptive agility (Sambamurthy et al. 2007) are executed alongside oppositional organisational ambidexterity constructs i.e. exploratory and exploitative concepts (March, 1991; Martini et al., 2013; Stettner & Lavie, 2014; Röder et al., 2014;6).

Improvement trap is the organisational trap that occurs between entrepreneurial agility and exploitative ambidexterity (Röder et al., 2014). Entrepreneurial agility, concerned with scanning the environment for new opportunities, threats and potential change impedes exploitative ambidexterity, which is concerned with the effective selection and refinement of forms, routines, and organisational practices (March, 1991; Röder et al., 2014). Essentially, the two are starkly juxtaposed because while exploitation is an activity based on certainty, speed, proximity, and clarity of feedback, entrepreneurship, by its very nature is about uncertainty, variation, search and development.

Figure 10: Ambidexterity Agility Model



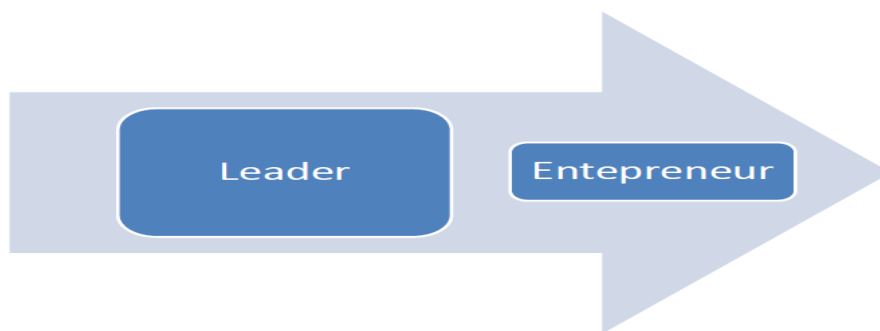
Source: Translated from Röder et al. (2014)

Given the findings from Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, with specific insights from the organisational enablers and/or inhibitors identified for both organisation ambidexterity and agility, this study highlights a couple of organisational dimensions about the dominant logic of organisations and the leadership in these organisations. In the Ambidexterity Agility Model depicted above, translated from Röder et al. (2014), the four quadrants present ambidexterity-agility traps of exploratory-adaptive trap: Disruptive Trap; exploitative-entrepreneurial trap: Dis-improvement Trap; exploratory – entrepreneurial trap: Failure Trap; exploitative – adaptive trap: Success Trap. Since it was identified through Research Question 5 that a different mindset is required to enable

an innovation culture through a different leadership cognitive frame, the Ambidexterity Agile Model translated above depicts the thinking for transformation.

Chapters preceding this one offered that an organisation's culture is anchored on the leader's cognitive frame. If the leader's cognitive frame is exploitative/adaptive, their logical framework for transformation will be equally exploitative/adaptive. Similarly, if a leader is entrepreneurial/explorative their logical frame of leadership will be equally explorative/entrepreneur.

Figure 11: Leadership Shift: Transformation of Success Traps to Disruptive Wins



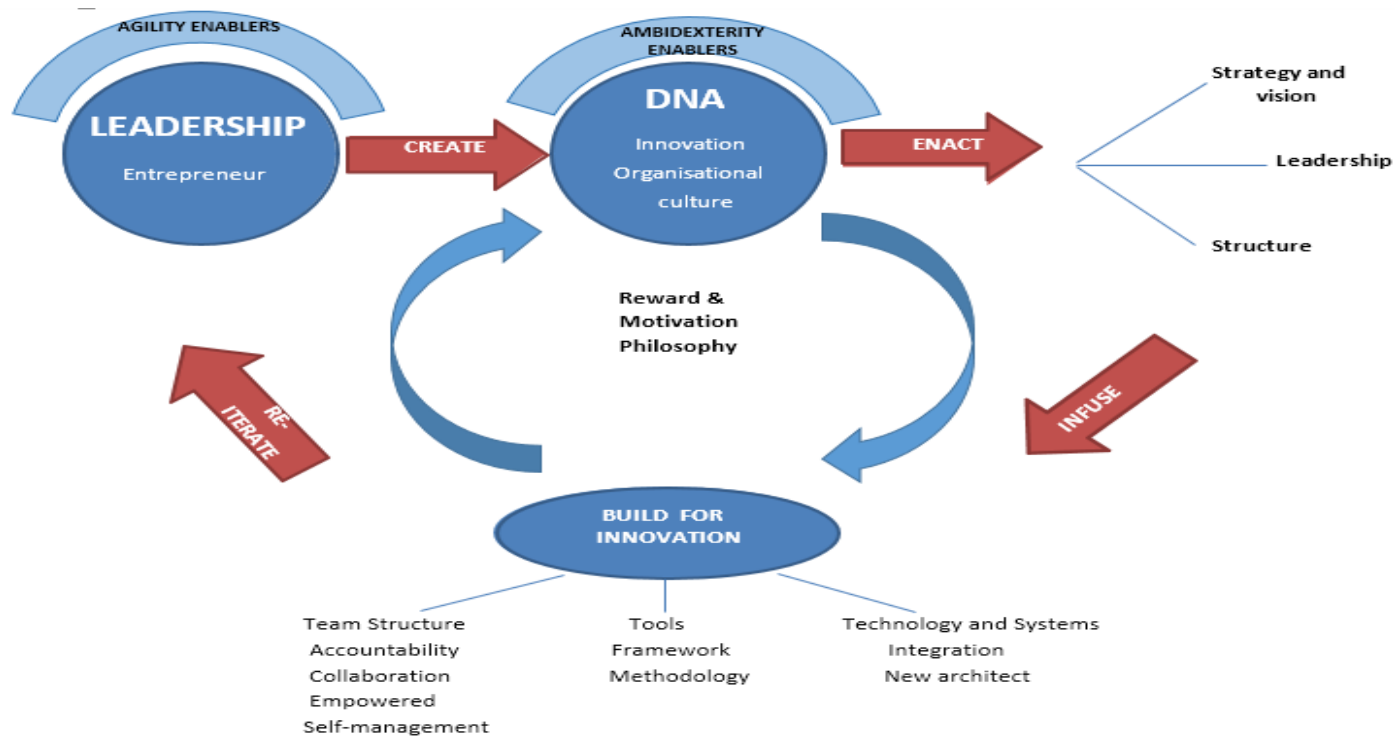
Source: Researcher's own

Since Röder et al. (2014) offer that a contentious trajectory towards one dominant frame results in paradoxical trap it is offered that the skill set of different leaders is required to continuously shift organisations between different logics. This is because people do not naturally disrupt themselves and in fact, contextual ambidexterity offers this view point. To that effect, it is offered that entrepreneurial disruptive leaders must transfer into established traditional businesses to transform them. However, it must be noted that these leaders must be granted decision making power to enable the kind of thinking required not only to push against the status quo, but to also galvanise an organisational culture that continuously assess market changes and transforms the organisation accordingly.

7.3.2. Business Transformation through Organisational Ambidexterity and Agility Framework

The Business Transformation through Organisational Ambidexterity and Agility Framework offers a framework to transform traditional established organisations toward an innovation culture that is created by the leader.

Figure 12: 7.3.2. Business Transformation through Organisational Ambidexterity and Agility Framework



7.4. Recommendations to Leaders in established business organisations inhabiting turbulent markets

Findings from Research Questions 1 to 4 indicated a gap on the organisational understanding, interpretation and enactment of organisational ambidexterity and agility. Research interview question 1 and 3, concerned with the definition and description of ambidexterity and agility, highlighted gaps in how each of these constructs is understood, particularly the construct of ambidexterity. While terminology was not the focal point of the questions, the inability to identify with organisational ambidexterity as a conceptual capability illuminates a probable disconnect in an organisation's ability to enact it. This is validated by how widely familiar and interpretable the concept of agility was with all research participants, related to how appropriately defined the issues relating to organisational agility could be identified, expounded and related to their perceived impact on organisational performance.

Furthermore, while there is a clear connection and requirement for organisational agility, the concept has two dimensional views that require equal focus for the effective enablement of organisational agility. An ignorance of the entrepreneurial dimension to agility, while terminologically insignificant, has far reaching consequences on an organisation's ability to transform, both from within and outside. It is thus important for leaders and managers in business organisations to recognise the important role they play in the translation of concept to action, action to culture, and culture to performance.

It is therefore further recommended that leaders and managers utilise the 'Transformation Ambidexterity Agility Model' developed in this research study, to highlight the urgency of the transformational need for large and established organisations inhabiting turbulent, volatile and complex business environments. Especially when said organisations are in the process of being disrupted by unknown entities.

Managers should aim to ensure that both constructs of ambidexterity and agility are resolved when planning for an organisation wide change.

7.5. Recommendations for Further Research

- Since this was a qualitative study, it is recommended that a more quantitative study be conducted to confirm or reject the findings from this study.
- More research needs to be conducted to understand the mindset shift requirements for transforming traditional organisational through disruptors
- Further research should be conducted to understand what constitutes ability to work independently in within agility and ambidexterity contexts give the teamwork requirement from both constructs
- Further research should be conducted to determine the causal effect between the leader, their leadership style and the impact on organisational agility and ambidexterity.

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9. APPENDICES

Table 19: Consistency Matrix

Proposition/Questions/ Hypothesis	Literature Review	Data Collection Tool	Analysis
Research Question 1: How is organisational ambidexterity understood, enacted and experienced and, what are its antecedents?	March (1991); Tushman and O'Reilly (1996); Gibson and Birkinshaw (2004); O'Reilly and Tushman (2008); O'Reilly and Tushman (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you understand organisational ambidexterity to mean? • How is organisational ambidexterity implemented and experienced in your organisation? • What do you believe are the antecedents to ambidexterity? 	Thematic Analysis
Research Question 2: How is organisational agility understood, enacted and experienced, and what are its antecedents?	Dove (1999); Dove (2002); Meredith and Francis (2002); Tallon and Pinsonneault, (2011); Röder et al. (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you understand organisational agility to mean? • How is organisational agility implemented and experienced in your organisation? • What do you believe are the antecedents of agility? 	Thematic Analysis
Research Question 3: What are the inhibitors and enablers of organisational ambidexterity?	Tushman and O'Reilly (1996); Raisch and Birkinshaw (2008); Raisch (2009); Martini et al (2013); Popadiuk and Bido (2016);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you believe enables ambidexterity in your organisation? • What do you believe inhibits ambidexterity in your organisation? 	Thematic Analysis
Research Question 4: What are the inhibitors and enablers of organisational agility?	Ireland et al. (2003); Lee et al (2015); Papachroni et al (2015); Papachroni et al (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you believe enables agility in your organisation? • What do you believe inhibits agility in your organisation? 	Thematic Analysis

<p>Research Question 5: How can the interaction traps between organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility be avoided, bypassed or eliminated?</p>	<p>Röder et al. (2014); Ireland et al. (2003); Sheffi and Rice JR (2005); Sajdak (2015); Lu and Ramamurthy (2011); Assink (2006)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you believe causes the friction between ambidexterity and agility in your organisation? • Do you believe the friction could be avoided, overcome or eliminated in your organisation? • If so, what do you think can be done? 	<p>Thematic Analysis</p>
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Figure 13: Project Plan

	08-May	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	06-Nov
Research Proposal								
Re-evaluate study for data collection								
Completed Literature Review								
Research Selection Contracting								
Supervisor Checkpoint								
Revised Chapters 1 - 3								
Revised Chapter 4								
Ethics Clearance								
Supervisor Checkpoint								
Data Collection to Completion			Start					
Data Analysis to Completion								
Complete Chapter 5				Start				
Complete Chapter 6					Start			
Supervisor Checkpoint								
Complete Chapter 7						Start		
Supervisor Checkpoint								
Global Elective								
Elective 1								
Elective 2								
Elective 3								
Elective 4								
Elective 5								
Review								
Final Supervisor Checkpoint								
Hand in								

Appendix 2: Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Dear XXXXX

Thank you for taking my telephone call earlier today. As discussed, I am completing an MBA at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and I am in the process of completing the compulsory research thesis component of the degree. My research project title is Business Transformation through organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility. I believe that you have the necessary expertise and experience needed to provide key insights into this area of study. I would greatly appreciate your participation in this research by agreeing to be interviewed on the subject matter. The interview will be a semi-structure in-depth interview and will last approximately 45 minutes. I plan to conduct the interviews during the months of June and July. Please find attached a copy of the consent form that you will sign prior to the interview commencing. The interview will be confidential and you will remain anonymous.

The research questions I aim to answer through this process are as follows:

1. How is organisational ambidexterity understood, enacted and experienced and, what are its antecedents?
2. How is organisational agility understood, enacted and experienced, and what are its antecedents?
3. What are the inhibitors and enablers of organisational ambidexterity?
4. What are the inhibitors and enablers of organisational agility?
5. How can the interaction traps between organisational ambidexterity and organisational agility be avoided, bypassed or eliminated?

Please can you confirm your agreement to take part, as per our telephone conversation and indicate your availability to be interviewed during the months of June and July 2015.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Lucratia Mathe

lucratiamathe@gmail.com

Appendix 3: Consent Form

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION THROUGH ORGANISATIONAL AMBIDEXTERITY AND ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY

Researcher: Lucratia Mathe, MBA Student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science,
University of Pretoria

Name of Participant: _____

Organisation of Participant: _____

1. I confirm that I understand what the research is about and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving reason
3. I agree to take part in the research
4. I agree to my interview being audio recorded
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotations in publications

Participant's Name: _____

Signature:

Researcher's Name: _____

Signature:

Date: _____

(Saunders & Lewis, 2012)

**Gordon
Institute
of Business
Science**
University
of Pretoria

22 June 2017

Lucratia Mathe

Dear Lucratia Mathe,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee