

Change Agility: A Paradigm of Change Acceptance for Organization Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

In today's business, the concept of change agility has become essential for an organization's growth and survival. Change agility in an organization is about quickly adjusting and reacting to the changing needs of the business environment. Numerous experts point out that organizations that adapt to change agility focus more on creation and innovation through collaboration, resulting in organizational sustainability as a competitive advantage. The study's key objective was to identify research gaps in change agility that needed further attention. This paper provides a comprehensive theoretical perspective that adds to the literature on change agility for organizational sustainability. The literature review was carried out using desk and digital research methods, and the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach was applied as the main method for data collection. An extensive review of scholarly articles published between 2000 and 2023 in the fields of change agility, change acceptance, and organizational sustainability was undertaken. Primarily, 110 articles were examined, and out of those, 72 were systematically reviewed. Through the analysis of previous studies on change agility and organizational sustainability, the researcher identified five main types of research gaps: knowledge, empirical, theoretical, contextual, and practical knowledge gaps. It's important to note that there's a clear lack of information in academic studies about what makes change agility unique and how it connects with different theories. The concepts of change agility for change acceptance remain largely unexplored in various disciplines. This paper suggests that more studies need to be carried out on change agility by identifying its dimensions, measurement, and methodologies, and aligning with the concept of organizational sustainability.

Keywords: change acceptance, change agility, change management, organization sustainability

I. INTRODUCTION

Change is a vital part of every organization, and every organization needs change because it provides room for growth although it interrupts the usual function of the organization. Fast and unforeseen changes are hallmarks of modern corporate business due to various internal and external triggers of change which can cause significant risk and uncertainty in business (Tzortzaki & Tsourdalakis, 2014). Lozano & Garcia (2020) state that adapting to new changes is one of the most important factors for organizational growth and sustainability. Change management is a strategic approach that focuses on resolving employees' reluctance to change while providing training and assistance during change transition or transformation (Walkme, 2023). It is a transformation in an organization's goals, values, processes, techniques, and technology through planning, communicating, and monitoring for the development of an organization. According to Ha (2014), change management is a challenging and unavoidable process that requires systematic planning, organizing, controlling, and coordinating skills. Well-planned implemented change benefits in terms of business survival, competitiveness, finance, employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction. Implementing change successfully in an organization is a challenge as it depends on the employer's skills, knowledge, ability, and employees' coping ability to adapt to the new system. Kermarrec (2021) mentioned that traditional change management has focused on getting other people to change their behavior to ensure successful change. However, the concept of change management has been transforming in recent years. The author reveals that change through a new prism to be 'more agile' in managing change, starting the change from the individuals' inside.

Change management is a concept that is deeply discussed by many researchers. However, the growing literature on change agility is fragmented and quite diverse. According to Josh Bersin Academy's (2022) report, change management is simply no longer applicable since change agility comes in. Additionally, despite extending studies on change management, few

studies focused on change agility for change acceptance in an organization. An agile organization with proactive thinking and decision-making can aid in the survival and successful operation of the business (Ghosh & Barman 2021). However, before implementing the change in an organization, it's important to understand how ready the organization is to support the change. So, it is necessary to assess change acceptance assessment to overcome the resistance to change before implementation of new change. Management needs to assess how employees perceive, think, and react to change by understanding their behaviors, attitudes, personalities, habits, emotional quotients, expectations from work, professional goals, and personal motives. Aligning change agility and organization sustainability practices leads to higher performance of an organization. Agility strives for corporate sustainability performance when organizational drivers align with the expectations of consumers, government regulations, environmental issues, and organizational procedures (Sun et al, 2022). More practical and applied approach studies are essential to explore more creative and novel applications of agility in the context of sustainability (Ghosh & Barman 2021). Further, as per researchers' knowledge, the term "change agility" is not common and unaware among various individuals, scholars, and organizations due to a lack of theoretical, analytical, and empirical information. The concepts of change agility for change acceptance remain largely unexplored. There are only a few articles available on the influence of change agility on organizational sustainability (El-Khalil & Mezher, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023), and a scarcity of studies in the Sri Lankan context. This study considered the above-mentioned factors when developing the objectives. Therefore, the authors intended to identify research gaps in change agility by exploring the concepts of change agility, change acceptance, and organization sustainability along with evolving dimensions of change agility. Finally, propose a conceptual model with the support of theories and concepts.

II. LITERATURE

A literature review is a comprehensive and in-depth evaluation of the available literature in the chosen research topic area. The purpose is to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge and research on a specific study area. This section provides the concept of change, change management, change agility, dimensions of change agility, change acceptance, organization sustainability and relevant theories of change agility.

2.1 Concept of Change

In general, change refers to the process of altering something by adjusting to a new method to make it different or better. It can occur gradually over an extended period or unpredictably. Therefore, change is the process of transitioning from one state, condition, or situation to another. It is a vital part of every organization which brings opportunities for growth although it interrupts the usual function of the organization. Organizational change is the process of adopting, implementing, and managing alterations to an organization's structure, strategies, processes, methods, culture, and technology to enhance the organization's effectiveness and adapt to dynamic internal and external environments (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Armenakis & Harris, 2009). In addition, Flovik et al. (2019) noted that an organization may undergo a change transition consciously, intending to gain or lose specific organizational features to accomplish predetermined goals and objectives, or inadvertently due to situations beyond its control. Organizational change is shaped by a combination of internal triggers which originate within the organization itself and external triggers which arise from the external environment. Internal drivers for organizational change often arise from inefficiencies, deficiencies in performance, outdated processes, and misalignment with strategic goals (Greenberg & Baron, 2008) and external drivers result from changes in external factors, such as technological advancements, shifts in the market, regulatory changes, and competitive in business (Johnson & Scholes, 2018). Therefore, to execute change successfully in an organization, it is vital to understand the drivers of change.

2.2 Concept of Change Management

Change management is a fundamental aspect of contemporary business practices to adapt the dynamic market conditions. Change management is a systematic tactic comprised of dealing with the transition or transformation of organizational goals, core values, processes or technologies (Jouany & Martic, 2023). The authors further highlight that the objective of an organization's change management is to successfully implement strategies and tactics into practice for bringing about change and helping individuals accept and adjust to the new system. Preparation, execution, and follow-through are the three primary stages of a change management process, which leads organizational transformation to a successful resolution (Stobierski, 2020). Well-planned implemented change may be beneficial in terms of business survival, competitiveness, finance, employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction. Cameron & Green (2015) pointed change management is a multidisciplinary concept that encompasses methods and tactics to guide individuals, teams, and organizations through transitions to accomplish desired results. Kurt Lewin's three-step model of change (1951), remains a foundational framework in change management which consists of three stages: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Unfreezing involves preparing individuals and the organization ready for change by overcoming resistance and creating motivation and understanding of the requirements of change. The moving stage entails the actual implementation of the change, while the refreezing stage is to

stabilize the new changes and make them permanent. As stated by Hussain et al., (2018) planning activities create a road map or path for implementation of change successfully by integrating change activities following the organization's change priorities and goals. Further stated that it is necessary to identify individuals and group commitments to support, formulate, and execute change successfully. Zainol et al., (2021) mentioned that excellent leadership is required to implement change effectively and efficiently.

2.3 Transformation of Change Management to Change Agility

The concept of change management has been transformed to change agility. The key factor to surviving and excelling in the modern workplace is accepting that change is frequent, necessary, and advantageous and the businesses that successfully traverse upheaval are those who foresee it and adjust to it (Schwarze, 2021). Safety, quality, efficiency levels, and anticipated outcomes are a few factors that determine change success in an organization (Alolabi, Ayupp & Dwaikat, 2021). Ha (2014) identified that leaders or change agents or management play a key role in making the whole organization system function effectively and efficiently aligning each element in the business process. Leaders or employers initiate change, develop strategies, and implement new changes in an organization. However, the successful implementation of a new change in an organization is also highly dependent on the employees by changing their mindset, attitude, and behavior. It becomes resistant to change if the employees are not willing to adapt to the new change. Resistance to change occurs when employees are reluctant or refuse to adapt to the new system. Therefore, the concept of change agility started to evolve by scholars, and industrialists at the beginning of the 21st century.

In a business context, agility was first noted in 1982 and was defined as "the ability to respond swiftly to rapidly changing conditions" (Walter, 2021). The concept of agility originated in the manufacturing sector, where the need for adaptability to changes in the supply chain demanded both flexibility and nimbleness, and the concept was acknowledged among practitioners and researchers in the early 1990s (Harraf & Wanasika, 2015). The concept of organizational agility was identified by Dove et al (1991) cited by Horney (2013). Goldman et al. (1995, cited in Zitkiene & Deksnys, 2018) introduced the concept of an agile enterprise strategy delineating an agile organization as one that consistently achieves profitability in an ever-changing environment and can adapt to unpredictable consumer preferences. Therefore, agility has no specific origin, instead, the concept has been evolved. It's important to conduct a change readiness assessment before embarking on a change initiative to determine whether employees are willing to change and whether the organization is prepared to support the change. It is necessary to understand human behavior changes and what motivates them to adopt change to make employees ready for change. Employees take an active part in formulating and delivering a solution to change (Rafferty & Griffin, 2008). It can be considered that employees as one of the most vital factors behind the success of any change initiative. Enforcing strict regulations, orders, and directions may discourage any change in the behavior of employees. The contemporary change management Nudge theory developed by Thaler & Sunstein (2008) seeks to deal with the resistance and inertia that are commonly present during organizational transition for change.

Traditional change initiatives and execution in an organization often rely on regulations, strategies, and decisions of the change agent or leader, which may trigger a backlash and reduce the involvement of employees in the change transition (Bhattacharyya, 2022). However, a distinct approach of Nudge theory focuses on gently influencing the behavior of individuals through indirect, choice architecture, people's actual thinking, and decision process. The theory emphasizes that small actions can affect people's decisions or behaviors instead of giving direct instructions. Perception nudges, motivation nudges, ability nudges, and simplicity nudges are four types of nudges that are commonly used to lead change in an organization. Change agility considers an employee's openness to change, their capacity for change, and how quickly they adapt to the new change. According to Poschen (2017), agile businesses do not switch from one static state to another in terms of structure, systems, and processes. Instead, agile organizations constantly prepare for the unexpected and foster an agile leadership culture that operates in a perpetual state of readiness for the unexpected and knows when to pull the appropriate leadership, talent, process, and technology levers to synchronize with an environment that is becoming more unpredictable. Further, scholars mentioned that high levels of internal and external trust, as well as high customer and staff loyalty, are indicators of agile and healthy organizations. Nangia (2022) highlights change is constant, unexpected, and non-linear, and change management needs to adjust to keep up with the unpredictable, fast-paced world of today. Additionally, the author stated that to foster "change agility," businesses must become "change-enabled" and "always ready for change". Manufacturing organizations may ensure competitiveness and long-term viability by embracing novel and innovative concepts such as sustainability and agility (El-Khalil & Mezher, 2020).

2.4 General Overview on Change Agility

Change agility is the key to responding and adapting change in a way that drives the workforce and business outcomes that are essential for an organization to endure and prosper through any change (Bersin Academy, 2021). High levels of internal and external trust, as well as high customer and staff loyalty, are indicators of agile and healthy firms. At present, there is no comprehensive definition of change agility as the concept is relatively new. Very few experts have given different

definitions of change agility in the existing literature. Change agility is the key to the success of an organization as an agile organization can adapt quickly to the circumstances and react immediately to changes in markets, competitors, products, services, and customers (Markarova, 2021). Agile organization enablers and capabilities collaborate to move forward and this process leads to action that agile organizations adapt to changing environments efficiently (Zitkiene & Deksnys, 2018). Organizational agility is a vital component ensuring the firms' long-term practices (Sun et al., 2022). According to Bersin Academy (2021), change agility means "rethinking organizational change from a one-and-done, a close-ended process to one that is continuous, open, and has an unpredictable end". Change agility is "the ability of an organization to renew itself, adapt, change quickly, and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment" (Smet, 2015). Therefore, based on the meaning of these definitions, researchers propose own definition for change agility as "An ongoing process of adaptability and implementing change to the response expected or unexpected internal and external environmental turmoil for growth and sustainability of business". Daly (2022) mentioned agility at work place results enhances productivity, boosts staff engagement, and improves the capacity to adjust external forces including changes in the market, customer preferences, and economic conditions. Table 1 provides the definitions of agility and related agility concepts.

Table 1: Definitions of Agility Concepts

Christopher & Towill (2000)	A business-wide capability that embraces organizational structures, information systems, logistical processes, and in particular, mindsets.	Journal of Supply Chain Management
Dove (2002)	The ability to manage and apply knowledge effectively to adapt as necessary to continuously changing and unpredictable environmental conditions.	Textbook manuscript
Sambamurthy et al. (2003)	Adapt and respond quickly to changing customer requirements.	MIS Quarterly
Kassim & Zain (2004)	The ability of a firm to face and adapt proficiently in a continuously changing and unpredictable business environment.	Journal of American academy of business
Harraf & Wanasika (2015)	Agility is an ongoing process and measure of responsiveness to the environment.	The Journal of Applied Business Research
Ghosh & Barman (2018)	Agility is the readiness that respond immediately to changing demand.	International Conference on Sustainability Development
Brodess (2018)	Agility is defined by two variables that is personal agility and organizational agility. Personal agility means adopting a flexible mindset that promotes the generation and implementation of original and useful ideas. Organizational Agility is the capacity to recognize, create, and exploit opportunities in a changing environment.	Tracom blog
Ulrich & Yeung (2019)	Agility is defined through four dimensions such as creating the future, anticipating opportunity, adapting quickly, and learning always.	Strategic HR review
Ghosh & Barman (2021)	Agility is the ability of an organization to create value, to promote and respond to change within its environment.	The George Washington International Law Review
Daly (2022)	Agility in the workplace is the ability to combine speed and data-driven innovation to maintain a competitive advantage.	ThroughExchange blog
Das (2022)	The ability of an organisation to quickly adapt and respond to changes in the business environment.	LinkedIn
Change agility		
Combe (2014)	Change agility is the intentional and planned preparation of the organization to enhance the likelihood that its strategies through portfolio, program, and project management, including the change management components-will produce the intended strategic benefits.	PMI white paper
Westover (2020)	Change agility is all about seeing change as an ongoing opportunity, not as a threat or liability.	Council post
Nangia (2022)	Change Agility is the path forward for responding, and adapting change in ways that drive the business and workforce outcomes critical for an organization to survive and thrive through any change.	LinkedIn

Bersin Academy (2022)	Change agility means rethinking organizational change from a one-and-done, close-ended process to one that is continuous, open, and has an unpredictable end.	The Josh Bersin Company
Organizational agility		
Lu and Ramamurthy (2011)	Organizational agility is a firm-wide capability to deal with changes that often arise unexpectedly in business environments via rapid and innovative responses that exploit changes as opportunities to grow and prosper.	MIS Quarterly
Harraf & Wanasika (2015)	Organizational agility is a core competency, competitive advantage, and differentiator that requires strategic thinking, an innovative mindset, exploitation of change, and an unrelenting need to be adaptable and proactive.	The Journal of Applied Business Research
Walter (2021)	Organizational agility is defined as the capacity, ability, and flexibility of an organization to adapt quickly to a changing external environment and landscape.	Management Review Quarterly
Walter (2021)	Organizational Agility is a learned, permanently-available dynamic capability that can be performed to a necessary degree quickly and efficiently, and whenever needed to increase business performance in a volatile market environment.	Management Review Quarterly
Gong & Ribiere (2023)	Organizational agility is the ability to quickly respond and proactively embrace unanticipated changes in dynamic environments through effective resource reconfiguration and rapid decision-making.	Journal of Information and Knowledge Management System
Business agility		
Dove (2002)	The ability of an organization to thrive in a continuously changing and unpredictable business environment.	Textbook manuscript
Cambridge dictionary	Business agility means a company is always in a position to take account of market changes.	Cambridge dictionary
Management study guide	Business agility refers to the ability of an organization to respond rapidly to market changes as a matter of routine.	Management Study Guide
Shin et al. (2015)	Business agility is nimble in reconfiguring its strategy to be responsive and adaptable to environmental changes along with flexibility in its operations.	International Journal of Production Economics
Strategic agility		
Weber & Tarba, (2014)	Strategic agility refers to the “ability to remain flexible in facing new developments, to continuously adjust the company’s strategic direction, and to develop innovative ways to create value	California Management Review
Shin et al. (2015)	A firm’s strategic intent to achieve agile operations which are driven by the management emphasis on improving its time-based competitive advantage, namely responsiveness and adaptability to customers’ needs and requirements.	International Journal of Production Economics
Widjajani & Nurjaman (2020)	Strategic agility is a meta capability that involves not only allocating sufficient resources for development and deployment but also staying agile by balancing dynamic capabilities over time.	Journal of Physics Conference series
SpriggHR (2021)	Strategic agility refers to a company’s ability to quickly and appropriately respond to, or drive, change while maintaining flexibility and focus.	SpriggHR
Brahma et al., (2021)	Strategic agility is also known as the process of adoption to changes which would lead to achieving greater success by exploiting the available opportunities and creating competitive advantages.	Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning
Christofi et al., (2021)	Strategic agility is presented as the ultimate ability to compete in turbulent environments and is achieved by the cultivation of meta-capabilities, namely, strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and collective commitment.	Academy of Strategic Management Journal

2.5 Key Studies on Change Agility

It has been observed that the transition of change management to change agility in the recent few years. Key studies on change agility were extracted from the studies conducted by a range of specialists and academics by thoroughly reviewing their studies. Based on the review of previous studies, it can be said that there are research gaps in change agility. The

summary of the key study is based on the available international and local studies from Scopus, Google Scholar database along with LinkedIn, and Research Gate during 2000 and 2023, and it is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Key Studies on Change Agility

Author	Year	Description
Alavi & Wahab	2013	This study identified existing gaps in workforce agility in the previous studies.
Combe	2014	The research review pinpointed the hallmarks and strategies crucial to organizations' success by examining the challenges in change agility.
Shin et al.	2015	This study examined the underlying components that contribute to SMEs' strategic agility and how this construct affects business operations and performance.
Zitkiene & Deksnys	2018	This study attempts to combine different approaches and angles to organizational agility. The study developed a conceptual organizational agility model based on organizational agility attributes, capabilities, and practices.
Ilmudeen	2019	The study develops a model of business process agility and firm performance. The study confirmed that agility leads to better firm performance during turbulent environments.
El-Khalil and Mezher	2020	This study provides empirical evidence that agility is a driver of operational performance in an organization. It also confirms a significant strong positive relationship between agility and sustainability performance in the US automotive industry.
Widjajani and Nurjaman	2020	This study found that entrepreneurial potential is a crucial asset that managers and business owners must possess for their organizations to be adaptable in the face of dynamic and uncertain environments.
Brahma et al.	2021	This study identified sensing agility, decision-making agility, and acting agility as dimensions of strategic agility. Researchers prove that all three dimensions have a significant and positive impact on sustainable competitive advantage.
Haider et al.	2021	This research was carried out as a literature review that provides certain theoretical information about agility. Researchers emphasize business agility, organizational agility, strategic agility, and operational agility as subdomains of agility.
Kuruppu and Egodawele	2021	This study was conducted in the banking sector in Sri Lanka considering knowledge management and workforce agility. The study confirmed that knowledge management has a significant positive relationship with proactive agility and flexible agility.
Ghosh and Barman	2021	The study tried to identify and focus on some vital components of agility & sustainability and established relationships among the components to formulate a new dimension. However, the study didn't test the relationship between agility and sustainability.
Walter	2021	This study identified four agility categories: agility drivers, agility enablers, agility capabilities, and agility dimensions, and developed a conceptual map of organizational agility.
Nangia N.	2022	This study emphasized the concept of change agility. The scholar also highlights the difference between change management and change agility and operationalizing change agility.
Sun et al.	2022	This study applied classical organizational theory by emphasizing and restoring the organization according to the goals, objectives, and needs of the customers. The study tests the relationship between operational and customer agility with sustainability in manufacturing practices and green procurement.

2.6 Dimensions of Change Agility

In today's highly competitive business environment, agility is crucial for all organizations. Gagnon & Hadaya (2018) pointed out three main reasons for change agility: more agile firms are faster and more effectively can adapt; enabled to advance in making strategic moves at a faster pace than their competitors and be a competitive advantage. The following dimensions and measurements of change agility were extracted from the literature.

2.6.1 Strategic Agility

In recent years, organizations have emphasized more strategic agility due to the dynamic and rapidly changing business environment. Khoshnood and Nematizadeh (2017) defined strategic agility as the ability of a company to detect changes through the opportunities and threats existing in the business environment to respond quickly by reorganizing its resources, procedures, and strategies. Authors have identified a clear vision, core competencies, selecting strategic targets, shared responsibilities, and taking actions as components of strategic agility. Teece (2007); Gagnon & Hadaya (2018) refer to strategic agility as an organization to speedily and effectively adapts its plans in response to unforeseen changes, interruptions,

and emerging market opportunities. Soltani, Nazem & Imani (2019), recognized strategic agility as one of the main dimensions of organizational change agility which was measured using four components: strategic vision, policy and policymaking, missions, and values. The findings of the study revealed that common vision is one of the important factors in achieving organizational change agility. A thorough review of the literature on strategic agility demonstrates that among the elements of strategic agility are information technology capacity, human resource capability, competence, adaptability, flexibility, speed, strategic insight, responsiveness, internal response orientation, and external response orientation (Ganguly, Nilchiani & Farr, 2009; Oyedijo, 2012; Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020).

2.6.2 Operational Agility

Operational agility is about an organization's capability to adapt efficiently and effectively in response to changes in the market. Gagnon & Hadaya, 2018 defined operational agility as the ability to quickly change operation activities from manufacturing to supplying goods or services in a manner that has no significant penalty on time, cost, quality, and functionality. According to QuickBase report (2023), an organization can flex and adapt its operations, technology, and information to constantly evolving business requirements brought on by market dynamics, competitive pressure, and business turbulence. Pahlke, Immanuel & et al (2011) refer to capabilities for sensing operational changes which are mentioned as the physical ability to act, and capabilities for responding to operational changes mentioned as the intellectual ability to find the appropriate courses of action as factors of operational agility. Innovation to future trends, financial impact, non-financial impact, human resource agility, non-human resource agility, agile stakeholders' perception, and management were identified as indicators of operation agility (TIBAI, 2023 report).

2.6.3 Agility Drivers

Agility drivers have a significant impact on the successful implementation of change agility. Zhang and Sharif (2007) stated it is internal and external driving forces for agility can place firms in a new, necessitating the pursuit of competitive advantages. Effective leadership is widely recognized as a key driver of change agility (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Effective Leadership is an essential component for a successful transformation of agility in an organization. Levels of adaptability in leadership style as well as flexibility play important roles in change agility. According to Howard Hermes' report (May 12, 2023), a leader must comprehend and embrace the agile mindset to provide a clear vision, support, resources, and lead the team for the agile transformation to be successful. It also mentioned that effective communication, transparency, collaboration, building trust, empowerment, psychological safety, investment in training, and coaching were some of the components of leadership for agile transformation. Employee engagement has emerged as another essential factor in driving change agility within organizations. Bakker and Demerouti (2008) highlight that engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of resilience and openness to change. Further stated that it can be nurtured through inclusive communication, involvement in decision-making, and recognition of contributions. George Homans (1958) developed the Social exchange theory (SET) provides an understanding relationship between employer and employee in the workplace. The theory emphasizes that employees choose their commitment level at work based on perceived support and community from their employer (Turk & Krastev, 2022). According to SET theory, engaged employees perceive a favorable exchange of resources between themselves and the organization, leading to increased commitment and discretionary efforts (Eisenbeiss et al., 2019). Engaged employees are more likely to be proactive in acquiring new skills, embracing change, and contributing to innovation, thus fostering organizational agility (Breevaart et al., 2014).

2.6.4 Agile Capacity

Agile capacity is the ability to deal with change and handle and adapt to change when it arises. It plays a pivotal role in fostering change agility in an organization. Hackmann et al. (2016) defined agile capacity for change as a multidimensional comprising different aspects of leadership, culture, employee behavior, and an organizational infrastructure supporting organizational change. According to Mladenova (2022), the concept of agile capacity for change has been an emerging area of research interest over the past decade. The author also mentioned that structural flexibility, encouraging participation in change processes, communication, learning, transformational leadership, and organization culture as elements of capacity for change. Westover (2022) stated main components of agile capacity are human skill sets, resources, formal systems and procedures, organizational culture, values, and norms. Similarly, structural flexibility, culture, technology, trustworthy leadership, transformational leadership, communication, support for change, and learning were identified as determinants of agile capacity for change (Judge & Elenkov, 2005; Bennerbroek et al., 2003; Klarner et al., 2008). Table 3 provides the dimensions and indicators of change agility identified by scholars.

Table 3: Summary of Dimensions and Indicators of Change Agility

Dimension	Definition	Indicator	Author
Strategic agility	An organization's ability to detect changes through the opportunities and threats existing in the business environment to respond quickly by recombining resources, processes, and strategies (Khoshnood & Nematizadeh, 2017).	Strategic vision and mission	Khoshnood and Nematizadeh, (2017); Soltani, Nazem & Imani (2019); Ganguly, Nilchiani & Farr, 2009; Oyedijo, 2012; Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020)
		Policy and policymaking	
		Shared values and responsibilities	
		Flexibility	
		Responsiveness	
		Core capabilities	
		Strategic insight	
		Internal and external response orientation	
		Human resource capability	
		Information technology capability	
Operation agility	Ability to quickly change operation activities from manufacturing to supplying goods or service with minimal impact on time, cost, quality, and functionality (Gagnon & Hadaya, 2018).	Innovation to future trends	Gagnon & Hadaya (2018); TIBAI, 2023 report); QuickBase report (2023)
		Financial and non-financial impact	
		Human resource agility	
		Agile stakeholders' perception	
		Organization flexibility	
		Adapt its operation	
		Adapt technology	
Agility drivers	Internal and external driving forces for agility place organizations in a new, necessitating the pursuit of competitive advantages (Zhang and Sharif, 2007).	Effective leadership	Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Bakker and Demerouti (2008)
		Effective communication	
		Collaborative	
		Build a trust	
		Empowerment	
		psychological safety	
Agile capacity	Multidimensional comprising various aspects of leadership, culture, employee behavior, and an organizational infrastructure that supports organizational change (Hackmann et al. 2016).	Structural flexibility	Mladenova (2022); Westover (2022); Judge & Elenkov, 2005; Bennerbroek et al., 2003; Klarner et al., 2008
		Encouraging participation in change processes	
		Learning	
		Communication	
		Organization culture	
		Transformational leadership	
		Human skill sets,	
		Resources	
		Formal systems and procedures	
		Support for change	

2.7 Concept of Change Acceptance

Change acceptance is an essential component for any organization to perform better and face competition. Mladenova (2022) stated normally acceptance of change is assessed at the individual level. Change acceptance reflects the extent to which an individual's cognitive and emotional tendencies to accept change. It is the ability and readiness of individuals, groups, and organizations to accept and integrate new circumstances, and concepts into the existing framework. Fabio & Gori (2016) highlight that there is little empirical work has been done in the area of change acceptance. Authors define change acceptance as the tendency to embrace rather than resist because acceptance is regarded as positive for well-being. Weiner (2009) describes it as an organizational member's commitment and change efficacy in implementing organizational change. Further scholar reveals that it is not just a multi-level construct, but also a multi-faceted construct (Stevens, 2013). Deng et al. (2021) convey that individuals' cognitive processes can create favorable assessments of change and facilitate the development of change acceptance. Further highlights that successful implementation of change depends not only on the agile drivers but also on employee's interpretation and acceptance of change. Additionally, the authors also indicate a positive association between change strategies and change acceptance. Nevertheless, it should be noted that acceptance or readiness for change does not guarantee the success of a multifaceted change program or process. Sometimes, organization members may incorrectly evaluate the degree to which the organization's readiness to change which occurs when underestimate or overestimate the required collective competence necessary for change implementation (Alolabi, Ayupp & Dwaikat, 2021). Management

support, human resource management, learning and development, customer focus and satisfaction, process management, and supplier collaboration are crucial factors that could either cultivate or diminish individual readiness for change (Maamari et al, 2018).

2.8 Concept of Organizational Sustainability

Organizational sustainability is a crucial aspect of the modern business landscape. A sustainable organization constantly prioritizes economic, social and environmental components when conducting business that help to shape an organization's long-term viability and competitiveness. It is the practice of running a business in a way that with minimum or without negative impact on society and the environment. Living beings and nature can exist in productive harmony if sustainability is maintained, which helps to fulfill the social, economic, and environmental needs of present and future generations. The most widely acceptable definition of organization sustainability is 'the development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WECED,1987). Nowadays, every organization must balance its economic, social, and environmental performance (Shammari et al., 2022).

Traditionally, organizations measure a firm's performance based on sales growth, return on equity (ROE), earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT), and return on investment (ROI). However, Pan, Sinha, & Chen (2020) mentioned that many scholars have argued that organizations should focus on the triple bottom line concept when measuring performance instead of focusing on one aspect which is financial performance. Further, the study found that environmental management practices positively impact organizational performance. In 1994, Elkington developed the concept of the triple bottom line (TPL) to measure the performance of a business. TPL consists of three elements such as profit, people, and the planet which represent the economy, society, and environment for sustainability. A sustainability organization aims to approach sustainable practices by managing the organization's resources effectively. It is a proactive approach to ensure the long-term growth and survival of business by effectively managing resources, reducing environmental impact, focusing on social responsibility, competitive advantages, and profitability. Based on the Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), when operating a business, the organization should create value for its various stakeholders such as investors, customers, employees, suppliers, government, etc., and not only its shareholders. It assumes that organizations that adopt stakeholder principles and practices perform better in terms of financial, social, and environmental than firms that don't adopt. Ghobadian et al., (2015) suggest that organizations should encourage stakeholders to share their experiences about the organization's responsible behavior, as this will help to link identities to a deeper sense of self with the organization. Businesses that invest in environmental sustainability reap the financial benefits in addition to those environmental and social benefits (Dilchert & Ones, 2012). Further, it reveals that organizational environmental sustainability will result in the deep ecological knowledge needed to sustain and enhance the quality of life on this planet.

2.9 Change Agility, Change Acceptance, and Organisational Sustainability

In today's business environment, change agility, change acceptance, and organizational sustainability become integral components for the growth and survival of an organization. Many experts state that adapting to new changes is one of the most important factors for organizational sustainability. Change is ongoing, and unavoidable as it is compulsory to adapt to change for the development of an organization. According to StudyCorgi report (2022), organizational change is a significant transition from one state to another for the whole organization, with its leaders, managers, employees, and other stakeholders who may participate, influence, or be dependent on a change process. The concept of change has been transformed from change management to change agility. As mentioned earlier, change agility is the route ahead for responding, and adapting to change in ways that create business and workforce results that are necessary for an organization to survive, and prosper through any change (Nangia, 2022).

However, it is necessary to evaluate the change acceptance of the organization to implement the new system successfully in an organization. Understanding and accepting change is a constant, and it is a vital aspect of prospering during uncertainty, both personally and professionally (Osborne, 2020). Successful implementation of change is possible only when employees are acceptance for change and show a positive attitude towards the change. According to Dutta (2020), acceptance of change as a part of corporate culture implies that management and employees should be ready and positive towards any sort of change rather than be worried about their execution. Conducting a change acceptance assessment explores strategic considerations like cultural issues, and commitment concerns that interact with the organization's strategy ensuring greater credibility of findings and a greater ability to influence appropriate responses (Combe, 2014). According to Khaw et al. (2022), age, culture, and attitude differences of employees affect how they respond and accept to organizational change. Further researchers mentioned that 71% of the success of employee transformation of change acceptance is due to leadership. When a leader is open to change, the employees are more likely to respond positively, however when a leader is resistant to change, the employees are more likely to respond negatively (Matthew, 2009).

Thus, the successful implementation of organizational sustainability strategies is also highly dependent on the change acceptance and implementation of change agility policies and practices. Pre-implementation levels of acceptance for change

exerted a positive main effect on employees' satisfaction and organizational performance (Jones et al., 2005). Based on the study conducted by Thanh & Phong (2021), found that organizational change acceptance significantly mediates the influence of change on organizational sustainability performance namely operational and financial performance. Organizational sustainability is about equipping organizations with the people, structures, strategies, and resources for the success of a business. It is a proactive approach to ensure the long-term growth and survival of business effectively by managing resources, reducing environmental impact, and focusing on social responsibility, competitive advantages, and profitability.

2.10 Underpinning Theories

This section explains the supporting theories of the study. Kurt Lewin, Nudge, and Stakeholder theories were used to support the study.

2.10.1 Lewin's Theory

Lewin's (1951) theory of change is one of the earlier and most acceptable models of change theory. It provides a structured framework for understanding how individuals and organizations can effectively manage and navigate the process of change. Based on Lewin's model, the change process requires learning and adoption of new attitudes by eliminating existing behaviors and attitudes (Maamari et al.2018). Therefore, it should ensure that individuals and organizations understand the requirement for a change to accept the new attitude and behavior for change which will help to execute the change agility process successfully. The model represents in three-stages: unfreeze, change, and refreeze. Unfreezing involves preparing individuals and the organization for change by overcoming resistance and generating awareness, motivation, and understanding about the need for change. The second stage is change which is actual implementation by introducing new practices, systems, and processes. Effective communication and leadership are required at this stage to ensure that the change is well-understood, and embraced. The final stage is refreezing focuses on stabilizing the new changes and making them permanent within the organization. Consequently, the model emphasizes the need for understanding, effective communication, leadership, and support in the change process to avoid change resistance.

2.10.2 Nudge Theory

The contemporary Nudge theory has gained significant attention in various domains in the past few years. Thaler and Sunstein (2008) developed the Nudge theory in their book, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. Nudge is defined as "any aspect of the choice architecture that predictably alters people's behavior without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives (Walter, 2009)". Theory emphasizes understanding how people think, improving decision-making, promoting desirable behaviors, and managing change. It is based on understanding and allowing for the actual situation, unlike traditional forcible direct instruction. The theory focuses on "choice architecture" which involves all of the outside forces that may gently guide an individual's decision to select one alternative over another. (Arno & Thomas, 2016). By understanding people's attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and capacities and also offering choices during the change process, this theory's application will assist in reducing resistance and confrontation in the implementation of change agility.

2.10.3 Stakeholder Theory

It has been noted that stakeholder theory has been applied more often in various fields in recent years. Monal (2021) highlighted that this theory has become a key consideration in the study of business. Freeman (1984), stakeholder theory is frequently used by scholars to describe the reason for an organization's responsibility to its stakeholders. The theory states organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders rather than concentrating solely on shareholders to create value and long-term success (Mahajan, et al 2023). The theory emphasizes interactions that exist between a firm and its consumers, suppliers, workers, investors, communities, governmental authorities, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, and even rivals and other stakeholders (Keup, 2022). Business operations impact the interests of numerous parties with a stake in the company, and similarly, the conduct of diverse stakeholders impacts business operations (Harmoni, 2013). Business operations affect the interests of various parties having a stake in a business and similarly, the behavior of various parties also affects business operations (Harmoni, 2013). Consequently, organization leaders must understand the importance of organization stakeholders and their impact on organization operations. To implement change agility successfully, it is important to actively include stakeholders and address their concerns to reduce change resistance. Additionally, while operating a firm, it is important to take social and environmental responsibilities into account. Tai (2022) mentioned that the majority of businesses considered social responsibility as one of the essential business philosophies that contribute significantly to the success and achievement of organizational goals. The author also added that effective implementation of social responsibility will lead to achieving the economic goals of the organization. Considering the theory, it complements CSR (Corporate social responsibility) and sustainability as well, therefore, profit alone cannot be the main metric of a business's success (Wright, 2023). According to Preston (1981) cited by Harmoni (2013) to build stakeholders' trust not only in

communication, but also a provision of actual evidence, a sustainable and socially responsible organization must identify, measure, monitor, and report the social, environmental, and economic effects of its operations.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on exploring the concept of change agility, change acceptance, and organization sustainability to reduce management phobia to adopt change for sustainability. To achieve the objectives of the paper researchers adopted desk research, digital research methods, and PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. The desk method focuses on exploring data from existing and previous research between 2000 and 2023. The concept of change agility was not widely known even though the concept existed before 2000. However, it has been observed that increased article publication in change agility and related concepts in recent years. By limiting the scope to recent publications, this study tries to provide a comprehensive understanding and contribute insights on change agility that can apply to most of the fields. With the advances in technology, the researcher also applies a digital method to collect, store, and process data by using electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources. PRISMA is widely recognized for conducting systematic literature reviews in various fields. The PRISMA flow diagram is used to choose the relevant articles (refer to Figure 1). In the identification stage, focus more on the Scopus database along with the Google Scholar database. Change agility, change acceptance, and organizational sustainability were considered as search terms, and OR and AND Boolean operators were used for search criteria. The term change agility was used with related synonyms such as change management, organizational change and change acceptance with change readiness. Altogether 110 articles were found 84 from Google Scholar and 26 from Scopus. After removing duplicate 6 articles, 104 articles remain for screening. In the screening stage, excluded 21 articles based on the time frame (2000 to 2023), not available as full papers, and irrelevant to the study title. Then, the remaining 83 retrieval papers were considered for eligibility check and 11 were identified as irreverent due to viewpoint papers, and lack of clarity. Finally, 72 articles were included in the study’s review. Figure 1 depicts the entire process. This study is based on the secondary data that was collected from published research papers. The systematic review process was confined to published research articles on change agility published between 2000 and 2023. The academic research databases, namely Scopus and Google Scholar were mainly used in this systematic review process. Additionally, to support and better understanding, some material was also obtained from blogs, research gate, and LinkedIn.

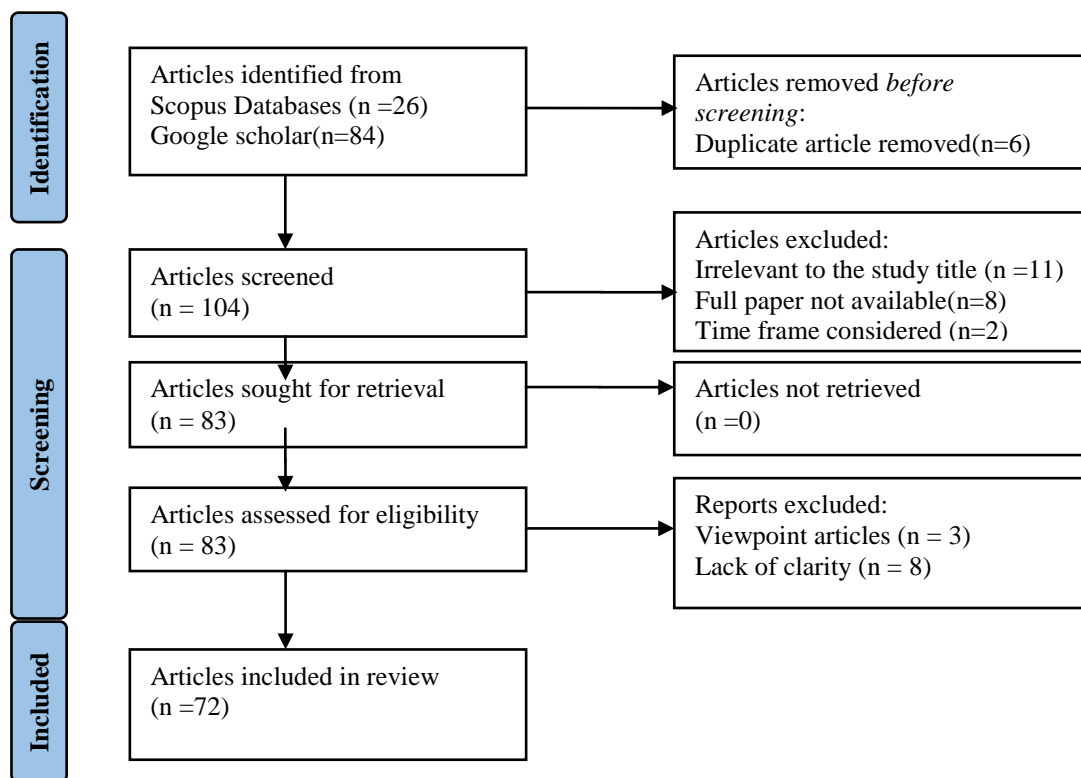


Figure 1: PRISMA Article Selection Flow Diagram
 (Source: Review data, 2023)

IV. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The descriptive analysis was presented in publication years, fields of study, and country of publications, based on the data available in the selected database. In terms of publishing years, there has been a growing trend of publications regarding change agility over the period (2000-2023) which is shown in Figure 2. It shows that drastic increase in publication from 2019 onwards. To meet the review requirements and understand the number of publications included for each year in the duration, the year-wise distribution of articles is taken into consideration. In terms of disciplines of contribution, most of the research has been undertaken in business, among other fields which is shown in Figure 3. Other significant fields include computer science, marketing, knowledge management, process management, industrial organization, economics, etc. Figures 4 and 5 display the article production by nation. Considering the top 10 countries, it reveals that the country with the most notable production is India (53 articles), followed by the United States (48 articles), China (32 articles), the United Kingdom (25), Iran (16 articles), Australia (12 articles), Brazil (12 articles), Germany (11 articles), Italy (9 articles) and France (8 articles). The lack of article production in Europe countries, Africa, and the Middle East indicates that there are gaps and scope for future research, which is emerging. As a result, future research on change agility is highly encouraged.

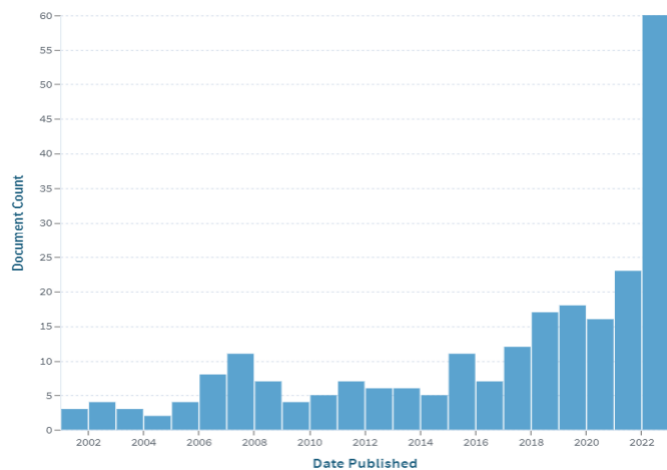


Figure 2: Publication during 2000-2023



Figure 3: Fields of Publication

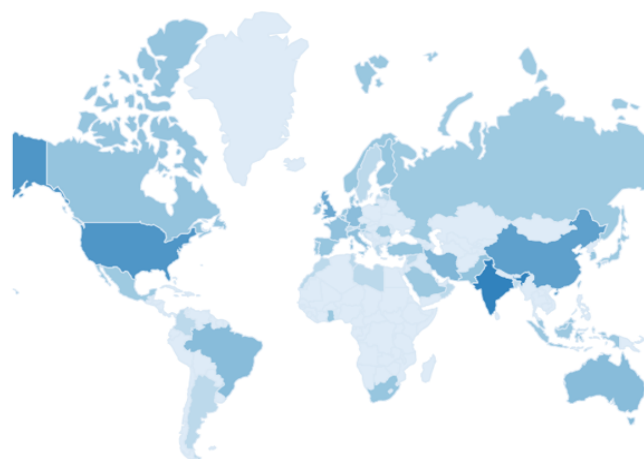


Figure 4: Country wise publication

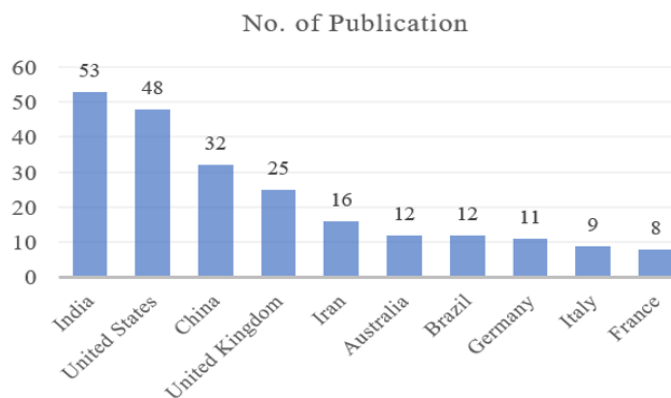


Figure 5: Top 10 Countries

V. IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS

This section highlights certain identified research gaps in the field of change agility. Change agility is the key to an organization's future success as an agile organization can adapt and react immediately to changes in markets, competitors, products, services, employees, customers, and other environmental factors. According to Sprogg (2021), in today's fast-paced business world, the ability to adapt to rapid changes in the market or customer demands is crucial. The capacity to react rapidly and adapt to the new environment is a key strength for any business. As per Brodess (2018), there is a lack of a mutual definition and a common approach to agility. Furthermore, the author highlights that many leaders have recognized the importance of agility but have yet to implement formal training programs in place to meet those demands. According to Walter (2021), the application of the agility term is blurred and inconsistent, which causes readers to become confused. Further, highlights the theoretical notion can contribute to effective implementation in practice and increase management's understanding of organizational agility, as well as providing a framework for organizational development. Managers who put the concept into action may have a more thorough understanding of the numerous aspects of agility. As this research paper gives a theoretical perspective to the existing body of knowledge on change agility, this study identified a few research gaps based on previous studies.

Gap 1: Knowledge Gap

There is no universally accepted definition of change agility. Numerous academics have provided various definitions of change agility based on their prospects. Considering the review of previous studies, the concept of change agility is not well-known or understood thoroughly by many people, scholars, and organizations. The concept is not completely investigated and it remains largely unexplored. Horney (2013) stated although there has been a study on change agility, studies are not consistent in their conceptualizations and tend to embrace rather narrow notions of dimensionality. Therefore, researchers revealed a knowledge gap in the previous studies concerning change agility and its dimensions. To provide a thorough understanding, the concept of change agility needs to be further investigated.

Gap 2: Empirical Gap

There are studies available on the effect of change agility on organizational performance (Alhadid, 2016; Palanisamy et al., 2022). However, past empirical studies less focus on finding the influence of change agility on organizational sustainability. Barroca et al. (2023) stated no studies have investigated how organizations sustain their agility despite the rising interest in agility literature. Therefore, it is appearing to be an empirical gap in the past studies. Some of these unexplored areas appear to be relevant and worthy of investigation for the growth and survival of the business. Furthermore, most of the previous research has been concentrated on qualitative studies concerning change agility in an organization. Very few empirical research studies have been carried out on change agility. There is a lack of studies that empirically investigate and establish the attributes of workforce agility (Asari et al., 2014).

Gap 3: Theoretical Gap

It has been noted that there are only a few theories that address change agility. Asari et al., (2014) adopted the Planned behavior theory (Ajzen, 1988, 1991) in their study on workforce agility. However, as per researchers' knowledge, there are fewer theoretical justifications for the relationship between change agility and organizational sustainability. Many change related theories such as Lewin, Kotter, The McKinsey 7-S, change, and ADKAR theories are used in change management studies. By integrating these theories into change agility, a comprehensive framework for understanding change agility will be provided. It shows that less theoretical argument for the effect of change agility on organizational sustainability in the Sri Lankan context, perhaps in the international context.

Gap 4: Contextual Gap

According to the review of prior studies, there is a contextual gap. Change agility appears to be significant and worthy of investigation in the context of Sri Lanka. There are research studies have been carried out on agility and related concepts internationally. Even though agility studies are available in an international context, there aren't many studies about agility in the Sri Lankan context. Based on Figures 5 & 6, there is evidence that absence of studies in the top 10 research publication list about change agility in Sri Lanka. Additionally, it confirms that despite research being done in the banking, software, and health sectors, none has been conducted on change agility in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka.

Gap 5: Practical-Knowledge Gap

Based on the review of previous studies, it has been recognized that less concentration on change agility. It has been observed that there are very few practical studies regarding how change agility impacts organizational sustainability. Ghosh &

Barman (2021) mentioned that to explore more creative and novel uses of agility in the context of long-term sustainable business in a chaotic environment, a more practical and applied approach is required. It is also identified that insufficient tests and a lack of practical implementation of the concept in real-world scenarios. Therefore, it can be said that there is a practical knowledge gap in understanding practical execution and sustainability in an organization. As per the referred database, no studies have been found that address the mediating role of change acceptance in the relationship between change agility and sustainability. There is no local or perhaps international research that argues for or tests the mediating role of change acceptance on the relationship between change agility and organizational sustainability. Therefore, it revealed that there is a practical knowledge gap in change agility.

VI. CONCLUSION

Due to the fast-moving and unpredictable business environment, it is necessary to think and act differently. Agility at the workplace is a fundamental requirement for survival rather than a competitive advantage (Daly, 2022). Change agility is a vital and emerging topic that is necessary for the sustainability of an organization. The main objective of the study was to identify significant gaps in the literature on change agility. Therefore, four research objectives were formulated for this theoretical paper. The study also briefs the transformation from change management to change agility, provides an overview of change agility, and identifies key studies of change agility. The researchers refer to several articles, reports, and documents to find the existing research gaps in change agility. Based on the study, the researchers have identified a few research gaps in change agility as knowledge, empirical, theoretical, contextual, and practical knowledge gaps. This study proposed a conceptual model based on the preceding models concerning change agility. Hence, this research paper may provide valuable implications and potential for future research. It also suggests that more in-depth and practical research on change agility and its attributes needs to be conducted by future researchers. In addition, it is necessary to organize activities and training programs on the awareness of change agility among employees, managers, and leaders. Therefore, an organization can maintain its competitiveness and long-term viability by embracing novel and creative principles like agility and sustainability. Thus, successful integration of change agility practices into business enables organizations to cope with more complex change.

VII. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

This study seeks to extend knowledge and understanding by addressing the gaps in change agility and related concepts. The researchers attempt to identify research gaps in change agility that future studies are required to fill those gaps. Researchers identified a few research gaps in the previous research studies and existing literature relating to change agility and organizational sustainability. Gap 1 can be considered as a knowledge gap, gap 2 can be categorized as an empirical gap, gap 3 as theoretical, gap 4 as contextual, and gap 5 as a practical knowledge gap. First, based on the review of the previous studies, there has been identified an apparent knowledge gap in the previous studies concerning change agility, related concepts, and its attributes. Those unexplored areas in the previous study are significant for further investigation. Second, the researcher identified an empirical gap which is the lack of rigorous research in the prior studies. Previous studies have mostly focused on change management. Very few research has been tested and verified on the agility to properly evaluate the problem. Third, researchers identified a clear theoretical gap in previous studies on change agility. Relevant theories need to be acknowledged in change agility. The previous theories tend to focus primarily on change management and organizational development. Therefore, an investigation into change agility and theoretical advancement is necessary. It has been identified there is a contextual gap. There have been very few studies on change agility in the Sri Lankan context, covering only a few segments and populations. The concept has not yet been explored in the hospitality, apparel, and automobile sectors as it has been under-researched. Lastly, it has been identified a practical knowledge gap in change agility. Therefore, it is needed to conduct more studies to fill the gaps that contribute to the existing body of knowledge of dynamics and consequences of the construct of change agility. Based on the previous study and literature, the below conceptual model has been proposed in Figure 6.

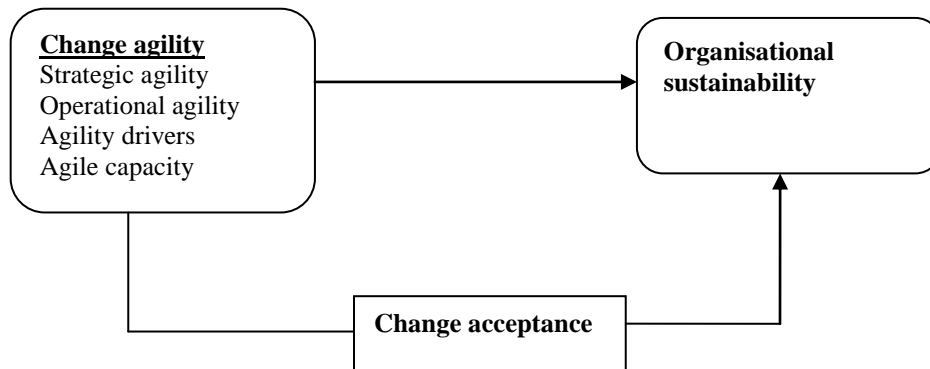


Figure 6: Proposed conceptual model
(Sources: Adapted from Castaneda et al., 2012; Zitkiene & Deksnys, 2018)

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