A case study investigating the effects of an Entrepreneurial Development Programme on the business sustainability of its beneficiaries' pre- and post-Covid-19

BY

Francesca Maria Lobetti
(1657254)

Supervisor:
Dr Robert Venter

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, **Francesca Maria Lobetti**, hereby declare that this research is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Business Science at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

I further declare that:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

SIGNED AT **Edenvale, South Africa** on this 28th Day of October 2022.

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Francesca Maria Lobetti

Abstract

Entrepreneurship in South Africa is complex and multi-faceted. This statement refers specifically to the operational aspects that are indicative of both economic growth and development. This case study investigated the impact of one hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme on the businesses of its beneficiaries in South Africa. The impact was examined across three primary themes, these being: economic success, employment generation capabilities and long-term business sustainability on the existing businesses of entrepreneurs who have successfully completed the programme. The value of this study was to determine if this particular entrepreneurial development programme has proved valuable to the beneficiaries in growing and sustaining their businesses and creating employment opportunities. As the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme provides the fundamental business operational knowledge to the beneficiaries, one aim of the study was to identify the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses of the beneficiaries and what measures were put in place to ensure that the businesses were resilient and survived.

To date and in the English literature, the impact of this programme had not been properly investigated. The study followed a mixed methods approach and research data was collected using both questionnaires and interviews. The study population consisted of 49 beneficiaries from the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme actively operating in different business sectors who had completed the programme between 2005 and 2018, allowing the 2018 beneficiaries to develop their businesses for a two-year period post completion of the programme. The questionnaire data was analyzed with measures of central tendency and presented with graphs and tables. Interview data was analyzed through content and thematic analysis and was also presented with the use graphs and tables. The information gathered in the interview process provided a degree of context to the questionnaire data, which also allowed for complementary analysis where conclusions were drawn between the two data types. The findings indicate that post completion of the programme, a majority of the businesses were on track to be sustainable with the possibility of business growth and expansion. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the same conclusions cannot be drawn. The entrepreneurial development programme will need to refocus their main goals and objectives to be more aligned with businesses in the post Covid-19 environment. The ramifications of the effects that the virus has had on the economy will continue to be present and businesses may need to adapt their operations to the new 'normal'. These changes are expanded upon in this study and recommendations for the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme are discussed.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Development Programme, Covid-19 pandemic, Entrepreneurship in South Africa, Long-term sustainability, Small business development

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Dedication

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the subject of the research will be introduced. The overview of the research, research problem, objectives, questions are provided. This chapter concerns itself with the hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme and the impact of this programme on the beneficiaries pre-and-post Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic is also introduced and discussed. The hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme is introduced and discussed.

1.2. Overview

This case study investigated the impact of one hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme on the businesses of its beneficiaries' in South Africa. This was investigated in terms of the programme's impact on the economic success, business sustainability and employment generation on the businesses of entrepreneurs who have successfully completed this programme. An important contributing factor that was investigated was the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the beneficiaries' businesses, their ability to be resilient when faced with adversity and the methods adopted to adapt and sustain their businesses. Investigating the beneficiaries' businesses pre-Covid-19 post completion of the programme compared to during the Covid-19 pandemic helped to understand the effects of the programme on their businesses and the measures adopted to ensure their businesses survived during the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of this programme had not been thoroughly investigated to date. The study population consisted of 49 beneficiaries actively operating in different business sectors who completed the programme between 2005 and 2018, allowing the 2018 beneficiaries to develop their businesses for a two-year period post completion of the course. The reason this study only includes beneficiaries who completed the programme in 2018 is to allow for business development for a two-year period. The beneficiaries that completed the programme in 2019 would not have had sufficient time to develop their businesses due to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Research data was collected using a mixed methods approach including surveys and interviews and the data will be analysed accordingly. Through triangulation, validity of inferences through questionnaire and interview data collection can be improved. The value of this study was to determine if this entrepreneurship development programme has proved valuable to the beneficiaries in growing and sustaining their businesses and creating employment. The value of this study also lies in understanding ability of the entrepreneurs in the development programme to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.3. Background of the study

Entrepreneurship in South Africa is a key to economic growth and development. The background of the study concerns itself with three major areas entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial development programmes and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The term entrepreneurship is complex to define since many academics understand and interpret it differently (Cassim, Soni & Karodia, 2014). In this study, the definitions of entrepreneurship are fundamentally similar. Entrepreneurship was defined by Shane and Venkataraman (2000, p. 218) as the "study of sources of opportunities, the process of discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them". Shane and Venkataraman's definition are similar to Venter and Urban's (2015) definition in which opportunities must be discovered, conceptualised and acted on. Entrepreneurship was defined by Venter and Urban (2015, p. 6) as "process of conceptualising, organising, launching and through innovation a business opportunity can be nurtured into a potentially high growth venture in a complex and unstable environment". A definition that has similar principles to that of the beneficiaries of the hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme is Neck and Murry's (2020) definition of entrepreneurship. Neck and Murry (2020) define entrepreneurship as "as a way of thinking, acting and being that combines the ability to find or create new opportunities with the courage to act on them" (Carey, Beitelspacher, Tosti-Kharas & Swanson, 2021 p. 172). The beneficiaries of the programme should be attentive to new opportunities in the market whilst ensuring that their ideas are conceptualised thoroughly and evaluated thoughtfully for the sustainability of their business. Venter and Urban's (2015) as well and Neck and Murry's (2020) definition remains apt in the South African context as entrepreneurs are confronted with several challenges in our emerging economy due to a lack of infrastructure, unskilled labour, and macroeconomic restraints (Botha, Nieman & Van Vuuren, 2007). Entrepreneurship is fundamental to the growth of the job market. Entrepreneurs, according to Neck and Murry (2020), Venter and Urban (2015) and Shane and Venkataraman (2000) using thinking, processing and organising thoughts and ideas and utilise these to create or identify new opportunities. Although these three definitions were written many years apart, the main theme of attentiveness to opportunity remains relevant especially for opportunities to be discovered and exploited on. Irrespective of the strategies and policies, namely the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP) and the Small Enterprise Development agency (SEDA) that the government has implemented, the importance of entrepreneurial programmes is still regarded as an underdeveloped research area in South Africa (Department of Trade and Industry, 2005). According to an article by Barnard (2022), based on research by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, South Africa has an ever-increasing business discontinuance rate, 6% in 2017 in comparison to 2.9% in 2005. This rate of business discontinuance coupled with high unemployment raises concern as investment into supplier and enterprise development is increasing, however the rate of entrepreneurial activity is decreasing (Barnard, 2022). Barnard (2022) also states that entrepreneurship programmes must have achievable goals for the entrepreneurs as this will be beneficial in transforming goals into actional points. The hotel group with the assistance of coaches and mentors aids the beneficiary with setting up a 5-year plan which is personalised to the beneficiary and their business (C. Tothill, personal communication, 18 February 2020). This 5-year plan prepared by the entrepreneurial development programme aligns with the viewpoint of Barnard (2022), in that growing and developing a business requires goals that transform into actional points. The goals and action points must coincide with the development of the entrepreneur's personal and business skills and knowledge (Barnard, 2022).

In South Africa, although entrepreneurship is not the definitive answer to high unemployment, it does help to bridge the gap between poverty and stagnant economic growth (Cassim et al., 2014). The small business sector in South Africa is not only an important contributor to economic growth and employment generation but also allows for the participation of previously disadvantaged groups in the economy and within local communities (Luiz, 2002). Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) state that Africa's, and more specifically South Africa's, economies are destitute which encourages entrepreneurs and small, medium and micro enterprises (SME's) to create their own means of employment, through self-employment. Entrepreneurs need to be resilient in these uncertain markets in which they operate as this resilience allows for positive adaption and personal growth when faced with adversity (Renko, Bullough & Saeed, 2016). According to Shepherd and Williams (2020), equilibrium in entrepreneurship occurs when the opportunities pursued by the entrepreneur allow for change to occur during adverse situation.

However, as many SME owners are first-time business owners, there is a lack of generational knowledge and support because business knowledge is not passed through generations. Chisala (2008) expresses that this is a means of boosting these financially disadvantaged economies. Entrepreneurial business and SME's stimulate both the economy and aid in employment generation (Ladzani & Van Vuuren, 2004; Prieger, Bampoky, Blanco & Liu, 2016). According to an article by the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF) (2019), entrepreneurs have the ability to tap into niche markets due to their business ideas, but entrepreneurs lack the ability to align their business idea with the required skills needed to be successful. This in turn impacts long-term business sustainability and employment generation (Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, 2019). Entrepreneurial development programmes are comprehensive programmes in which the individuals' knowledge, skills, abilities, and their business knowledge are developed (Kumar, 2017). Kumar's (2017) research is similar to the objectives of the National Small Enterprise Act and SEDA in which their main mission is to support organisations to become active entrepreneurs in all spheres of the economy.

South Africa has a number of entrepreneurial development programmes which provide entrepreneurial support. Some of the more prominent programmes include Allan Gray Orbis Fellowship Programme, SeedAcademy and The South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE). The Allan Gray Orbis Fellowship Programme focusses on nurturing and facilitating business success of their entrepreneurs (Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, 2019). SeedAcademy offers three main types of courses. Firstly, "Accelerate Her" is a programme designed for female entrepreneurs with the aim of providing a tailored programme which addresses the challenges that women in business in South Africa face. Secondly, "Grow", concentrates on young entrepreneurs and prepares them for their entrepreneurial career. Lastly, "Scale", supports entrepreneurs with benefits such as business recognition (SeedAcademy, 2019). The South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE) offers courses which are beneficial to entrepreneurs as entrepreneurial behaviour is encouraged, and the programme provides business literacy training. SAIE facilitates two courses for entrepreneurs which are 'Launching your business idea' and a leadership course both of which are SETA accredited (South African Institute for Entrepreneurship, 2020). A South Africa platform to assist entrepreneurs with the 'business' aspect of their businesses is the Fundaba platform on the First National Bank website. Fundaba was recently launched by First National Bank (FNB). It provides a business account with no bank charges and a platform for online learning which includes a number of templates, tools and learning materials (African News Agency Reporter, 2019). This platform allows for entrepreneurs to upskill themselves through the learning materials on the platform but also have access to a banking service with no charges.

The tourism and hospitality industry are key drivers for entrepreneurship in South Africa (Botha et al., 2007). As these two industries are important, entrepreneurship is crucial to enhance the success of these industries provided the social, economic and political conditions are aligned to serve as a motivation for success for the entrepreneur (Hollick & Braun, 2005). Tourism, in 2018, directly contributed R130,1 billion to the South African gross domestic production (GDP) which equates to about 3% towards to GDP (StatsSA, 2021). Therefore, the substantial size of these two industries is beneficial to entrepreneurs as it creates opportunities for business and generates economic and employment growth (Rusu & Lucian, 2015). The tremendous beauty seen across all provinces and the weak Rand make South Africa an attractive travel destination for both local and international travellers (Department of Trade and Industry, 2005).

The hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme has similar aims to the three other entrepreneurial development programmes considered above, and aims to mitigate the lack of knowledge, improve business ideas and address the skills shortages of the beneficiaries within their programme. This is achieved through the one-year development programme which is delivered together with business mentorship, leadership coaching, and various benefits such as networking opportunities required by enterprises to help them become sustainable (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). Entrepreneurial programmes aim to enhance an individual's attributes through mentoring and coaching and simultaneously teaching business-skills and sustainability practices (R. Nadasen, personal communication, 18 February 2020)[1]. The sole purpose of this hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme is to develop small or emerging enterprises to help them become sustainable (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). According to (Bose & Mahajan, 2018), sustainability can be defined as the process of managing an organisation while taking its economic, social and environmental impact into account. Mollenkamp (2022) refers to sustainability as the capacity to consistently support or maintain a process. Sustainable development refers to an organisation's ability to meet the needs of the organisation today without undermining the potential for future generations to have the same ability to meet their needs (Foley, Bogue and Onakuse, 2016). Although Foley et al. (2016) definition is more aligned with intergenerational equity and therefore environmental sustainability, the fundamentals of the definition remain apt for this study when combined with the definition from Bose and Mahajan (2018) and Mollenkamp (2022). In this study, sustainability refers to the ability the beneficiary has to grow and sustain their business in terms of turnover and profitability (economic growth) and employment generation capabilities. Sustainability for the businesses of the beneficiaries within the hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme is an important objective according to Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021). The value of this entrepreneurial development programme is to identify whether economic growth, employment generation and business sustainability was achieved once the beneficiaries' completed the programme. Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause (1995), explain that achieving substantiable development is a process in which development must be inclusive, equal and protected manner to ensure that the organisation is sustainable for the future.

Another factor considered in this study are demographics. Demographics with regard to business success are multifaceted as the demographic structure in terms of age, gender and race within a country is responsible for the formation of human capital (Doubell, & Struwig, 2014; Laing et al., 2018).

[1] R. Nadasen and C. Tothill are two individuals from the hotel's entrepreneurial development programme that play a significant role in the study in terms of their direct relationship with the programme and the beneficiaries both at an organisational and mentorship level.

Demographics in this study relates to age, gender, geographic location, access to networking and the level of education. This will be measured against profitability to explore whether or not there is a link between profitability and demographics. Geographic location, access to networking, the level of education of the beneficiary and the economic sector of their business will be investigated in detail during the data collection process. The geographic location can be viewed as an investment because can it serve as a strategic purpose. As the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme has beneficiaries in their programme from around South Africa, understanding the impact that geographic location has on their businesses is beneficial. According to Maecki (2018), the entrepreneurial ecosystem is similar to any organisation's internal and external environment and includes all levels of the entrepreneur's network. The hotel group provides the beneficiaries with access to their networks which contributes to their businesses being given access to networking opportunities.

An entrepreneur's level of motivation is determined by their need for achievement which includes individual attributes such as creativity, innovation, knowledge, skills and abilities (Ladzani & van Vuuren, 2002). The entrepreneur must be resilient in the face of adversity and have their own mechanisms to cope with unforeseen circumstances (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten et al., 2014). Motivation and preparedness of an entrepreneur allows for the entrepreneur to use the unforeseen environment as an opportunity to grow and adapt their business (Southwick et a., 2014). A study by Fatmawinarti, Sukmawati and Abubakar (2019) states that business sustainability can be created by constant improvement in turnover in relation to the number of people employed which can result in growth in productivity. In this study, a sustained improvement in turnover and sustained improvement in number of people employed will be used as indicators of improved productivity. Improved profitability will also be measured.

The start of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in entrepreneurs and businesses around the world being faced with increased adversity and uncertainty (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). Price (2022) states that being an entrepreneur in South Africa is tough. Activity in early-stage entrepreneurial businesses rose from 2019 to 2021, pre-Covid-19 the early-stage entrepreneurial business activity was 10,8% and in 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was 17.5% (Price, 2022). This shows a growth in entrepreneurial activity during the Covid-19 pandemic. GEM author, Bowmaker-Falconer, said "given the generally high failure rate of start-ups, the overall positive entrepreneurial activity in 2021 is to be welcomed" (Price, 2022, p.2). Price (2022) states that as the South African economy recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, there are positive signs of business activity amongst entrepreneurs as well as an increase in businesses surviving further than the start-up stage. The hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme aims to support their beneficiaries to develop their businesses holistically in order to achieve economic success, employment growth and ultimately long-term sustainability (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). This study aims to understand how the beneficiaries of the entrepreneurial development programme used their ability to adapt and sustain their business during the Covid-19 pandemic. Another aim of this study is to determine the impact of the pandemic on economic success, sustainability and employment generation of their businesses. This study also aims to understand the coping mechanisms of these beneficiaries and hence the ability to adapt when faced with adversity. Understanding the beneficiaries' coping mechanisms and their adaptability to adversity will be important in determining how successful the measures implemented for business survival are.

This research project aims to understand the impact of one hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme in South Africa in terms of economic success, sustainability and employment generation across a varied range of South African industries pre-and-post the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.4. Research Context

The entrepreneurial development programme has been existence since 2005 yet the impact of this programme had not been thoroughly investigated to date. This entrepreneurial development programme is believed to have been beneficial in not only the tourism industry but among other small enterprises in the country (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). The importance of the entrepreneurial development programme is to heed the call from government for socio-economic development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and to encourage the entry of black entrepreneurs into the South African economic sphere (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021; Werksmans Attorneys, 2018). Given this, it is necessary to reflect on the broader context for empowerment in South Africa through a consideration of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment.

Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) was a growth strategy created by the Department of Trade and Industry in South Africa to ensure that the South African economy is restructured through equality and employment strategies which encourage significant involvement of black people, women and individuals in rural or underdeveloped populations into the mainstream economy which will have a positive effect on economic and employment growth (Department of Trade and Industry, 2007). The B-BBEE Act 53 of 2003 is considered imperative in economic empowerment of previously disadvantaged South Africans (Werksmans Attorneys, 2018). According to Werksmans Attorneys (2018), B-BBEE's main purpose is to include previously disadvantaged individuals into the economy with the aim of empowerment.

One of the critical objectives of the entrepreneurial development programme is to empower emerging entrepreneurs to have equal access to economic support. The B-BBEE scorecard can be utilized as a guideline for businesses to ascertain their inclusion of previously disadvantaged individuals and determine their empowerment of these individuals (Werksmans Attorneys, 2018). The higher the number of points the business has on their scorecard, the more compliant the business is (Werksmans Attorneys, 2018). The programme is mutually beneficial to both the beneficiaries' and the hotel group in terms of B-BBEE rating. The hotel group empowers black-owned enterprises and the target weighting score for enterprise and supplier development is 40 points of a total score of 111 points which contributes the hotel group's B-BBEE scorecard.This high target encourages the building of South African business in critical sectors (Werksmans Attorneys, 2018).The beneficiaries of the programme are required to be 51% black-owned in order to enrol in the programme (C. Tothill, personal communication, 23 October 2020). By doing this, the South African hotel group is able to maintain its high B-BBEE status. The hotel group supports SME's and the idea is that the SME's support other SME's thus resulting in a continuous cycle of economic support. The hotel group actively supports procurement from black-owned qualifying small enterprises and emerging small enterprises who automatically have a level 4 and 5 B-BBEE rating which promotes the used of black-owned service provider (C. Tothill, personal communication, 23 October 2020; Krüger, 2011).

This study particularly focussed on the response of entrepreneurs to the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of their resilience, coping mechanism and ultimately the impact of the adverse pandemic on their business model in terms of turnover, profitability and employment generation. The background to the case study will be discussed in the next section. As the Covid-19 pandemic was unexpected, understanding the factors which allowed for the entrepreneurs to pivot their business model in order to survive will be critical in the South African research field as this has not been investigated comprehensively to date. The case study background, discussed below, expands on the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to the hotel group, its programme and its beneficiaries.

1.5. Case Study Background

The entrepreneurial development programme proposed as the case study in this research is a good example of how a large organisation can act as a potentially powerful catalyst for entrepreneurs. The programme was first developed in 2005. The main aim of this programme is to develop small businesses through transformation, employment generation and improved business sustainability (C. Tothill, personal communication, 18 February 2020). There are two individuals from the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme are significant in this study in terms of their direct relationship to the programme as well as understanding the beneficiaries from the entrepreneurial development programme. The entrepreneurial development programme's main focus is on enterprise and entrepreneur development rather than a one-dimensional approach of entrepreneurial training. In 2005 this programme began looking at the development of guesthouses in villages and townships, but as the programme grew, other business sectors were included through a comprehensive one-year development programme. Although all business sectors were included in the one-year programme, the main industries that are still represented are the hospitality industry and the contract cleaning sector (C. Tothill, personal communication, 18 February 2020). The hotel group recognised the need for entrepreneurial education, especially for already established entrepreneurs, which resonates with Ndedi's (2009) analysis of entrepreneurial education. To ensure the success of entrepreneurial education and to help the entrepreneur obtain the necessary skills business incubators, practical exposure and common-sense approaches, need to be established to enhance the skills applicable to business growth and success (Isaacs, Visser, Freidrich & Brijlal, 2007; Ndedi, 2009).

According to Tothill (personal communication, 18 February 2020), maintaining the B-BBEE level of the hotel group is imperative and as such, the entrepreneurs who apply for the programme are required to complete a form as B-BBEE Codes of Good Practice guidelines and provide an affidavit. This affidavit determines which category in which the entrepreneurs' businesses fall, exempt micro enterprises or qualifying small enterprises. An exempt micro enterprise is a business with an annual turnover of less than R10 million whereas a qualifying small enterprise has an annual turnover between R10 million and R50 million. Businesses within the tourism industry have lower annual turnover contributions due to the nature of their business. As the entrepreneurs must have a business with over 51% black ownership to enrol, this aids the hotel group in maintaining the B-BBEE status.

The entrepreneurial development programme has a holistic approach as each entrepreneur is unique and in essence their business is an extension of the entrepreneur. The programme should be structured based on a standard system or method but also tailored to the needs of each beneficiary (Welter, Baker, Audretsch & Gartner, 2017; C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020).

The beneficiaries accepted for the programme undergo a rigid selection process as each phase of the selection process is interlinked and structured to provide the beneficiary with the best possible chance of success. (C. Tothill, personal communication, 18 February 2020). The first phase of the selection process examines the entirety of the business in terms of the product or service offered, the length of time in existence and if it is an owner-managed business. An owner-managed business is key as both the business and entrepreneur can be developed (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). The second phase of selection involves a thorough evaluation of the entrepreneur, with the assistance of the *predictive personality index psychometric test* developed by Harris, Tracy and Fisher (2014). The *predictive personality test* measures an individual in terms of dominance, extroversion, patience and formality as well as their decision-making ability and their response level (Harris et al., 2014). This resonates with Isaacs et al., (2007) analysis of the three main dimensions which an entrepreneur is dependent on, namely innovativeness, risk-taking and pro-activeness. The beneficiary is then asked to choose between two adjectives per line, stating which one they felt suited them best (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). If the beneficiary's personality aligned with the pre-determined 'ideal entrepreneur', the final phase of selection would commence. The beneficiary's financials would be examined to identify if the business has the potential to make a profit. This would be determined through their financial records which aids in plotting the trends in the business (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). Once the beneficiary is accepted, they are inducted into the programme and are each introduced to their three coaches - a business coach, a financial mentor and a leadership coach.

The coaches guide the entrepreneur in compiling their year roadmap and their five-year plan (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). The coaches, who are experienced and knowledgeable in the industry, mentor the entrepreneur in the development of their full business potential and the expansion of their mindset (Haynie, Shepherd, Mosakowski & Earley, 2008). Their mindset is developed through short courses, group and enterprise development training sessions which essentially enables them to recognise that the environment in which they trade and operate is dynamic and volatile (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020; Urban et al., 2011). The beneficiaries complete a small business management course at the University of Cape Town as well as a basic accounting course and marketing and social media marketing course. These provide a knowledge base for the beneficiary. The business coach facilitates human resource planning (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). With the assistance of the knowledge learnt from the University of Cape Town's small business management course, the beneficiaries are empowered to grow their business (R. Nadasen, personal communication, 2 June 2020). The hotel group has identified the importance of financial literacy among its entrepreneurs, and this is the reason for each entrepreneur to be assigned their own financial mentor (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). As many of the beneficiaries are not in a position to invest in their business during the programme, with the guidance of the financial mentor the beneficiary is encouraged to invest in the business within the subsequent five years and continue to invest after the five-year period is complete (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020).

Entrepreneurial activity does not exist in isolation but is rooted in the business networks and the internal and external environment of the business (Chan, Bhargava & Street, 2006). The beneficiaries are coached and mentored by business experts at the hotel group as well as being peer-mentored by alumni of the course during the group-coaching sessions. This is beneficial to them because they receive mentoring from a past beneficiary who has had experience in the business field (R. Nadasen, personal communication, 2 June 2020). Entrepreneurs operating in the tourism or hospitality industry, partake in practical training where they spend about a week at one of the group's hotels rotating through each department learning and assimilating the different roles, functions and procedures within a hotel (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). With the assistance of their financial mentor, each entrepreneur recognises where their business can improve with the manufacturing or packaging of their product and learns the reasons as to why they are not turning a profit within their first few years of operation (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). The beneficiary, with the assistance of his/her three business coaches, formulates a five-year business plan in which the goals for the upcoming years are established. Callaghan and Venter (2011) state that the entrepreneur's knowledge is influenced by four main factors, namely, the needs of the entrepreneur, the inputs from the external environment, the reinforcement and the measurement of knowledge as well as the interaction with people in the organisation. These inputs inspire to shape the entrepreneurial environment (Harris et al., 2014). This programme currently (June 2020) supports 162 emerging enterprises. At the end of the one-year programme, there is an annual conference and award ceremony which recognises the most outstanding entrepreneurial performer for the year and the top academic achiever in the programme (C. Tothill, personal communication, 18 February 2020). This award is a platform for the entrepreneur to promote their business and serve as a role model to other emerging businesses in South Africa.

The entrepreneurial development programme provides business development and coaching whilst attempting to transfer knowledge and skills to their beneficiaries. However, this hotel group is unique in the way that it provides beneficiary support. The beneficiary, in order to maintain the relationship with the hotel group, must renew their annual membership as this enables the group to remain committed to their promise of a long-term business relationship (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). The hotel group also supports their beneficiaries' businesses with public relations and business management software to assist with marketing and brand recognition. The beneficiaries are granted access to the group's markets and networks which contributes to the beneficiaries' businesses by being given access to networking opportunities.

As each entrepreneur's business is personal to the entrepreneurial development team at the hotel group, the team live by the philosophy "a hand-up is better than a hand-out" (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). The YouTube videos on their YouTube channel is testament to this. "This Legacy Series is a mini documentary series which aims to uncover and showcase everyday heroes within the South African entrepreneurial landscape" (C. Tothill, personal communication, 15 December 2021). Season two aims to document the stories of the entrepreneurs and reflect on their lives and their stories (C. Tothill, personal communication, 15 December 2021). This series aids in networking and business opportunities as well as improved brand recognition.

The sole focus of the relationship between the group and the beneficiary is purely on business and entrepreneur development, rather than financial investment into the business in terms of grants or joint ventures (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). This differentiates the group from other companies that offer entrepreneurial development programmes.

The Covid-19 pandemic altered the structure of the programme because mentorship and support were conducted remotely over social media platforms and the entrepreneurs were not afforded the opportunity of the hands-on support as they were the previous years (C. Tothill, personal communication, 19 February 2021). The 2020 programme was suspended due to the uncertainty of the year ahead and during the period of 2020 and 2021, many businesses did not survive and sadly, a few beneficiaries of the programme lost their lives to the virus (C. Tothill, personal communication, 19 February 2021). Throughout 2020 and 2021, the hotel group still provided support over social media platforms such as WhatsApp and through the Legacy Series. This Legacy Series especially provided networking opportunities to these beneficiaries during the Covid-19 pandemic. The beneficiaries were added to a supplier directory club which allowed for other large organisations to engage with the beneficiaries for their services (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). These three measures were the only measures that the hotel group was able to provide to the beneficiaries throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Intra-networking between the beneficiaries was encouraged and this resulted in partnerships forming between different businesses (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). The Entrepreneurial Development programme is still temporarily suspended (February 2022) and will only recommence once the hotel group's business begins to stabilise again. The hotel group aims to improve their programme for the future beneficiaries of the programme and will be utilising some of the findings from this study as well as incorporating more technology such as digital directories and telephone applications (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021).

1.6. Research Problem

This research project aims to evaluate the impact of a particular entrepreneurial development programme in South Africa and how it benefits the beneficiary in terms of economic success, employment generation and ultimately long-term sustainability of the business of the beneficiary.

Despite an extensive search of the literature, very little South African research has been found that comprehensively measures the effectiveness and impact of entrepreneurial development programmes. Studies have for instance focussed on entrepreneurial training programmes. For instance, Ladzani and Van Vuuren (2004), concluded that in order for entrepreneurship to become more established in South Africa, entrepreneurial training programmes must be in-depth and comprehensive to ensure that the entrepreneur's businesses are successful. Although Gwija, Eresia-Eke and Iwu (2014) discuss entrepreneurial education as a factor for business success, their study mainly focussed on the knowledge and skills the entrepreneur had to learn to better equip them in their business. However, entrepreneurial training programmes on their own fall short of the fullness of support offered by entrepreneurial development programmes (which, as suggested under the description of the case study, include other aspects such as business development, coaching and the like). Moreover, as the Covid-19 pandemic was still having a significant economic impact throughout this study, very little had been documented relating to the effect of the pandemic on entrepreneurs in terms of turnover, profitability and employment generation capabilities.

Research from the University of Witwatersrand Library, Google Scholar, Research Gate and JSTOR provided important information pertaining to economic activities surrounding entrepreneurs, long-term sustainability of businesses in general and employment development capabilities of entrepreneurs. Research in the South African context was not conclusive for this study. Although this information proved to be important for the foundation of the study, details into how entrepreneurial development programmes influence these factors is not evident. and the variables pertaining to this study. Research into measures of adaptability during the Covid-19 pandemic on small businesses was not thorough at the time of this study and as such conclusions can be drawn from the impact other disasters have had on small businesses with the intention of a cross-over between measures that are implemented during a crises.

Understanding whether the hotel group had a positive impact on the programme beneficiaries' economic growth and employment generation is an important factor to understand in light of the lack of evidence and research surrounding entrepreneurial development programme. These two factors have not been investigated by the hotel group to date. Economic growth in this study will be determined by a growth in both turnover and profitability. A growth in employment generation will be determined by an increase in number of people employed in the business. Long-term sustainability of the beneficiaries' businesses has not been investigated to date. A study by Fatmawinarti, Sukmawati and Abubakar (2019) states that business sustainability can be created by constant improvement in turnover in relation to the number of people employed which can result in growth in productivity. Understanding the beneficiary's business long-term sustainability is pertinent for both the hotel group as this has not been investigated to date.

Demographics are also an important factor to consider as the impact has not been investigated in terms of the hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme. Age, gender and the level of education of the beneficiary has not been researched in terms of the impact on profitability on their businesses. Geographic location and access to networking are an additional two demographic factors that have not been investigated to date. The hotel group provides the beneficiaries with access to their networks. These two factors are important to investigate to determine whether geographic location and access to networking has an impact on the profitability of the beneficiaries. Research regarding the impact of demographics on profitability is not evident especially in relation to the entrepreneurial development programmes.

There are moreover a limited number of detailed research studies addressing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the coping mechanism of entrepreneurs, their response to crisis and the overall impact of the pandemic on their businesses, especially in South Africa. Due to the lack of research that proved to be relevant at the time of research (2020/2021) relating to during and post pandemic environment there are few comparisons that can been drawn to existing knowledge. This is as a result of the uniquity of this pandemic. Investigating the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the beneficiaries of the programme will contribute to that body of knowledge. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the entrepreneurs' businesses in terms of economic success, sustainability and employment generation to determine the effects of the pandemic on their businesses and their ability to adapt and sustain their businesses accordingly post the initial crisis of the pandemic will be investigated.

The research problem will address through the evaluation into whether persons who had successfully completed the entrepreneurial development programme between 2005 and 2018 experienced an improvement in turnover, profitability, growth in employment in their businesses which will indicate improved long-term sustainability of their business pre-Covid-19 pandemic. This study further investigates whether the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in entrepreneurs having to pivot their business models to become more resilient when faced with adversity.

1.7. Research Questions and objectives

A mixed methods approach was adopted in this study to investigate the following research questions and objectives which have resulted from the research problem described in section 1.6.

1.7.1. Research questions

1. Economic Growth:
   a) Has the turnover and profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses shown sustained growth in the period of at least two years after completing the programme and has there been a recovery in the growth post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. Employment Generation:
   a) Has the number of people employed by the beneficiaries' businesses shown sustained growth in the period of at least two years after completing the programme and has there been a recovery post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?
   b) What proportion of the businesses of the beneficiaries showed recovery in employment numbers to pre-Covid-19 levels?
3. Measures of adaptability and resilience:
   a) How many of the beneficiaries and their businesses successfully adapted to the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic in order to be able to sustain the profitability of their businesses?
   b) What measures did the beneficiaries take to try and sustain their businesses through the pandemic?
4. Sustainability:
   a) Did a majority of the beneficiaries' businesses achieve long-term sustainability, thereby indicating overall success of the entrepreneurial development programme?
5. Demographics:
   a) Have demographics had a measurable impact of the profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses who completed the programme and post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?

1.7.2. Research Objectives

1. Economic growth:

a) To obtain an insight into the turnover and profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses subsequent to the completion of the programme and identify if there has been a recovery in economic growth post the crisis of the pandemic.

2. Employment generation:
   a) To determine to what effect, the beneficiaries have contributed to employment generation in South Africa once completing the programme and during the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.
   b) To evaluate how many of the businesses of the beneficiaries showed recovery in employment numbers to pre-Covid-19 levels.
3. Measures of adaptability and resilience:
   a) To determine whether response to the crisis of the current pandemic has resulted in the beneficiaries successfully adapting their business practices in order to sustain business profitability.
   b) To determine what measures were put in place by the entrepreneurs to try and sustain their businesses during the initial crisis of the pandemic.
4. Long-term sustainability:
   a) To evaluate if the entrepreneurial development programme can be deemed to have been successful in achieving its objectives in terms of promoting long-term sustainability of the beneficiaries' businesses pre-Covid-19 and post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. Demographics:
   a) To determine if relevant demographics have a measurable impact on the profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses who completed the programme and post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.8. Key definitions relative to the research questions

1. **Economic growth:** Economic success and enterprise development will be measured by a growth in turnover and a growth in profitability.
2. **Employment generation:** This was measured by identifying if employment generation increased two years post completion of the programme and if this increase was sustained or recovered post the initial crisis of Covid-19.
3. **Demographics:** The research looked at the impact of demographics in terms of age, gender, geographic location, access to networks and level of education against the profitability of the business subsequent to the beneficiaries having completed the course and identify how these demographics aided the beneficiaries in sustaining their businesses profitability during the initial crisis of Covid-19.
4. **Long-term sustainability:** Maintaining or increasing turnover, profitability, and employment numbers will indicate long-term business sustainability.
5. **Covid-19:** This was studied to identify what measures the beneficiaries put in places to try and sustain their business throughout the crisis and how this impacted the overall long-term sustainability of their business.

1.9. Outline of dissertation

This study is divided into five chapters:

Chapter one aims to set the tone of the study and includes the introductory chapter and provides a general overview of the context, problems, the case study background, research questions and research objectives.

Chapter two delves into the conceptual framework which set the thinking for literature and theoretical framework. The literature review unpacks five main areas of research namely:

- Entrepreneurial development programmes and current programmes in South Africa
- Economic growth of small entrepreneurial businesses in South Africa
- Resilience of small entrepreneurial businesses to internal and external events
- Demographics relevant to the beneficiaries in the Entrepreneurial Development Programme
- Long-term sustainability of the businesses of the beneficiaries

Chapter three addresses the research methodology in this research. This includes the research paradigm, research design and sampling approaches.

Chapter four outlines the presentation, analysis and discussion of the results from the questionnaire and interview data. In this chapter, the research methodology is reviewed and the main themes of the study are developed, expanded and concluded on.

Chapter five draws findings and conclusions from the case study. This includes conclusions surrounding the literature and results, the research contribution and recommendations for the hotel group and future research.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical Overview and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This literature review addresses the current knowledge of entrepreneurship in South Africa in relation to the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses of entrepreneurs. The theoretical overview explores three main theories, human capital theory, opportunity-based entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship under crisis. These themes set the tone for the review of the literature. The literature review was investigated in terms of current entrepreneurial development programmes in South Africa, economic growth of small entrepreneurial businesses, resilience and long-term sustainability of small entrepreneurial businesses and lastly, demographics relevant to the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme were explored. A conceptual framework was also proposed and discussed in relation to the entrepreneurial development programme and the literature researched.

2.2. Theoretical Overview

The theoretical overview will address three main theories; human capital theory, opportunity-based entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship under crisis. These three theories are relevant to this study in terms of the underlying fundamental principles of the each. The underlying fundamental principle for human capital theory is the experiences and knowledge of the entrepreneur. Opportunity-based theory is based on the opportunities that the entrepreneur is exposed to and can exploit. Lastly, entrepreneurship under crisis relates to the measures put in place by the entrepreneur to survive. These theories will be explored and discussed below.

2.2.1. Human Capital entrepreneurial theory

Human capital entrepreneurship as a theory according to Adom & Asara-Yeboa, (2016) is closely linked to the experiences a of the individual entrepreneur which influences their productivity. Fairle and Robb (2008) explain that human capital theory in entrepreneurship is directly related to the entrepreneurs education, knowledge, skills and abilities. Another article by Ployhart and Moliterno (2011) believe that education, experience and business skills are key factors for success. According to Adom and Asara-Yeboa (2016), an entrepreneur that is highly educated married with work experience and entrepreneur training programmes will be more successful and sustainable than an entrepreneur that does not have these. Entrepreneurial education is a critical factor in the development of an entrepreneur. Although many entrepreneurs in South Africa do not have formal education, their knowledge, skills and abilities too can contribute to their human capital. Entrepreneurial development programmes aim to develop the entrepreneurs knowledge, skills and abilities but few provide formal educational courses for their entrepreneurs to attend (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). The theory of human capital has a direct link to Foley et al's (2016) capital model as well links the theory of opportunity-based entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship under crisis because among other characteristics, knowledge, experiences and skills are required for opportunity exploitation and the growth of business, especially during a time of crisis.

2.2.2. Opportunity-based entrepreneurial theory

Schumpeter, Drucker and Stevenson (Simpeh, 2011) proposed opportunity-based entrepreneurial theory as the way the entrepreneur explores techniques and systems which need to be changed and the methods which are uncovered to respond and fully utilize the presented opportunity. Schumpeter defines the entrepreneur as an individual who identifies the need to invent new products and services or revolutionise already existing inventions (Bula, 2012). By revolutionising existing inventions, new methods for production and supply-chain can be applied (Bula, 2012). “The entrepreneur is considered to be an innovator who 'shocks' and disturbs the economic equilibrium during times of uncertainty, change, and technological upheaval” Schumpeter (1934) (p. 3). According to a Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) article, 75% of initial-stage entrepreneurs in South Africa are opportunity-driven entrepreneurs as opposed to other African countries who start necessity-driven businesses (Herrington, Kew & Kew, 2010). An opportunity can be identified as the risk an individual is willing to take to fill a niche within the market with the use of an ingenious product or service which could result in a high reward (Ardichivil, Cardozo & Ray, 2003). The relevance of this theory is such that the beneficiaries identified the need to revolutionise existing products and services in the market through improved production and supply chain.

There are three aspects which are important to opportunity-based entrepreneurial theory (Murphy & Marvel, 2008). Firstly, episodic knowledge is knowledge which is sporadic and unpredictable. Episodic knowledge and the entrepreneur are linked because, like the sporadic nature of knowledge, the entrepreneur cannot be categorised into already established laws and norms but rather, adapt the already existing laws and norms in business (Venkataraman, 1997). Secondly, knowledge production proves difficult among entrepreneurs. Freeman (1982) and Von Hippel (1986), explain that knowledge can translate unpredictably in everyday life from conversations with colleagues and partners to purposeful business actions. Thirdly, opportunities are difficult to theorise because entrepreneurial opportunities vary and diverge in each case which proves difficult to researchers as each entrepreneur and business is fundamentally similar and different (Murphy & Marvel, 2008). The entrepreneur’s attentiveness also plays a critical role in the identification of new opportunities because their alertness to the market and the interacting business environments such as politics, social and economic may aid in addressing the gaps within the market (Ardichivili et al., 2003; Giotopoulos, Kontolaimou & Tsakanikas, 2017; Kirzner, 1973). Kirzner (1997) explains that entrepreneurs are more attentive to possible opportunities when they are able to recognise the opportunity in terms of realising the market need, spotting a link between a specialised resource and market need and lastly, inventing a product or service. Through prior knowledge, knowledge production and opportunities in the market, coupled with the entrepreneur’s attentiveness; new opportunities in the market are able to be leveraged on and exploited.

These knowledges are imperative for the beneficiaries of the programme due to the programme providing the relevant knowledge through courses which provides a platform for the beneficiaries to realise the market need and creating the crucial link between a market need and a product and/or service strategy and execution. According to Koellinger (2008), the entrepreneur’s level of education is important during a time of crisis as education assists in the development of abstract thinking and problem-solving capabilities. Former knowledge is divided into two parts, explicit and implicit. Explicit knowledge is knowledge which is learnt by reading and researching. Implicit knowledge the knowledge which is accrued over time through the application of explicit knowledge (Shane, 2000). Former knowledge assists the entrepreneur in opportunity discovery because the recognition of the opportunity will elicit a response to its value (Shane, 2000). According to De Koning and Muzyka (1999), the entrepreneur's access to networks is crucial to the success of their business because their network influences their opportunity. The first network to be considered, is the entrepreneur's inner circle as this is where their candid and secure relationships are housed. Partnerships are the relationships formed with the people who are most involved with the entrepreneur from the start of their business. The last network to consider, which is a weakness in South Africa, is the distant interactions. These are the individuals or organisations who may be of assistance to the entrepreneur in terms of opportunity formulation or just general assistance if necessary (De Koning & Muzyka, 1999).

The beneficiaries of the programme are provided with networking opportunities as discussed by De Koning and Muzyka (1999). The beneficiaries are encouraged to look to their inner networking circle by better developing these networks and by strengthening relationships and improving communication. The second network as proposed by De Koning and Muzyka (1999) is partnerships, the hotel group provides these networks to the beneficiaries' during the programme and post completion of the programme to allow for the beneficiaries' additional access to opportunities. These networking opportunities aim to develop the distant interactions network as proposed by De Koning and Muzyka (1999) for the beneficiary. These distant networks are beneficial for further growth and development of the beneficiaries' business post completion of the programme.

Opportunity-based entrepreneurship is a valuable theory in this study because it encompasses different knowledges and education for the exploitation of opportunities while simultaneously revolutionising existing products and services. Networking is another factor critical to opportunity-based entrepreneurship because networking influences opportunity.

2.2.3. Entrepreneurship under crisis

According to Doern, Williams and Vorley (2019, p. 401), a crisis can be defined as "an extreme, unexpected or unpredictable event that requires an urgent response from organizations and creates challenges for them – by interfering with its operations, creating ambiguity in its decision-making processes, threatening its goals and values, damaging its public image and bottom line". During times of crisis, entrepreneurs must be aware of the different changes in the business environment which will expose gaps in the market (Giotopoulos et al., 2017). These exposed gaps will allow for the entrepreneur to identify new opportunities in the market which is as a result of the strategic redesign and transformation of business models during the initial crisis (Giotopoulos et al., 2017). The Covid-19 pandemic is one such crisis as defined by Doern et al. (2019). The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in urgent responses from governments and organisations around the world to deal with the multifaceted issues caused by the pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted all the businesses of the beneficiaries within the entrepreneurial development programme as operations, decision-making processes and the bottom line were damaged. This crisis, however, exposed gaps in the market as stated by Giotopoulos et al. (2017) for the beneficiaries of the entrepreneurial development programme and their businesses. These gaps allowed for opportunities to be exploited and leveraged off of. Disruptions in the market result in entrepreneurs having to pivot their business models and products and services as a means of survival

(Ketchen Jr & Craighead, 2020). To ensure effective crisis management the entrepreneur must be resilient as this will allow for the business to survive and continue during the disruption (Doern et al., 2019).

Shane (2009) explained that during a crisis, typical entrepreneurial ventures will not result in growth opportunities and employment generation. There are five key drivers of opportunities namely, attentiveness of the entrepreneur, former knowledge, social network, entrepreneur's personality, and the type of opportunity. For the purpose of this research, entrepreneur attentiveness, former knowledge and access to networking are relevant (Ardichivil et al., 2003). The entrepreneur's attentiveness, former knowledge and access to networking as stated by Ardichivil et al. (2003), are important drivers in the hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme. The entrepreneur's attentiveness and former knowledge are utilised in conjunction with external courses that the hotel group grants the beneficiaries' access to. This knowledge is utilised to further improve their businesses and with the assistance of coaches and mentors, the beneficiaries are provided the best possible opportunity to growth and sustain their business. Access to hotel groups networks allows for the beneficiaries of the programme to further expand and develop their own personal networks. These three factors are all important during stable business conditions but are more important during times of crisis as explained by Shane (2009). Shane (2009) statement is relevant to this study as it forms the basis of identifying the opportunities created by the beneficiaries throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to try and sustain their businesses. Although growth in employment numbers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Shane (2009), statement is important to investigate to determine whether, if there was at least growth in employment numbers to pre-Covid-19 levels.

An entrepreneur who has characteristics of resilience has the ability to leverage off opportunities based on available resources (Doern et al., 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many entrepreneurs redesigning their business models due to changes in the market and the demand of products and services. Although some entrepreneurs were able to use opportunity-based theory during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, other entrepreneurs would have had to utilize pivots in the business model to ensure the overall survival of the business (Ratten, 2020a). According to Brünjes and Revilla-Diez (2013), aside from the negative consequences which arise from crises and disruptions, these events can spur the development of new opportunities in the market (Doern et al., 2019).

In summary, disruptions manifest themselves in the marketplace through crises of varying degrees. Entrepreneurship seeks to mitigate the detrimental effects of these disruptions, subsequently resulting in new opportunities arising in the market. Opportunity-based entrepreneurs must exploit these opportunities in order to secure robust, resilient, and sustainable businesses, ensuring their survival through the crises.

2.3. Literature Review

This literature review provides research on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial development programmes and the Covid-19 pandemic. The conceptual framework sets the tone for the flow of the literature review and introduces the main concepts and themes in this study. The literature review is based on current research and is interlinked with the case study with comparisons being drawn between existing literature and the practices and principles of the hotel group. Sustainability, resilience and adaptability is also discussed in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic to understand the impact of this on the beneficiary's businesses.

2.3.1. Conceptual framework

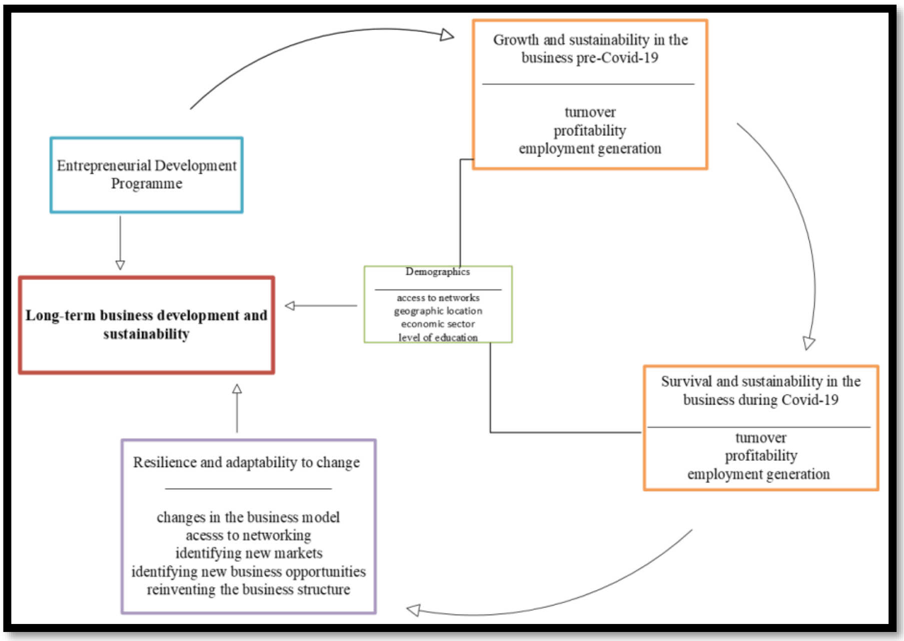
The conceptual framework provides an overview of the main concepts and themes in this study. Each element is inter-related, and the framework follows a circular design, indicating a start point being the entrepreneurial development programme and an end point being long-term business sustainability. The hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme is fundamental in the conceptual framework because without the programme, there would not be a study. The entrepreneurial development programme is the first measure in the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework aims to understand the growth and sustainability of the beneficiary's business pre-Covid-19 in terms of their turnover, profitability and employment generation capabilities. The next measure in the framework aims to understand the survival and sustainability of the beneficiary's business during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of turnover, profitability and employment generation capabilities.

Exploring turnover, profitability and employment generation capabilities pre-and-post Covid-19 is fundamental in ultimately determining long-term sustainability of the beneficiary's businesses. As the Covid-19 pandemic was an expected event, investigating the beneficiary's resilience and adaptability to change also contributes to their long-term business sustainability. Resilience and adaptability will be investigated in of changes in the business model, access to networking, new market and business opportunity identification and reinventing the business structure. These are key factors to explore, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic was an unplanned and business destroying pandemic. Demographics forms central to the framework as profitability in terms of demographics will be explored during the interview and questionnaire process. Not only are age and gender considered to be a demographic in this study, access to networking, geographic location, economic sector and level of education are also included.

According to Fatmawinarti et al. (2019), business sustainability can be created by constant improvement in productivity and profitability. In terms of this case study, a sustained improvement in profitability versus numbers of people employed will be equated to an increase in productivity. Long-term business sustainability is dependent on many factors in this framework such as turnover, profitability and employment generation capabilities of the beneficiary's post completion of the programme and also during the Covid-19 pandemic. This provided a deeper understanding about the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme and further exploration about the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects thereof. Long-term business development and sustainability is also dependent on the beneficiary's resilience and ability to change. The high unemployment rate, organisational restructure and redesign and has forced many into entrepreneurial activities as a means of survival (Prieger et al., 2016). An increase in opportunities would result in an increase in growth and expansion for the entrepreneur which will ultimately result in greater economic growth (Acs et al., 2009). Understanding the growth and sustaibility of the beneficiaires businesses pre-and-post the Covid-19 pandemic because an increase in economic growth for the businesses of the beneficiaries can be attributed to a growth in turnover and a growth in profitability. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) affirm that entrepreneurship has become more valuable to developing countries as it can potentially reduce unemployment and improve the standard of living of many since entrepreneurship generates employment. SME's are valuable within the country because of their ability to utilise the current business environment and transform their owner-manager business to a business which is a driver of job creation (Mahadea, 2012; Sunter, 2011).

Demographics form central to the framework as the relationship between demographics and profitability have a direct effect on long-term business development and sustainability. Demographics with regard to business success are multifaceted as the demographic structure in terms of age and gender within a country is responsible for the formation of human capital (Doubell, & Struwig, 2014; Laing et al., 2018). Geographic location, access to networking, the level of education of the beneficiary and the economic sector of their business was investigated in detail. The geographic location can be viewed as an investment because can it serve as a strategic purpose. Geus' (2002) model for corporate sustainability and longevity examines the main factors which influence a business' longevity such as former knowledge, access to networking and entrepreneur attentiveness.

Resilience and adaptability to change referred directly to the measures that were put in place by the beneficiaries to try and sustain their business during the Covid-19 pandemic. These measures directly contributed to the profitability and employment generation capabilities of these businesses. Morgan et al. (2020) expresses that the Covid-19 pandemic has been a driver for businesses to adapt their current business practices to the 'new world' in order to sustain their businesses. Although some entrepreneurs were able to use opportunity-based theory during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, other entrepreneurs would have had to implore pivots in the business model to ensure the overall survival of the business (Ratten, 2020a). Ratten (2020a) identifies the importance of social networks for entrepreneurs during the pandemic as this allows for new opportunities to be identified. The pandemic had a detrimental effect on the economies of many countries around the world, this in turn impacted entrepreneurs and their ability to exploit opportunities in the markets for their businesses (Devece et al., 2016). Resilience in terms of coping mechanisms and preparedness in entrepreneurs allows for them to adapt their current business and personal processes and practices when faced with adversity to adapt and grow to the current environment in which they operate (Southwick et al., 2014). Provided that the businesses of the beneficiaries experienced an increase in their turnover, profitability and number of people employed, it can be concluded that the businesses of the beneficiaries are successful and will be more sustainable in the long-term.



Author's own (2021)

Figure 2.1: **Conceptual Framework**

2.3.2. Entrepreneurial development programmes and current programmes in South Africa

As entrepreneurial development programmes form a fundamental part in the conceptual framework as the programmes form a base for all other measures to be explored and investigated. Globally, entrepreneurship is causing an economic revolution, either through the creation of new business, or the expansion of existing business (Botha et al., 2007). Entrepreneurship is considered a powerful economic agent as it proposes to alleviate the high unemployment rates in Africa and South Africa (Kuratko, 2014; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). Awogbenele and Iwuamadi (2010) affirm that entrepreneurship has become more valuable to developing countries as it can potentially reduce unemployment and improve the standard of living of many since entrepreneurship generates employment.

In South Africa, there are three main factors which influence unemployment namely, globalisation and labour legislation, design and structural changes in organisations and lastly, government grants which support South Africans who are unemployed (Mahadea, 2012). These government grants do not contribute to growth in employment for South Africans, but the government should rather enable South Africans to become entrepreneurs which will promote economic growth and employment creation for the country. SME's are valuable within the country because of their ability to utilise the current business environment and transform their owner-manager business to a business which is a driver of job creation (Mahadea, 2012; Sunter, 2011). The development of SME's in the form of an entrepreneurial development programme will be fundamental to the growth and success of the business. If the knowledge, skills and abilities of the entrepreneur are development through a comprehensive entrepreneur development programme the entrepreneur will be enabled to further grow their businesses.

In 2004, the Department of Trade and Industry developed the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) ((SEDA), 2018). SEDA recognises that although entrepreneurship is fundamental to ending cyclical poverty, failure of an entrepreneur can be associated with numerous factors such as underestimation of financial yield, insufficient training, limited support by experts and a lack of business development opportunities (Department of Trade and Industry, 2005). The National Small Enterprise Act (SEDA, n.d.) provides guidelines from state organisations to promote small businesses in South Africa. This Act can also be known as Nkitsa (SEDA, 2018). The primary functions include:

- Promoting entrepreneurship
- Facilitating market access for products and services for small entrepreneurs in national and international markets
- Promoting a network of service delivery to facilitate access and promote support and development from small enterprises

The objectives of the South African Government and SEDA include providing support, promoting economic growth and employment creation whilst developing the foundation of small enterprises for domestic and international trade (SEDA, 2018; South African Government, n.d.). The Small Enterprise Finance Agency's (SEFA) main objective is to provide funding and enterprise development for small enterprises (SEFA, n.d.). There are three main areas for funding include start-ups and expansion: franchises and business acquisitions (SEFA, n.d.). SEFA like the SEDA aim to provide the necessary support to small enterprises by means of training, mentoring and consulting to entrepreneurs to ensure business growth and expansion (South African Enterprise Development Agency, 2018). SEDA's (South

African Enterprise Development Agency, 2018) main mission is “to develop, support and promote small enterprises to ensure their growth and sustainability in co-ordination and partnership with other role players” (p.3). Under the National Industrial Policy Framework, several innovative governmental strategies have been established namely, the micro-economic reform strategy, B-BBEE strategy and the integrated strategy on the promotion of entrepreneurship and small enterprises (S.A.G, n.d.; Department of Small Business Development, 2004). These strategies provide support and nurture entrepreneurs and small enterprises. They aim to develop entrepreneurial skills and talent whilst providing an environment for them to participate both in the economic and social environments of South Africa as well as aim to strengthen the number of black-owned enterprises (South African Government, n.d.; Department of Small Business Development, 2004). GEAR and the RDP government policy are two policies that the government has implemented for growth, employment, development and business reconstruction of small enterprises in South Africa (Department of Trade and Industry, 2005). These policies, like the hotel group’s entrepreneurial development programme, are imperative to growth and expansion of small businesses in South Africa because of the training, support and knowledge these programmes provide small enterprises. The support mechanisms mentioned above implemented by the South African Government intend to develop small enterprises in South Africa and promote business growth and sustainability.

There are three entrepreneurial programmes, that were investigated for this study, that provide entrepreneurial support in South Africa. These are explored in more detail and their similarities and objectives are compared in terms of the hotel groups entrepreneurial development programme.

The Allan Gray Foundation

- This foundation aims to achieve entrepreneurial development through the development of entrepreneurial skills and the knowledge as well as the mindset of the entrepreneur. Their aim Is to develop the entrepreneur both locally and globally (Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, 2019).
- This programme which was founded in 2005 has four main programmes which focus on nurturing and facilitating business success of the entrepreneurs (Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, 2019).

SeedAcademy

- SeedAcademy is another type of entrepreneurial development programme that offers three main types of courses. Firstly, “Accelerate Her” is a programme designed for female entrepreneurs with the aim of providing a tailored programme which addresses the challenges that women in business in South Africa face. Secondly, “Grow”, concentrates on young entrepreneurs and prepares them for their entrepreneurial career. Lastly, “Scale”, supports entrepreneurs with benefits such as business recognition (SeedAcademy, 2019).
- This programme aims to provide entrepreneurs with support, funding and access to markets. Their goal is to aid entrepreneur to grow and build their businesses (SeedAcademy, 2019).

South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE)

- The South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE) offers courses which are beneficial to entrepreneurs as entrepreneurial behaviour is encouraged, and the programme provides business literacy training. SAIE facilitates two courses for entrepreneurs which are ‘Launching your business idea' and a leadership course both of which are SETA accredited (South African Institute for Entrepreneurship, 2020).

- This institute supports start up's and promotes entrepreneur behaviour which in turn aids in employment generation and lessening the effects of poverty throughout South Africa (South African Institute for Entrepreneurship, 2020).

As there has been little research on entrepreneurial development programme, there is no data to substantiate their overall success however, there are similar goals and objectives among the entrepreneurial development programme. These institutions and the hotel group strive for their entrepreneurs and beneficiaries within their programmes to achieve economic success, employment generation and ultimately long-term sustainability. An article on the Entrepreneur Scan website, states that "start-ups and small businesses are – despite a high failure rate – of added value for many economies, including developing countries. Their major benefits to an economy are job creation, innovation, and economic growth" (EntrepreneurScan, n.d, p 1). This article states that 66.67% of entrepreneurs increase their skills and competencies towards marketing, develop personal belief in their entrepreneurial activity and improve their knowledge and understanding of business accounting which in turn improves their business profitability (EntrepreneurScan, n.d). Assisting entrepreneurs with coaching and mentorship on technical skills allowed for a growth of 40.4% in the study conducted by (EntrepreneurScan, n.d,). The purpose of this study is to provide the hotel group with data for their own entrepreneurial development programme.

2.3.3. Economic growth of small entrepreneurial businesses in South Africa

Economic growth in terms of the conceptual framework is related to turnover and profitability. Turnover and profitability are important factors to investigate as, among other factors, an increase in both of these will allow for economic growth and development of the business. Turnover and profitability are explored in two main avenues in the conceptual framework, firstly pre-Covid-19 and post completion of the programme and secondly, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The reason for this is to understand the impact of the programme on the beneficiaries' businesses both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In South Africa, the relationship between economic growth and the entrepreneur is intricate and multifaceted (Prieger et al., 2016). The high unemployment rate, organisational restructure and redesign has forced many into entrepreneurial activities as a means of survival (Prieger et al., 2016). An increase in opportunities would result in an increase in growth and expansion for the entrepreneur which will ultimately result in greater economic growth (Acs, Braunerhjelm, Audretsch & Carlsson, 2009). Financial literacy can be understood by entrepreneurs through three main factors, namely budget management, financial planning and basic insight into investment (Oseifuah, 2010). Research was conducted by Oseifuah, (2010) in the Thohoyandou and Sibasa commercial business region of the 39 youth entrepreneurs from which the data was collected. In this study 47.1% of them kept detailed financial records, with 66.7% of those records being a monthly business budget. Of the 39 entrepreneurs, 71.8% of them, expressed a wish to improve their financial management skills and 40.5% of them were accustomed to saving (Oseifuah, 2010). The financial literacy of entrepreneurs is important to the success of the business in terms of ensuring a turnover and anticipating a profit

(Oseifuah, 2010). The hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme understands the findings by Oseifuah (2010) and their programme includes financial literacy courses as well as access to a financial mentor. The Schumpeterian entrepreneurship theory states that the entrepreneur, who is both the gap-filler and risk-taker in the business environment, is obligated to use the explicit and tacit knowledge and convert it into a profitable business (Braunerhjelm, Acs, Audretsch & Carlsson, 2010).

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in many businesses struggling to survive. The capital the entrepreneur has access to plays a pivotal role in the survival of the business. Social and human capital within in the business are important because these relationships are pertinent when surviving a crisis as the support systems built outside of a crisis, allow for adaptable employees (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). The viewpoint of Castro and Zermeño (2020) towards social and human capital are not the only important capitals, financial capital too is a pertinent capital. If the entrepreneur only had access to the social and human capital but not financial capital, their ability to maintain a positive cashflow may have been challenging. Economic growth during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic was possible if the entrepreneurs were able to retain their customers through ensuring that product or service offering for the customer was adapted to the new business pivoted model (Maritz, Perenyi, de Waal & Buck, 2020). It is important to note that the uncertain business environment brought on by Covid-19 affected small entrepreneurs drastically and resulted in some being unable to pivot their business models to survive (Maritz et al., 2020). Covid-19 pandemic posed many challenges on businesses economic growth because of the constraints on trade between countries and disruptions in the markets due to the initial restrictions by governments (Maritz et al., 2020). Many entrepreneurs were faced with a trade-off between the profitability of their business versus the growth of their business (Maritz et al., 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic did not impact the beneficiaries' social and human capital as explained by Casto and Zermeño (2020), because the support systems built outside of the crisis, during the development programme, was utilised by the beneficiaries and more intra-networking occurred which allowed for not only business survival but some businesses were able to include more product and service offerings into their business (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021).

2.3.4. Resilience of small entrepreneurial businesses to internal and external events

Resilience can be defined as 'the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress.' (American Psychological association, 2014, para. 4). Resilience can be overcome if the individual has the ability to be self-aware, self-motivated and is able to utilise the situation to grow, learn and adapt to the current environment (Southwick et al., 2014). Entrepreneurial resilience can be interchangeable with self-efficacy, preparedness and persistence (Korber & McNaughton, 2018). Resilience can be referred to short-term or long-term external events which require adversity (Southwick et al., 2014). The Covid-19 pandemic could be classified as both a short-term and long-term external event. The shock of the pandemic resulted in a pivot in business models which had and will have an impact on the overall business (Morgan, Anokhin, Ofstein & Friske, 2020).

According to Southwick et al. (2014), entrepreneurs must adopt a variety of different coping methods which can be adapted according to the situation faced in order to be resilient. Herbane (2013), states that crisis management is an interrelationship between preventative planning and the individual's response to unforeseen circumstances such as failures and interruptions. Natural disasters not only have the ability to influence the survival of the business but are also influenced by the entrepreneur and their preventative planning to cope with the damages (Doern, 2014). This research is relevant for natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes and floods. However, the Covid-19 pandemic was an unforeseen disease which wreaked havoc on all industries throughout the world and this type of natural disaster would have been challenging to fully prepare for (Doern, 2014). Crisis management and business continuity are strategies the business must adopt to allow for the essential functionality of the business (Ivanus & Repanovici, 2016). The continuity of the business after the crisis is imperative for the business's survival, however, this is a continuous process as the entrepreneur's preparedness allows for the business to cope with the crisis in a functional manner (Ivanus & Repanovici, 2016).

The crisis preparation framework is imperative to ensuring the business and the entrepreneur are resilient. Pauchant and Mitroff's (1992) framework is divided into five stages: signal detection, preparation, damage containment, recovery and learning. Signal detection involves identifying and understanding the crisis (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Preparation includes the creation of teams and undergoing training by the entrepreneur and damage containment is imperative to attempt to limit the effects of the crisis on the entire business (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Lastly, recovery includes activities and operations which aim to allow the business to return to normality and learning involves the future preparation for a crisis which will ultimately affect the performance of the business in the long-term (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Although Pauchant and Mitroff's (1992) framework for crises is still relevant another stage which can be added is financial preparedness. Financial preparedness is important for crisis preparation and this must also include a savings reserve for such events. A savings reserve is valuable during a period of business crisis as it allows for expenses and salaries to be paid whilst turnover and profitability are improved upon. A resilient entrepreneur needs to be supported by an economy that allows for the business stability and the exploitation of new opportunities. swses

According to a study by Devece, Peris-Ortiz and Rueda-Armengot (2016), the economy in which the entrepreneur operates plays a vital role to the success or failure of their business. A weak economy can often have a detrimental effect on the entrepreneur and their ability to exploit opportunities. They state that some entrepreneurs who are alert, have prior knowledge of the market and who actively search for new opportunities are able to recognise new opportunities and leverage off of this. Economic crises, like the Covid-19 pandemic result in a dynamic shift in available opportunities. The pandemic also resulted in entrepreneurial development programmes, like the hotel group to temporarily suspend their programme. This forced beneficiaries to turn to each other for additional support and possible new opportunities in the market.

Exogenous shocks, like the Covid-19 pandemic not only unsettle once-effective business models, but also impact available opportunities (Morgan et al., 2020). The pandemic has been a driver for businesses to adapt and change their products, services and target markets to the 'new world' in order to sustain their businesses (Morgan et al., 2020). The pandemic has impacted all spheres of the business. Entrepreneurs need to be creative in adapting their current business practices because this ultimately determines if these can be useful to catering to the needs of businesses in times of uncertainty (Ratten, 2020a). Manolova, Brush, Edelman and Elam (2020) in their research uncovered that the Covid-19 pandemic caused a disastrous impact on the supply and demand of the global economy. The stopping of business in contact intense industries and lockdown restrictions imposed by the government negatively influenced the supply of products and services and the demand for products which were not necessities decreased (Manolova et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs who have the ability to pivot their business models during periods of uncertainty are able to utilise new opportunities more effectively (Morgan et al., 2020; Ratten, 2020a). Kirtley and O'Mahony (2020) define a pivot as "a change in a firm's strategy that reorients that firm's strategic direction through a reallocation or restricting of activities, resources and attention" (p. 3). Strategic change is a process and changes are made one element at a time (Kirtley & O'Mahony, 2020). However, Townsend, Hunt, McMullen and Saravathy (2018) share an opinion which is different to that of Kirtley and O'Mahony (2020) and believe that early stage entrepreneurs are prompted by uncertainty thus resulting in strategic change. Pivoting in a business is as a result of multiple strategic decisions which are as a result of problems or opportunities (Kirtley & O'Mahony, 2020). In this study pivoting of business models can be defined as a radical change in the business due to external influences which result in one or many changes in the business model. The Covid-19 pandemic had devastating effects on businesses especially the restrictions imposed by governments around the world which forced businesses to radically adapt their processes and procedures.

Duarte Alonso et al. (2020) identifies that Covid-19 has had devastating effects on a large proportion of businesses primarily due to the lockdown restrictions. Meahjohn and Persad (2020) identified similar conclusions in their study stating that "many small-scale entrepreneurs were compelled to close their business while some were just working 'hand to mouth' and struggling with their businesses" (p. 1169). According to Kumar (2020), "the tourism sector is currently the hardest-hit by the outbreak of Covid-19, with impacts on both travel supply and demand" (p. 703). Although this article's main focus is on Indian businesses and business sectors, economic sectors in South Africa and globally were also crippled. Arndt et al. (2020) supports this finding in their article as they note that the lockdown restrictions in South Africa had a knock-on effect to the whole economy. Since the lockdown affected supply and demand of non-essential products and services, there was a disruption in the overall supply and demand for the country as well as for global exports (Arndt et al., 2020). Another factor noted in Arndt et al.'s (2020) study was that the lockdown impacted the tourism industry because of the restrictions imposed to limit movement and travel. The industries in which the beneficiaries of the programme operate as well as many other entrepreneurs where greatly influenced by the lockdown restrictions. These restrictions caused a ripple effect through supply chains and businesses. Meahjohn and Persad (2020) supports this as their study also investigated the impact of the pandemic on global entrepreneurship and noted that these the tourism and hospitality industry were negatively impacted due to travel bans and restrictions and these are external forces which are not under control of the entrepreneurs. According to Ratten (2020a), it is imperative for entrepreneurs to utilise social networks because opportunities can be recognised based on their access to networks. Cacciolatti, Rosli, Ruiz-Alba and Chang (2020), stated that an organisation's credibility and discrepancies in financial performance can be alleviated through strategic alliances (i.e. networks). The viewpoint of Caccialoatti et al. (2020) is one in the same as Ratten (2020a) in that networking forms an integral part in opportunity identification.

Governments around the world-imposed restrictions on the movements of people and lockdowns which forced some businesses to close temporarily and unfortunately some closed permanently (Tang, Zhang & Lin, 2021). The same was seen in South Africa and this affected majority of the businesses in the country as trading ceased and lockdown measures were not in favour of business survival. Kalogiannidis (2020) supports this as his research states that "a lockdown in a single economy can result in the complexity of the global supply chain and can cause major ripple effects all over the world" (p. 389). Jain, Budlender, Zizzamia and Bassier (2020) expressed that "due to preventative procedures taken by the governments of many countries, numerous small-scale businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs are the most vulnerable groups that are greatly impacted in this time of crisis" (p. 1166). Jain et al. (2020) study introduces the emergency social insurance relief fund called Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (TERS) which some of the beneficiaries resorted to in order to pay their staff. In the interviews, a common trend of employers using the TERS relief fund as a means of income for themselves and their staff was noted. A reduction in the income of many consumers is directly linked to the change in their spending pattern during the pandemic and many businesses overextended their credit which led to bankruptcy (Kalogiannidis, 2020). Although there was an income reduction amongst many consumers, entrepreneurs that were innovative and exploited opportunities available to them in the market may have been able to influence the consumer to spend more on their product or service. These businesses and so many more in South Africa suffered greatly as a result of lockdown restrictions and a change in supply and demand. The Covid-19 pandemic posed many challenges on businesses' economic growth because of the constraints on trade between countries and disruptions in the markets due to the initial restrictions by governments (Maritz et al., 2020). The constraints on trade greatly impacted the South African market because not only were certain businesses restricted from operating but many products too were prohibited to be sold. This resulted in entrepreneurs resilience being tested as well as the possibility of business survival.

Factors of resilience are also important when understanding an entrepreneur's ability to adapt to the crisis (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). An entrepreneur's attitude, business characteristics and strategic management capabilities play an important role in adapting to crisis (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). According to Sawalha (2020), the entrepreneur must diversify their business and focus on proactivity to ensure their business survives. If an entrepreneur has the ability to be proactive and diversify either their products, services or their markets their responsiveness to the crisis will allow for a better survival of the business. The business must have characteristics of adaptability and flexibility because opportunities present themselves the business must have the ability to pivot their business models to the 'new' business environment (Kuckertz et al., 2020). This flexibility allows for the entrepreneur and the employees to improve their learning opportunities which will allow for further survival due to innovating and developing the business to the new business environment (ECLAC, 2020). Kuckertz et al. (2020) shares a similar view in that the business must have characteristics of adaptability and flexibility because opportunities present themselves the business must have the ability to pivot their business models to the 'new' business environment. Strategic management capabilities of the entrepreneur are imperative because pivoting the business model results in uncertainty and resistance from employees (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). Saebi, Lien and Foss (2017), study is similar to that of Castro and Zermeño (2020) and explains that there are a variety of factors which influence adjustments and changes to a business model, such as technology, external stakeholders, business performance and exogenous shocks. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many businesses pivoting their business models to fall in line with the regulations posed by their governments (Liu, Ming Lee & Lee, 2020). According to, Tronvoll, Sklyar, Sörhammar and Kowalkowski (2020), businesses must be flexible and adaptable in the economy post the pandemic as these qualities will aid them in the changing business world.

2.3.5. Long-term sustainability of the businesses of the beneficiaries

The last measure on the conceptual framework is long-term business development and sustainability. The end goal of the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme is for the beneficiaries to develop their businesses and achieve long-term sustainability. According to Foley, Bogue and Onakuse (2016), sustainability is a critical factor in the world of business today. Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause (1995), explain that achieving substantiable development is a process in which development must be inclusive, equal and protected manner to ensure that the organisation is sustainable for the future.

In order for an organisation to achieve sustainability, resource prioritisation is a requirement (Foley et al., 2016). The five capital model was created by Foley et al. (2016) to provide a vision for organisations to consider sustainability. The five capital model consists of the following capitals:

- **Natural:** In the business world in which organisations operate today, the natural capital is imperative for the long-term sustainability of the organisation due to the preservation of resources and to aim to eliminate waste within the production cycle. The hotel group teaches the beneficiaries' the preservation of resources and the elimination of waste. This is achieved through mentorship and financial coaching (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021) also states that the accounting and business management courses from the University of Cape Town aid in individual empowerment. Understanding the importance of resource preservation, the beneficiaries are able to aim for long-term sustainability.
- **Human:** Human capital is a driving factor for entrepreneurial businesses because of the individual's knowledge, skills and ability which can be beneficial to the organisation. Human capital is critical driving factor for entrepreneurial businesses. Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021) explains that the businesses coach facilitates human resource planning. As Isaacs, Visser, Freidrich & Brijlal (2007) state the success of entrepreneur is as a result of the development of necessary skills. The entrepreneur must be able to enhance the skills applicable to business growth and success. The hotel group aims to achieve this through the short courses the beneficiaries' complete (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). These courses provide a comprehensive knowledge base for the beneficiary. Growing and maintaining social relationships contributes to maintaining the organisation's human capital.
- **Social:** Social capital is the relationship between the organisation and its macro environment, for example its communities, businesses and trade unions, and these relationships are beneficial in maintaining the organisation's human capital. The beneficiaries are granted access to the hotel groups markets and networks which contribute to the beneficiaries' business by being given access to networking opportunities. The benefits the beneficiaries' social capital. The beneficiaries', especially during the Covid-19 pandemic utilised their intra-personal relationships with other peers from the programme (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021).
- **Manufacturing:** Manufactured capital consists of the infrastructure and technology that the organisation utilizes and leverages off to become innovative. Manufacturing capital relates to the infrastructure and technology utilized by the organisation to become innovative. Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021) states that the hotel group supports their

beneficiaries with public relations and business management software to assist with marketing and brand recognition. This support directly relates to Foley's et al. (2016) view on sustainability.

- **Financial:** Financial capital expresses the actual value of the other financial capitals combined and is invaluable in isolation. The financial capital is an invaluable capital as in isolation due to the complexity and nature of the financial aspect of the business. The hotel group has identified the importance of financial literacy among its entrepreneurs (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). This is achieved through a business management course and a basic accounting course as well as sessions with the beneficiaries' financial mentor. The financial mentors aid the beneficiaries' in developing a roadmap which provides insights into their business's finances and guidance on investing and re-investing (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021).

Five capital model and entrepreneurship

This five-factor model for sustainability requires organisations to be flexible in the ever-changing world of work but also focuses on ensuring that their businesses will be sustainable in the long term (Foley et al., 2016). The entrepreneurial development programme is holistic in nature in terms of their aims and objectives on economic growth, employment generation and long-term sustainability. The sole focus of the relationship between the hotel group and the beneficiaries' is purely on business and entrepreneurial development. This five-factor model links to Geus's (2002) model as both identify the importance of the community, flexibility and the impact that the external environment has on the financial aspect of the organisation. Social capital is important as because without the support of the community, the organisation will not succeed.

Although the five-factor model mainly addresses organisations to be flexible in the ever-changing world of work to ensure long-term sustainability, the entrepreneur must also be flexible to this world or work, especially in light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic. An entrepreneur who has characteristics of resilience will be able to adapt to change more easily which affects their businesses survival (Salisu, Hashim, Mashi, & Aliyu, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic is one such unforeseen crisis that has resulted in entrepreneurs adapting their business practices and homing in on their own personal characteristics of resilience to ensure their businesses survive. The entrepreneurial development programme, during the pandemic was temporarily suspended. This resulted in the structure of the programme to change as the mentorship and support was conducted remotely (C. Tothill, personal communication, 29 November 2021). Many of the beneficiaries business did not survive due to the pandemic and the ones that did were forced to pivot their business model and be resilient in order to survive and ensure sustainablity. According to Bacq, Geoghegan, Josefy, Stevenson and Williams (2020) the Covid-19 pandemic can be referred to a 'great crisis' because of its destructive nature on countries, businesses and economies world-wide. The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses and especially entrepreneurial businesses was detrimental. Closing of the borders to assist in limiting the spread of the virus resulted in many entrepreneurial businesses failing, especially in the tourism industry (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). An entrepreneur must be resilient to adapt and overcome the continuous changes in the market and different situations, especially during a crisis (Castro & Zermeño, 2020).

Corporate sustainable longevity refers to the life the organisation has beyond its average expectancy (William & Jones, 2010). Geographic location and the industry in which the business operates can be important to its success and sustainability, however since Geus (2002) developed his model the digital age has been revolutionising markets and, in some industries, geographic location is now not as important to its success, for example, software development and e-commerce. There are four main branches to Geus' (2002) model, which include adaptability to the business environment, distinctiveness within the community, business flexibility and lastly, the optimal deployment of finances. This study will use a subset of his model to measure long-term sustainability of the beneficiaries' businesses and include entrepreneur attentiveness, former knowledge and access to networking.

Corporate longevity is imperative for entrepreneurs because their access to networking, former knowledge and their attentiveness provide them with the ability to ensure that they survive the dynamic business world (Galadanchi & JulientiAbu Bakar, 2018). The main aim of this hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme is to ensure that these businesses have corporate longevity. Another aim of the programme is to equip the beneficiaries with the right knowledge and skills to be able to successfully exploit opportunities in the market. Kirzner (1979) defines entrepreneurial attentiveness as the entrepreneurs' ability to recognise and exploit opportunities without actively searching for them. The entrepreneurs' attentiveness to their environment and new information aids the entrepreneur in recalling experiences and adapting the knowledge into the situation (Groves, Vance & Choi, 2011). Intuition is beneficial to the entrepreneur because of the capacity the entrepreneur has to not only recall previous experiences and observations but turn the knowledge from these opportunities into new business ventures (Groves et al., 2011). Both Groves et al. (2011) and Kirzner (1979) share the same viewpoint and state the entrepreneur's attentiveness is based on the ability that entrepreneurs have to utilise their cognitive ability and exploit this as an opportunity for new business ventures. However, Valliere (2013) includes innovation in their definition and states entrepreneurial attentiveness is critical to the success of the organisation and forms the link between opportunity exploitation, socio-economic advantage and innovation. Innovation is a good factor to include in both Groves et al. (2011) and Kirzner's (1979) definition because innovation because new methods, ideas and products need to be innovated and is critical in opportunity exploration.

The entrepreneur's knowledge which was formed in school, college or university and the corporate environment, serve as information outlets which aid in the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Audretsch & Keilbach, 207). Knowledge has the ability to ensure competitive advantage because although economic uncertainty is prevalent, the link the entrepreneur has between old knowledge and new knowledge can allow for new opportunities to be exploited (Alvarez, 2003; Alvarez & Barney, 2005). The aim of entrepreneurial development programme is empowering the beneficiaries with knowledge to allow for them to excel in their field and within their business. The knowledge spill over theory is important for former knowledge for the entrepreneur because the duality of the information filter reflects prospects for entrepreneurship. Knowledge-rich contexts can generate and ensure more opportunities for entrepreneurs and this can ensure utilisation of prior knowledge effectively and holistically (Audretsch & Keilbach, 2007). The entrepreneur's attentiveness and their former knowledge can provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to successfully venture into new business opportunities.

The entrepreneur must view networking as a strategy which can aid in the access to knowledge (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2004). Networking is crucial to the success of the entrepreneur's businesses as these businesses and businesses in general are surrounded by a vast array of social relationships, whether it in their inner circle, their partnerships with other businesses or the distant interactions the entrepreneur has had (Turkina & Thi Thanh Thai, 2013; Turkina, Van Assche, & Kali, 2016). As entrepreneurs plan on growing their business, access to networking should be considered due to the power networking has for the entrepreneur to grow their business community and to intra-networking amongst other entrepreneurs. These social networks provide an opportunity for episodic knowledge and knowledge production to be stimulated and interchanged which in turn, stimulates business growth and business opportunities (Turkina, 2018).

According to Good (2003), for an entrepreneurial enterprise to be feasible and successful, the organisation must be of a substantial size to ensure that it will be financially viable. A healthy relationship between the entrepreneur and the community in which the organisation is vital to the success of the organisation (Parker & Khare, 2005). An entrepreneurial enterprise which focuses on the development of the community will succeed provided that the entrepreneur's business strategy is well-developed (Parker & Khare, 2005). Entrepreneurs who wish to be sustainable must make sacrifices and trade-offs to thrive in the economy and often, these trade-offs are economic, social or environmental rather than for sustainable goals (Tilley & Young, 2006). The viewpoint of Parker and Khare (2005) and Tilley and Young (2006) are still relevant today as community development can have a direct impact on the business because if the entrepreneur aims to uplift and provide job creation to the community their business may be more successful than a business that does not provide upliftment and job creation to a community. Business sustainability is a company's capacity to improve itself to ensure its long-term survival and this can be accomplished by constantly achieving organisational objectives and developing and growing the organisation (Fatmawinarti et al., 2019). Business sustainability can be created by a constant improvement in productivity and by a growth in profitability (Fatmawinarti et al., 2019).

In order for businesses to improve their productivity and in turn grow their productivity, entrepreneurial performance needs to explore and understood by the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial performance, according to Lumpkin and Dess (1996) is defined as "a construct comprising of earnings and satisfaction taken from the broader framework of a conceptualisation of entrepreneurial performance." Entrepreneurial performance is measured both intrinsically and extrinsically. Personal growth and satisfaction would be the individual's intrinsic reward and an increase in turnover and/or a profit would be extrinsic (Callaghan & Venter, 2011). Business and specialised skills training, which is the focus of most entrepreneurial training programmes, should be beneficial to the entrepreneur's business. However, the intellectual and emotional development of the entrepreneur should also be advantageous to the future of the business (Urban et al., 2011). Business success is evaluated in terms of an increase in profit, investment, or generation of assets and overall growth which ultimately influences the success and development of the business (Xesha, Iwu, & Slabbert, 2014). Similar to Xesha, Iwu and Slabbert (2014), the main objective of entrepreneurial development programmes is economic growth, employment generation and ultimately long-term sustainability. Successful entrepreneurs take opportunities to generate economic and social value based on their drive and vison to be successful. Kumar (2017), expresses that entrepreneurial development programmes are critical in the development of entrepreneur’s skills. Entrepreneurial development programmes are comprehensive programmes in which the individual knowledge, skills, abilities and their business knowledge is developed (Kumar, 2017). Organisational development has a significant relationship on sustainability (Fatmawinarti et al., 2019). If the business of the entrepreneur has the ability to be adaptable to the dynamic business environment, then the organisation has a higher chance of sustainability (Fatmawinarti et al., 2019).

Önder and Ağca (2019) state that sustainability is an important factor in an organisation’s strategy because the organisation must make decisions which focus on their business needs and the needs of the society as ultimately this is a driver of a sustainable society (Schrippe & Ribeiro, 2018). This hotel group has many different corporate social responsible commitments. An entrepreneurial development programme is important for the development of entrepreneurs as this in turn will ensure that there is not only business growth but long-term sustainability for the businesses of the beneficiaries. Corporate social responsibility influences the organisations growth and development of their credibility, shareholder value and the efficiency of their financial performance (Önder & Ağca, 2019).

Sustainability in businesses is a pertinent factor to consider and marrying the five capital model as proposed by Foley et al. (2016) to the business model and structure requires understanding, careful planning and resource prioritisation. Entrepreneurial development programmes aim to provide entrepreneurs with knowledge and understanding in order for their businesses to succeed and to be sustainable. The five capital model in relation to the hotel group’s entrepreneurial development programme is crucial especially since the main objective for the hotel group is long-term sustainability. The five capital model, is critical to the sustainability of the business and ensuring the capitals are integrated and married with one another, the organisation can achieve long-term sustainability. The five capital model, accompanied with the entrepreneurial development programme, the beneficiaries of the business are provided with a fundamental foundation to not only grow but sustain their business

2.3.6. Demographics relevant to the beneficiaries in the Entrepreneurial Development Programme

Demographics with regard to business success are multifaceted as the demographic structure in terms of age, gender and race within a country is responsible for the formation of human capital (Doubell, & Struwig, 2014; Laing, Wang & Lazear, 2018). According to Alli, Ramirez and Yung (1991), the geographic location of a business is significantly correlated with the success of the business because it can translate to competitive advantage for the business. The geographic location can be viewed as an investment because not only can it have strategic purposes, but it can aid in the growth of the business’s profits (Hayter, 1997).

This study considered the impact of demographics on the ability of beneficiaries to network effectively. The entrepreneurial ecosystem is similar to any organisation’s internal and external environment and includes all levels of the entrepreneur’s network (Maecki, 2018). The entrepreneur’s ecosystem provides support and is a symbiotic relationship to both the parties within the network and the entrepreneur (Brown & Mason, 2017). As in nature, when one element in the ecosystem changes, the whole structure needs to adapt, is also applicable for entrepreneurial ecosystems. The hotel group provides the beneficiaries with access to their ecosystem and networks. As the entrepreneur’s business expands and transforms, the relationships between the parties in his/her network would need to change in order to be beneficial and true to the core nature of the business (Maecki, 2018). The benefits of networking provided to the beneficiaries, allow them the ability to improve, sustain and grow their business which is critical to the socio-economic contribution of South Africa (C. Tothill, personal communication, 18 February 2020). N

Comparing Nigeria to South Africa is relevant because of the similar socio-economic circumstances that both countries find themselves in. In Nigeria, as in South Africa, a decline in the economy and high youth and adult unemployment rates are attributed to high levels of corruption, lack of skills and proper skills development (Anzaa, 2013; Emeh, Nwanguma & Abaroh, 2012; Otumba, 2013). Due to this, the entrepreneur needs to be an opportunist and exploit opportunities in order to be successful (Ayoade & Agwu, 2016). This study also considered the impact of employment generation capabilities of the beneficiary. According to Ayoade and Agwu (2016), the eradication of unemployment can be a result of entrepreneurs creating wealth by seizing opportunities and growing and developing their businesses. Entrepreneurs have the ability to reduce unemployment and by doing so, the standard of living and overall skills development will increase which in turn creates economic growth (Ayoade & Agwu, 2016). A lack of sustainable infrastructure and access to technology, combined with individuals not being empowered to make choices and better their lives contribute to high levels of poverty and unemployment (Ayoade & Agwu, 2016). An objective of the hotel group and this study is to determine whether the beneficiaries of the programme have grown and sustained their number of people employed post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Entrepreneur development programmes not only provide entrepreneurs with the ability to provide self-employment, but it also provides a platform for the entrepreneur to create opportunities for employment for others (Kumar, 2017). The viewpoint of Kumar (2017) is similar to the viewpoint of the hotel group in that opportunities are created for the entrepreneur to create employment for others.

The effect of the level of education of the beneficiaries will also be considered to understand how the beneficiaries have benefited from the programme based on their level of education. According to Reynolds, Hay and Camp (1999), the level of education is important for a variety of reasons. Education teaches an individual to be self-sufficient and aids in building confidence (Reddy, 2011). Education is also the link between knowledge and new opportunities because not only does education increase awareness for alternative career choices, but it prepares the individual for new ventures (Reddy, 2011). Education provides entrepreneurs with the opportunity to develop their talent and develop their confidence (Dumitrașciuc, 2020). It is imperative that the entrepreneur has the ability to constantly assimilate information, especially about information within their field. This learning must be paired with practical learning to ensure that knowledge does not become redundant (Dumitrașciuc, 2020). The hotel group ensures their beneficiaries' knowledge is assimilated within their field, this is ensured through courses that the beneficiary attends as well as sessions with mentors and coaches. Maxwell (2005), has a differing view to that of Reddy (2011) and expresses that another form of education for the entrepreneur is through learning from failure because it allows them to learn from their mistakes and to further grow and develop their business. Education provides the entrepreneur with the ability to develop and deepen their knowledge which can create a successful entrepreneur (Dumitrașciuc, 2020). The study by Maxwell (2005), Reddy (2011) and Dumitrașciuc (2020), believe that education is multifaceted in that learning through failure, existing knowledge and developing characteristics like self-sufficiency and confidence all contribute to the entrepreneur's educational background.

2.6. Conclusion

This research project focussed on investigating the success of the hotel group's entrepreneur development programme and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses of these entrepreneurs. Many of the other entrepreneurial development programmes in South Africa provide financial support. However, the main aim of this entrepreneurial development programme is to provide a 'hands up rather than a handout'. This entrepreneurial development programme is holistic and provides support across all facets of the business. Research on entrepreneurship in South Africa is an underdeveloped research field in terms of studying training programmes, economic success, potential sustainable business practices and employment generation. This research project aimed to draw conclusions about this specific hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme. These conclusions aided in understanding whether the hotel group had a positive or negative impact of the businesses of the beneficiaries. Research on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of the entrepreneurs' coping mechanisms and ability to be resilient is limited, especially in the South African context. As the Covid-19 pandemic was unforeseen and had a detrimental effect on businesses around the world, understanding the impact on the businesses of the beneficiaries became increasingly important. The importance of this was not only to contribute to literature, especially in South Africa, but to understand if small businesses were able to cope with adversity and pivot their businesses to survive during the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. Demographics are important factors to investigate in relation to profitability as this will identify the relationship that demographics have on the business's profitability. Networking, geographic location, economic sector and level of education were the four demographics researched because these four demographics had the ability to have meaningful results in relation to profitability. Determining the long-term sustainability of the beneficiaries' businesses is another important factor considered when evaluating if these businesses will be in operation in the future. Long-term sustainability is imperative for this entrepreneurial developmental programme because their main aim is to develop small and emerging beneficiaries and assist them in becoming sustainable. Although the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily hindered business sustainability, their main focus became business survival rather than long-term sustainability. The knowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic equipped the beneficiaries with, has the potential to offer up additional experience in trying times which can potentially contribute to their long-term sustainability.

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter delves into the research methodology adopted in this study. A mixed-methods approach was used. Interview data was collected, as required for the purposes of this research, by means of structured interviews with the beneficiaries of the programme and with the manager of the programme. Questionnaire data was collected by means of a questionnaire. A mixed methods design with the main focus on qualitative data was adopted. Through triangulation between the interview and questionnaire data**,** a convergent parallel design was utilised. The interviews aimed to understand the experiences the beneficiaries faced post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire data aimed to investigate the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme on the beneficiary's post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview data was coded and analysed through thematic and content analysis. The questionnaire data was analysed through nominal and ordinal scales. Both sets of data were proposed in this chapter to be presented using graphs and tables.

3.2. Research Paradigm and Approach

Pragmatism in an American philosophy developed during the late 19^{th} and early 20^{th} centuries by philosophers Pierce, Dewey and James (Perry & Taylor, 2006). Pragmatism as a paradigm uses an in-depth analysis of human activity to solve problems and places emphasis on human experiences rather than generating theories (Morgan, 2014). Similar to Morgan (2014), Perry and Taylor (2006) has a similar view and states, "pragmatists rejected all forms of absolutism and insisted that all principles be regarded as working hypotheses that must bear fruit in lived experience" (p. 1). The viewpoint of Perry and Taylor (2006) as well as the view of pragmatism link directly to that of a case study in that live experiences are explored and studied (Yin, 1994) Pragmatism focusses on emotional and social viewpoints to achieve a philosophical approach rather than a data-rich scientific approach that both positivism and interpretivism adopt (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Similar to the viewpoint of Kaushik and Walsh (2019), the case study of the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme focusses on understanding the emotional and social viewpoints of the beneficiaries' in terms of their economic growth, employment generation capabilities and long-term sustainability. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), the core understanding is that the researcher must focus on a methodological or philosophical approach which best addresses the research questions rather than using a single method of data collection.

Ontologically, pragmatists accept that human actions are not static but are continuously linked to actions based on past experiences. Present beliefs are shaped by these experiences due to the human the ability to consciously solve problems (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Powell, 2019). Unlike positivism, pragmatic researchers do not believe that reality is autonomous of human experiences and beliefs (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019.). The epistemological position of pragmatism can be fully understood when knowledge is entirely based on experience and is unique to a person (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019.). Mixed-methods research forms the basis of pragmatism, therefore both questionnaire and interview information will be used to analyse human activity and their ability to problem solve (Morgan, 2014). Questionnaire information helps to investigate the research question through careful and predictable experimentation or analysis (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Interview information aims to draw conclusions about patterns of behaviour and the way in which people understand things (Denscombe, 2003).

Triangulation is a mixed-methods model which aims to use results from different methods to corroborate, elaborate and convey new perspectives (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The convergent parallel design uses both questionnaire and interview data collection methods (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). This data is collected independently of one another and the results are analysed simultaneously to provide an overall interpretation of the phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Triangulation as a methodical model that can be challenging as the data may be difficult to converge due to the different methods which are used to address and evoke the same concepts (Creswell & Clark, 2007). However, this model, if executed correctly, has the ability for valid and well-established conclusions about the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

3.3. Research Design

This research was in essence a case study. Eisenhardt (1989) refers to a case study as a "research study which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single setting" (Hussey & Hussey, 1997, p. 66). Leedy (1989, p. 90) defines case and field study research as "a type of descriptive research in which data is gathered directly from individuals (individual cases) or social or community groups and their natural environment for the purpose of studying interactions, attitudes, or characteristics of individuals or groups". Yin (1994) defined a case study as an "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident...[and] relies on multiple sources of evidence" (p. 13). Case studies can provide an in-depth account of interactions, processes and events which exist within a specific instance (Denscombe, 2003). These three definitions are similar in that the information gathered is dynamic and within the real-life context which requires multiple sources of evidence to achieve the desired outcome. Mixed methods studies, according to Molina-Azorin (2016), have the potential to enrich understandings and provide multiple points of view. Case studies and mixed methods are similar in that their overall aim is to enrich understanding from multiple points of view. This is proven by Creswell & Plano Clarke (2018) definition, stating that "it is a type of mixed methods study in which the quantitative and qualitative data collection, results, and integration are used to provide in-depth evidence for a case(s) or develop cases for comparative analysis".

According to Guetterman and Fetters (2018), a case study – mixed methods is inclusive of a case study which is beneficial for the mixed methods design of the study. The integration of the mixed methods approach requires the merging, connection and building (Guetterman and Fetters, 2018). Merging requires understanding both the qualitative and quantitative data and providing awareness of the similar or differing views of the results (Guetterman and Fetters, 2018). Connecting involve the usage of the results from the quantitative results and using this in selecting the participants for the qualitative interviews (Guetterman and Fetters, 2018). Lastly, building is pertinent to the end result because the results are used to identify if meaningful conclusions can be drawn (Guetterman and Fetters, 2018). Poth (2018) and Shannon-Baker (2015) state "Embracing complexity investigation" (involves integrative thinking, adaptative mixed methods and case study research design, and paradigms that support multifaceted (Cook and Kamalooden, 2020 p. 59). The research of Shannon-Baker (2015), Poth

(2018) and Guetterman and Fetters (2018) are all similar in that a case study design – mixed methods design are deliberately combined to access the full potential of the research at hand. Cook and Kamalooden (2020) also affirm in their study that case study design and mixed method design is not a linear approach and hence, this study adopts a convergent parallel design.

According to Green, Caracelli and Graham (1989), 'triangulation seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence and results from different methods (p. 259). The data was collected according to the convergent parallel design (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Interview research was triangulated with questionnaire data to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire research design focussed exclusively on data collection pre-Covid-19, whereas, the interview research design focussed exclusively on data collection during the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire data precedes the interview data in order to understand the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme post completion of the programme. The interview data, which is dominant, aimed to draw conclusions about the perceptions, emotions and experiences of the beneficiaries surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore the overall effect on their businesses. The questionnaire research design was less dominant as this data was collected to assist in comprehensively drawing conclusions about the beneficiaries' businesses. This information was used with the information from the interview research data to gather an overall understanding of the businesses of the beneficiary's post completion of the programme and present day during the Covid-19 pandemic. These conclusions deduced how the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in entrepreneurs adapting to sustain their business and what measures were implemented by the entrepreneurs to adapt to the crisis.

3.4. Target Population

The target population for this study consisted of 49 beneficiaries who have been enrolled in and have completed the hotel groups Entrepreneur Development Programme from the years 2005 to 2018 inclusive.

3.5. Sampling: Interview approach

3.5.1. Sample size estimation

According to Fusch and Ness (2015), data saturation does not occur when the resources are exhausted but rather when there is depth in the data. Data depth is as a result of a lack of new themes presents in conjunction with no new data or coding arising from the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), sample size saturation is not a 'one-size-fits all' approach and is unique to the research methods utilized in the study. Saturation occurs when no additional data is being found and no new codes occur in the data (Saunders et al., 2018). In this study, twenty beneficiaries partook in the interview process and one manager of the programme partook in the interview. Saturation began to occur at interview twenty as no new codes occurred in the data or transcriptions. The interview process was beneficial in drawing conclusions through triangulation through the questionnaire data. There interviews were also of importance in delving into the experiences and ideas of the beneficiaries.

3.5.2. Sampling technique

Interview participants were determined from the beneficiaries' focus groups by adopting purposive sampling. The programme manager was included in the interview process. This sampling method allows for the selection of participants for an intended purpose (Wegner, 2016). Purposive sampling was appropriate to this research as it allows the researcher to not only focus on the experiences of participants which are critical to the research question but also to investigate extreme cases (Wegner, 2016).

3.5.3. Data collection methods

The structured interview guide for the interviews with the beneficiaries are divided into six sections (Appendix G). Section 1, the sustainability and networking section will be posing questions about the beneficiaries' feeling toward their businesses' long-term success and their access to networking. Section 2, the employment generation section asks the beneficiaries about job creation within their businesses throughout 2020 when the pandemic began. Section 3 delves into sensitive financial information about the beneficiaries' business. Section 4 includes questions to understand the beneficiaries' opinion on the success of the Entrepreneur Development Programme. The questions will be asked in present day as well as post one year of living in the pandemic to understand the impact of the Covid-19 virus on their businesses and their ability to adapt their businesses accordingly.

Although, the structured interview with the manager (Appendix J) was similar to both the questionnaire and the interview guide with the beneficiaries, the questions were structured around the hotel group's opinion towards their entrepreneurial development programme and how they believed their beneficiaries' businesses have grown and adapted accordingly. This interview addressed topics such as economic success, employment generation and long-term sustainability. The questions aimed to identify how the programme developed the beneficiaries to cope with adversity. Furthermore, the questions also aimed at understanding if the knowledge and skills learnt during the programme had the ability to equip the beneficiaries for the uncertainties of the initial stages of the pandemic.

3.5.4. Data collection strategy

The programme manager was the only participant on one set of structured interviews. The other set of structured interviews consisted of twenty beneficiaries from the programme. The purpose of the structured interview with the manager was to understand the organisation's perspective on their entrepreneurial development programme and to identify if the organisation believes the programme to be of value to the beneficiaries. This was used to draw comparative conclusions between the responses of the beneficiaries and those of the manager of the programme. The purpose of the structured interviews with the beneficiaries of the programme was to understand their experiences and ideas about the programme as well as the influence the programme had on their economic growth, employment generation and long-term business sustainability. Sustainability was measured using a reduced subset of Geus' (2002) model for corporate sustainability and longevity to examine the main factors which influence a business' longevity. These subsets include former knowledge, access to networking and entrepreneur attentiveness. A reduced subset was utilised due to the suitability required for the application in this study. This assisted in drawing conclusions to identify if prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the business could have been deemed sustainable and how the Covid-19 pandemic hampered long-term sustainability.

To avoid bias, the questions and the way they are posed will be controlled and asked according to the interview guide (Denscombe, 2003). The interviews with the beneficiaries and the manager of the programme were conducted online using either Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Skype. The interviews were recorded, which was disclosed to the participants before the start of the interview. An initial email was sent, notifying the beneficiaries of the study and asking if they wished to participate in the research. A second email was sent to those beneficiaries willing to participate, with the date, time and link for the interview attached. The interview recordings were then transcribed, and the data was analysed using content and thematic analysis to identify patterns and relationships between the variables.

3.5.5. Data quality control

The interview data was explored using Leininger's (1994) criteria to ensure there was consistency and quality in the data analysis. The research was conducted with the suitable participants as the participants were beneficiaries from the entrepreneurial developmental programme. Saturation concentrates on the researcher and the degree to which they understand the project (Leininger, 1994). Recurrent patterning directs attention to the repetition of rituals, behaviours and experiences in order to draw conclusions surrounding an identifiable pattern (Leininger, 1994). Saturation only began to occur during the interview with participant twenty as similar themes and codes began to recur. These criteria ensured that from the questionnaire data, the suitable participant was selected and assisted in identifying patterns within the data set. The interview guide had been adapted in such a way to attempt to avoid bias and skewness of responses, by including the check questions.

Reliability and validity were integral factors considered in the interview process because according to Guba and Lincoln studies in 1981, 1982 and 1989 these two factors run parallel to 'trustworthiness' (Morse, Barret, Mayan et al., 2002). Credibility is the first characteristic of reliability and validity (Shenton, 2004). In this study, this was achieved through the random sampling of the beneficiaries of the programme, triangulation between the questionnaire and the interview data and check questions to ensure the beneficiaries were answering honestly and candidly. Transferability is another characteristic that was taken into consideration and in this study, it is believed that in this study the findings can be applied to other entrepreneurial development programmes (Shenton, 2004). Dependability relates directly to reliability in that if the study were to be repeated following the same conditions, would the same results be obtained. The questionnaire and interview aimed to achieve dependability by ensuring the proposed questions were executed strategically and evaluated effectively (Shenton, 2004). Reliability and validity were ensured throughout the interview process through credibility, transferability and dependability.

3.5.6. Data analysis

Interview data in the form of structured interviews was analysed using content and thematic analysis. Content analysis is a method used to convert data from the open-ended questions to a numerical value (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). According to Downe-Wamboldt (1992, p. 314), "the goal of content analysis is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study”. This knowledge must be represented systematically and objectively to ensuring the phenomenon is truly quantified (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Inductive content analysis is the appropriate method of content analysis in comparison to deductive content analysis because of the lack of former knowledge regarding the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme on its beneficiaries (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

Data collected from the structured interviews was coded in textual format into different categories. This was performed by creating broad categories such as economic growth, sustainability and employment generation and open coding the text to reduce the number of sub-categories and identifying categories which are similar or dissimilar (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The coded categories were presented graphically or tabulated to identify and explain the relationships between the various research questions. The mean difference for employment numbers before entering into the programme, post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic to understand the overall changes of employed numbers overtime was tabulated and elaborated on.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing and organising themes found within a data set. Thematic analysis was used for ideas and knowledge which branched off from the interview guide. This assisted in identifying alternative themes which were explored in more detail. The data was categorized into six main themes based on Braun and Clarke’s (2012) study on thematic analysis. The steps followed were the same approach that Braun and Clarke (2012) suggested in their research.

Table 3.1. Thematic Analysis process in this research

Step	Description
Familiarising yourself with the data	In the interview several main ideas emerged. While completing the transcriptions and making key points, more main ideas came to the forefront.
Generating initial codes	The initial codes were generated and collated into themes upon further reading and listening to the transcriptions, these were a mix of descriptive and interpretive codes.
Searching for themes	Codes were reviewed and overlaps between the codes were identified which aided in the main themes and sub-themes being identified.
Reviewing themes	This step was important to ensure the themes captured the data and was in relation to the main research questions.
Defining and naming themes	The final themes and sub-themes identified are mentioned below: i. Economic Success ii. Employment Generation iii. Measures of adaptability and resilience iv. Sustainability a. Economic Sustainability v. Demographics a. Networking Relationship between networking and profitability

Step	Description
	b. Geographic location Relationship between geographic location and profitability c. Economic sector Relationship between economic sector and profitability d. Level of education Relationship between level of education and profitability vi. Perceived Success of the programme
Producing the report	The final report is presented below. Quantitative (questionnaire) data and qualitative (interview) data were integrated through triangulation. The questionnaire data was investigated and presented graphically and tabulated. The interview data was presented graphically and tabulated with extracts from the interview. As the questions from both the questionnaire and interview guides were similar, drawing conclusions from both data sets showed valuable insight. Additional themes from the interview process were investigated and explored. The two data sets were compared, and conclusions were drawn.

3.6. Sampling: Questionnaire approach

3.6.1. Sample size estimation

The sample size for the questionnaire data comprised the entire population of 49 beneficiaries.

3.6.2. Sampling technique

The entire population was canvased to partake in the questionnaire thus making this study a census sample (Wegner, 2016). Census sampling is appropriate as it is an attempt to gather information about the entire population (Lammer & Badia, 2016). All 49 beneficiaries were asked to participate in the questionnaire. The final sample consisted of 20 beneficiaries who partook in the questionnaire.

There is, however, the possibility that an unrepresentative cross-section of beneficiaries will eventually respond (Wegner, 2016). A fair cross-sectional response or a non-biased response was evaluated once the questionnaires were returned and the interviews transcribed. The cross-sectional responses were evaluated across different industries, economic sectors and fields of work within South Africa to determine if a representative cross-section of sectors and fields were contained within the responses. It can be concluded according to table 3.2 that besides for the hospitality industry, there is a fair cross-sectional response from the beneficiaries. As this entrepreneurial development programme early on was primarily focussed on the hospitality industry, it is understandable that this economic sector has a larger proportion in comparison to the other economic sectors/industries.

Table 3.2. To show the cross-sectional responses for economic sector/industries

Economic Sector/Industry	Count
Arts, Culture and Design	1
Beauty	1
Construction and Engineering	2
Hospitality	8
Landscaping	1
Manufacturing	3
Multi-media and Events	1
Tourism	3
Grand Total	**20**

3.6.3. Data collection strategy

Questionnaire data was collected using a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. Questions were analysed using content analysis and appropriate graphs. In order to ensure a maximum response from the participating beneficiaries, a method recommended by Leedy (1989) was adapted and applied. An initial email was sent out, asking the beneficiaries if they wished to participate in the research. A second email was sent to those beneficiaries willing to participate, with the questionnaire link attached. The questionnaire was in the form of a Google form that was convenient for the participants to reply.

3.6.4. Data collection methods

The research data was collected by means of a descriptive survey, structured interviews with the beneficiaries of the programme, and a structured interview with the managers of the entrepreneurial developmental programme. Interview research methods focus on the ways in which individuals interpret and comprehend the information (Denscombe, 2003). An interview study aims to underscore descriptive techniques which draw conclusions in the perceptions, emotions and beliefs of the population (Denscombe, 2003). Descriptive statistics were analysed to make summaries about the data and content analysis will be used to draw conclusions from the data (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). This data was collected by means of structured interviews. Questions for the structured interviews were collected through structured guides with structured questions. Questions not covered in the interview structure were followed up if they appeared to be relevant to the research structure. Questionnaire research methods focus on statistical analysis and objective measures using instruments such as questionnaires or polls (Wegner, 2016). This data was collected by means of a questionnaire through using closed-ended questions.

The questionnaire was adapted from Isaga's (2012) research in entrepreneurship and the growth of SMME's in Tanzania (Appendix D) and divided into five sections. Section A collected demographic data namely, gender, age, geographic location and level of education. The demographics section of the questionnaire (Section A) was adapted from Isaga's (2012) study as it is important to determine if demographics have an impact on profitability. Section B, the sustainability section posed questions about the beneficiaries' feeling toward their businesses' long-term success and their access to networking. Section C, the employment generation section, asked the beneficiaries about job creation within their businesses. Section D and E, the last sections of the questionnaire asked sensitive questions about the beneficiaries' business. These sections were placed last because according to Denscombe (2003), as the less sensitive questions will build trust and assist in the beneficiaries' willingness to complete the questionnaire. Throughout each sub-section of the questionnaire, questions about the Covid-19 pandemic were not included. This was intentional to understand the overall impact of the entrepreneurial development programme and to assist in exploring the businesses of the beneficiaries before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Section 1 and 2 from Isaga's (2012) study are relevant as Isaga addresses sections A, B and F of the questionnaire. Isaga's (2012) section four aided in the development of the three-point Likert scale in section B which addresses questions surrounding business sustainability~~.~~ Geus's model for corporate sustainability and longevity, incorporated in section B of the questionnaire, aims to investigate the importance of access to networking and entrepreneurial attentiveness. Including questions surrounding this was necessary to understand the impact that networking has on the beneficiary's business. Due to the limited research existing regarding the impact and effectiveness of an entrepreneurial development programme, questions in section D of the questionnaire, aimed to ascertain whether the beneficiary believed the programme to be a success.

3.6.5. Data quality control

Reliability is the degree to which the findings are credible by examining its consistency and accuracy across the total population, and whether the study will produce similar results if the study is to be replicated (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Reliability looks at the study's ability to be replicated using a similar methodology (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Validity examines to what extent the study's results are accurate and if the study measures, what it intends to measure (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

The questionnaire had been adapted in such a way to attempt to avoid bias and skewness of responses, by including the check questions. The entire population was requested to participate in the study which in turn helped avoid bias due to census sampling.

3.6.6. Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the questionnaire data from the close-ended questions. Section A, the demographics section of the questionnaire was used and analysed using nominal and ordinal scales. Nominal scales categorise the data and ordinal scales rank the data accordingly (Wegner, 2016). These graphs were used to assist in drawing conclusions and identifying relationships between the data pre-Covid-19 post completion of the programme and after the initial crisis of the pandemic. The data from the demographics section will be measured using measures of central tendency and descriptive statistics. The data was represented using graphs and tables. A tabulated comparison between demographics and profitability was performed to identify if there is an association between the two (Section A and F). This association was identified through measures of central tendency and graphs. A three-point Likert Scale was used in the sustainability section to determine if the beneficiaries believed that their businesses were sustainable (Section B of the questionnaire). The results were descriptive in nature and were presented graphically to view the measures of central tendency.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

This research complied with all the ethical requirements of the University of Witwatersrand. The researcher was aware of, and ensured adherence to, the research ethical considerations, such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, non-disclosure, anonymity and the use of research data. Ethical clearance was authorised (**H21/09/17**) from the University of Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical). Participants were presented with a letter that provided them with adequate information about the research project as well as with a consent form for the beneficiaries to complete. Participants were advised that they were free to refuse to participate in the survey and that no personal data would be used for the study. All personal data was stored in a password protected computer and will be deleted once the researcher's degree has been obtained.

3.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter addressed crucial elements relevant to this research study. The paradigm, triangulation approach and research methodology were addressed. The population and sample size for the interview and questionnaire were determined in terms of saturation and census sampling. Clarity in terms of data analysis methods were addressed. The mixed methods research design was in accordance with the convergent parallel design.

Chapter 4: Presentation of interview and questionnaire data, analysis and discussion of findings

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the results from the questionnaires and structured interviews will be presented, analysed and discussed in accordance with the literature review. Triangulation between the questionnaire and interview data is important, since there is a link between the respective sets of data and the discussion of both sets of findings were conducted together. The questionnaire data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented with graphs and tables. The interview data was analyzed according to constructs and themes developed and also presented with graphs and tables. Through triangulation and the convergent parallel design, the findings from the two data sets were explored and compared and meaningful conclusions were drawn.

The questionnaire data began with data cleaning and descriptive statistics. Data cleaning was performed by cross-checking the information from the questionnaire and ensuring each beneficiary responded correctly. The interview data began with transcribing the interview recordings. The transcriptions provided the main constructs to be identified and these were presented in conjunction with the interview question. The constructs were transformed into main themes which allowed for the generation of a thematic causal map.

4.2. Sample frame review

A total of twenty responses were gathered from the questionnaire and a total of twenty responses were gathered from the interviews. The manager of the programme also partook in an interview and this was to identify the impact of the programme from the hotel group’s perspective. The data sets enabled the collection of extensive details about the beneficiaries’ businesses both pre Covid-19 (identified from the questionnaire) and during Covid-19 (identified from the interviews).

4.3. Data credibility

To ensure data credibility some questions asked in the questionnaire and the structured interviews with the beneficiaries and the manager of the programme were duplicated. Check questions were integrated to ensure accuracy of response. Questions derived from themes which presented themselves in the interviews were asked in such a way that consistency was maintained.

4.4. Themes developed

The process of data collection, data cleaning and content analysis allowed for descriptive tables and graphs to be presented and seemed to be identified.

The themes which were defined in step five (table 3.1) were explored and investigated in conjunction with the data from the questionnaires. This was to holistically understand the impact of the hotel group’s entrepreneurial development programme on the businesses of the beneficiaries as well as the effects on the Covid-19 pandemic on these businesses.

The following main themes were identified based on the research questions as mentioned in section 1.6:

- Economic Success
- Employment Generation
- Measures of adaptability and resilience
- Sustainability
  - Economic Sustainability
- Demographics
  - Networking
    - Relationship between networking and profitability
  - Geographic location
    - Relationship between geographic location and profitability
  - Economic Sector
    - Relationship between economic sector and profitability
  - Level of education
    - Relationship between level of education and profitability
- Perceived success of the programme

4.4.1. Economic Success

Economic success and enterprise development was measured by a growth in turnover and a growth in profitability. Prieger et al. (2016) noted that in South Africa, the relationship between economic growth and the entrepreneur is intricate and multifaceted. High unemployment rates, organisational restructures and redesigns have forced many individuals into entrepreneurial activities as a means of survival (Prieger et al., 2016). Economic data was collected from the questionnaires to identify and draw conclusions about the general trend in economic growth post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic. As the interview data made use of interviews, economic data was collected for during the Covid-19 pandemic only and the reason for changes to the economic success were explored in greater detail.

Economic success was identified as a main theme to investigate the changes in turnover and profitability two years post completion of the programme as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on turnover and profitability. This section will detail the findings from the perspective of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire and the beneficiaries from the interviews.

Research question

1. Has the turnover and profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses shown sustained growth in the period of at least two years after completing the programme and has there been a recovery in the growth post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Questionnaire data

Table 4.1 and 4.2 show the economic success from the questionnaires post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 4.1. Economic Success post completion of the programme from the questionnaire data

	Economic Success in the first two years after completing the programme		
Economic Success	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
Turnover	13	5	2
Profitability	14	5	1

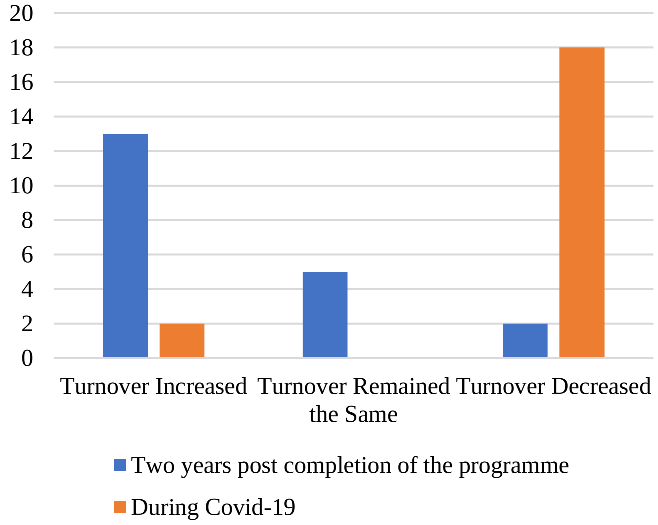


Figure 4.1. Comparison of turnover post completion of the programme and during Covid-19 from data gathered from the questionnaires

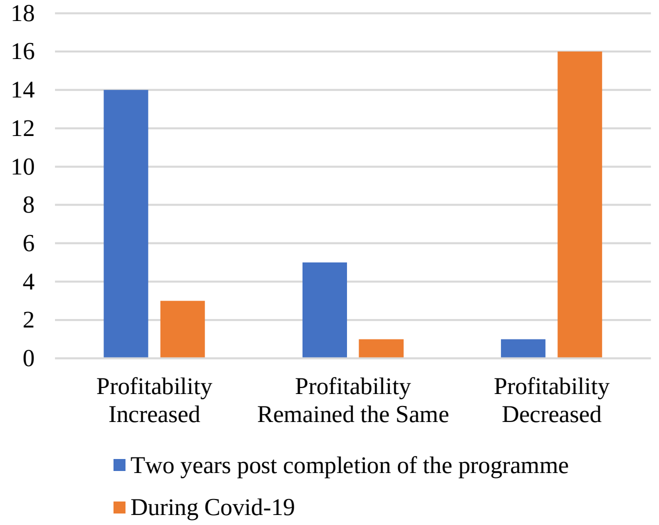


Figure 4.2. Comparison of profitability post completion of the programme and during Covid-19 from data gathered from the questionnaires

Table 4.2. Economic success during the Covid-19 pandemic from the questionnaire data

	Economic Success during Covid-19		
Economic Success	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
Turnover	2	0	18
Profitability	3	1	16

In table 4.1, from twenty respondents from the questionnaires 65% indicated an increase in turnover while 70% indicated an increase in profitability. In both turnover and profitability, 25% respectively indicated that their economic data remained the same. The increase in turnover and profitability could be attributed to the completion of the programme. The programme empowers the beneficiaries by providing access to a small business management course as well as a basic accounting course (C.

Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). Figure 4.1 and 4.2 are a graphical representation of the data in table 4.1 and 4.2 and a clear decline in turnover and profitability can be noted. The beneficiaries are assigned their own financial mentor and this mentor guides the beneficiary in creating an appropriate business strategy and plan. It must be noted that 15% of the beneficiaries indicated a decrease in profitability and turnover. The questionnaire did not explore reasons for an increase or decrease in profitability and turnover. In table 4.2, 90% and 80% expressed decrease in turnover and profitability, respectively. As businesses ceased operations and the supply and demand was impacted, a decrease in turnover and profitability was as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. 10% of the beneficiaries noted an increase in turnover and 15% indicated an increase in profitability. These beneficiaries were fortunate that the uncertainty caused by the pandemic did not halt their business operations, the sectors in which they operate (arts, culture and design and construction and engineering) would appear to be more resilient to shock than the hospitality industry)

Table 4.3 to 4.6 are detailed tables of the percentage range change of turnover and profitability post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic from the questionnaire.

Table 4.3. Detailed turnover post completion of the programme from the questionnaire data

	Turnover in the first two years after completing the programme		
Percentage	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
0 - 10%	1	5	1
11 - 20%	7	0	0
21 -30%	1	0	0
31 -40%	2	0	0
41-50%	0	0	0
Above 50%	2	0	1
Grand Total	**13**	**5**	**2**

Table 4.4. Detailed turnover during the Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

	Turnover during Covid-19		
Percentage	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
0 - 10%	1		2
11 - 20%			1
21 -30%			1
31 -40%			0
41-50%			4
Above 50%	1		10
Grand Total	**2**	**0**	**18**

Table 4.5. Detailed profitability table post completion of the programme from the questionnaire data

	Two years after completing the programme		
Percentage	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
0 - 10%	1	5	1
11 - 20%	6		
21 -30%	4		
31 -40%			
41-50%	2		
Above 50%	1		
Grand Total	**14**	**5**	**1**

Table 4.6. Detailed profitability table during Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

	During Covid-19		
Percentage	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
0 - 10%	1	1	4
11 - 20%			
21 -30%			
31 -40%			1
41-50%	1		2
Above 50%	1		9
Grand Total	**3**	**1**	**16**

Post completion of the programme, 35% of the beneficiaries indicated that their turnover increased between 11-20% (Table 4.3). However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, 70% of the same beneficiaries indicated that their turnover decreased by over 41% (Table 4.4). The Covid-19 pandemic posed many challenges on businesses' economic growth because of the constraints on trade between countries and disruptions in the markets due to the initial restrictions by governments (Maritz et al., 2020). Table 4.5 shows that 30% of the beneficiaries' businesses saw a growth in profitability between 11-20% and 20% experienced a growth between 21-30%.

An increase in opportunities would result in an increase in growth and expansion for the entrepreneur which will ultimately result in greater economic growth (Acs et al., 2009). The programme provided the beneficiaries with additional opportunity as well as increased business knowledge and understanding so a growth in profitability is an indicator of a successful programme. This links to Foley et al.'s (2016) five factor model because growth in profitability relates to natural capital. Natural capital is imperative for long-term sustainability of the organisation due to the preservation of resources and to aim to eliminate waste within the production cycle. 80% of the beneficiaries experienced a decrease in their profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic (table 4.6). Maritz et al. (2020) in their research identified that many entrepreneurs were faced with a trade-off between the profitability of their business versus the growth of their business. This literature concurs with the findings from the research as the beneficiaries were faced with this trade-off. However this trade-off was between economic growth and survival rather than profitability versus business growth.

Interview Data:

Table 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 show the number of interview beneficiaries who noted a change in their turnover and profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 4.7. Economic Success post completion of the programme from the interview data

	Economic Success during the Covid-19 pandemic		
Economic Success	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
Turnover	0	0	20
Profitability	1	0	19

Table 4.8. Detailed turnover table during the Covid-19 pandemic from the interview data

	Turnover during the Covid-19 pandemic		
Percentage	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
0 - 10%			
11 - 20%			
21 - 30%			2
31 - 40%			2
41 - 50%			1
Above 50%			15
Grand Total	**0**	**0**	**20**

Table 4.9. Detailed turnover table post completion of the programme from the interview data

	Profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic		
Percentage	Increase	Remained the same	Decreased
0 - 10%			
11 - 20%			
21 -30%			2
31 - 40%	1		
41- 50%			2
Above 50%			15
Grand Total	**1**	**0**	**19**

The table below consists of some verbatim quotes that highlight the economic success of the beneficiaries.

Table 4.10: Quotes from the interview participants regarding economic success of their businesses post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
Economic Success	**Looking back, is there anything you could have done differently to improve your profitability last year?**	- No, used every single resource - Pre-Covid trajectory was to grow business by 30% and profit would have increased by 60% but stuck with investments and payments during Covid-19 so would not have invested to grow business - Yes, if did not have financial constraints, would have been able to adapt better to what was happening - No, without sales business cannot survive - Yes, missed opportunities because looked into different sectors and e-commerce space too late

This question was posed to allow the beneficiaries to expand on what they learnt during the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic and what they would have done differently. Many of the beneficiaries noted that if there were no external influences such as lockdown restrictions and financial constraints, they would have been able to adapt better to what was happening. Covid-19 imposed severe structural constraints in terms of loss of sales and pressure on financial constraints. Existing debt was still to be serviced and a majority of the beneficiaries used every single resource possible to ensure their business survived. These main constructs arose from the question 'looking back, is there anything you could have done differently to improve your profitability last year?'. Interviewee twelve is an example of one such beneficiary who experienced a drop in sales, *"the pandemic resulted in a drop in my sales and without sales, my business cannot survive"*. Interviewee fifteen stated *"there was nothing I could have done differently to improve my profitability because I tried my best and put my best foot forward"*. The beneficiaries of the programme expressed that without the constraints of the pandemic, their profitability would have remained stable. Interviewee ten said *"if I did not have the financial constraints and debt to service, I would have had more flexibility to be proactive during the pandemic and adapt more to what was happening"*.
Interviewee seven expressed that their business was on a growth trajectory before the Covid-19 pandemic (Table 4.10) and the Covid-19 greatly influenced this and caused financial strain during the pandemic because business operations ceased (Appendix L1 &L2). Interviewee seven also indicated that during the Covid-19 pandemic, their business was *"stuck with paying off business loan for the investment and because of this, overheads during the pandemic were unable to be drastically reduced*". Foley et al.'s (2016) financial capital refers to the actual value of the financial capitals combined which is invaluable in isolation. This financial capital links to the financial constraints of the beneficiaries during the pandemic because in isolation, the beneficiaries would have suffered greatly. However with the assistance of the government grants, TERS and UIF for employees businesses were exposed to some cash flow into their business.

When comparing table 4.1 with table 4.8, the respondents had a high decrease in their turnover and profitability. The same can be noted when comparing table 4 and 6 with table 9 and 10 where 80% and 85% expressed a decrease over 41% in their turnover and profitability, respectively. There is one exception amongst tables 4.8 and 4.9 where the interviewee experienced an increase in profitability.

However this interviewee's business is in the financial sector and this sector remained necessary during the pandemic. This interviewee noted that *'some good months with large sums of money coming in from completed projects helped with profitability'*.

There is a noticeable relationship between the results found and the research from the literature review. Sunter (2011) and Mahadea (2012) explain in their respective studies that SME's are valuable within the country because of their ability to utilise the current business environment and transform their owner-manager business to a business which is a driver of job creation. This was evident in the study as post completion of the programme, the businesses of the beneficiaries indicated growth in their turnover and profitability and this resulted in a growth in employment throughout their businesses. The entrepreneurial development programme was successful in acting as a driver for positive business change in terms of relevant mentors and coaches which allowed for improvement in the beneficiaries' businesses. The Covid-19 pandemic posed many challenges on businesses' economic growth because of the constraints on trade between countries and disruptions in the market due to the initial restrictions by governments (Maritz et al., 2020). Lockdown impacted the tourism industry because of the restrictions imposed to limit movement and travel. These restrictions caused a ripple effect through supply chains and businesses.

This too was noticed in the study as many businesses were forced to cease operations or pivot their businesses to be classified as 'essential services businesses'. These changes influenced the beneficiaries' growth plans for their businesses as their main aim was to survive throughout the pandemic. Many entrepreneurs were faced with a trade-off between profitability of their business versus the growth of their business (Maritz et al., 2020)

It can therefore be concluded that during post completion of the programme, the questionnaire and interview respondents noticed an overall growth in turnover and profitability which therefore answers the research questions about whether a majority of the businesses showed a sustained growth in turnover and profitability post completion of the programme. However, the same cannot be concluded for turnover and profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic from both the questionnaire and interview beneficiaries there was a general decline in turnover and profitability thus there was no sustained growth post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.4.2. Employment Generation

Awogbenle and Iwuamaai (2010), states that the eradication of unemployment can be a result of entrepreneurs creating wealth by seizing opportunities and growing and developing their business. There is a link between Awogbenle and Iwuamdai (2010) study and the beneficiaries of the programme. The beneficiaries have the ability to grow their business if they are provided with the correct set of knowledge and skills. From the tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 (See appendix K) , table 4.11 can be extracted which shows an employment trend between both full-time and part-time post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic

Employment generation was identified as a main theme to investigate the changes in employment numbers, especially full-time and part-time two years post completion of the programme as well as the impact of the Covid-19 on employment numbers. This section will detail the findings from the perspective of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire and the beneficiaries' from the interviews.

Research questions

1. Has the number of people employed by the beneficiaries' businesses shown sustained growth in the period of at least two years after completing the programme and has there been a recovery post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What proportion of the businesses of the beneficiaries showed recovery in employment numbers to pre-Covid-19 levels?

Questionnaire data:

Table 4.11. Number of employees employed post completion of the programme in comparison to Covid-19

Trend	Full-time Employees over the five year period	Part-time Employees over the five year period	All employees during Covid-19
Grew	4	4	0
Static	11	10	6
Shrank	1	3	10
'Failed' = lost all employees	4	3	4
Grand total	**20**	**20**	**20**

A trend was noted from the questionnaire participants in that businesses with a high number of employees before entering the programme, reduced their workforce in the four years post the programme (Table 5.1 and 5.2 in Appendix K). Table 4.11. supports this finding. Four main trends namely, employment numbers grew, were static, shrunk and 'failed'. The term failed in this instance is related to the number of employees employed drastically decreasing until there were no employees in the business. These findings are aligned with Foley et al.'s (2016) human capital factor from their model as human capital is a driving factor for entrepreneurial businesses because of the individual's knowledge, skills and ability which can be beneficial to the organisation. The positive influence of human capital was noticed amongst the beneficiaries from the programme because through the development of their knowledge and skills through the participation in the programme, they in turn were equipped with the ability to have a positive influence on job creation.

When comparing full-time employees to part-time employees in table 10, 20% of the business grew in employment numbers throughout the four years post completion of the programme. 55% and 50% respectively remained static in their employment numbers in full-time and part-time employees were generally consistent throughout the four years post completion of the programme (Table 4.11). 3% and 15% of business shrank in their full-time and part-time employment numbers which showed a decline in number of people employed throughout the four years post completion of the programme. 20% and

15% respectively of businesses ‘failed’ in full-time and part-time employment numbers indicating a drastic decline in employment numbers throughout the four years post completion of the programme (Table 4.11). As many of these beneficiaries completed the programme in 2018, their fourth-year post completion of the programme will only be in 2022 and th is was considered in the data preparation. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the full-time and part-time employment numbers declined (Table 10). 50% of the total number of employees shrank during the Covid-19 pandemic, while 30% remained static and 20% ‘failed’.

Many of the beneficiaries expressed that due to cashflow constraints, lack of supply and demand and economic difficulties, employees were either retrenched or moved onto a short-time schedule with a salary decrease. Interviewee seven stated that *“lockdown had a knock-on effect that influenced cash flow, forced me to downsize my business and cut costs”.* Interviewee eight expressed the same view in that they also struggled with labour, salaries and cashflow. Interviewee eleven said *“I had to try and save costs where I could to keep my business afloat and this meant having to let go of some auxiliary staff”*. This view is supported with a study by Fernandes (2020), “many established firms were compelled to reduce their production or number of branches causing a drastic increase in unemployment” (p 1166). Jain, et al. (2020) study introduces the emergency social insurance relief fund called Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (TERS) which some of the beneficiaries resorted to in order to pay their staff. In the structured interviews, a common trend of employers using the TERS relief fund as a means of income for themselves and their staff was noted. Many of these business owners opted for the TERS relief fund to mitigate retrenching their workforce. An interesting point was raised by two interviewees stating that TERS had malfunctions in the online system and the fund administrators were unable to identify the correct business details. These beneficiaries were unable to rely on TERS as a means of income for their employees. Interviewee five is one such beneficiary and stated *“I was unable to rely on government funding because most of my employees were interns and the remaining employees registered to work in South Africa”*. This situation further resulted in a reduction in employment numbers because the beneficiaries were unable to sustain enough income to pay salaries for their employees. Interviewee seventeen expressed *“funding from the government by means of TERS was a measure that helped me maintain my cashflow when lockdown restrictions were imposed”.* These trends can be noted in table 4.10 where a majority of the beneficiaries’ businesses shrank or failed. A similar study was executed by (Jain et al., 2020) in which it was noted that the decline in active employment was 40%. The same was found in Kalogiannidis (2020) study as this study also noted that businesses had to reduce their employees by an average of 40%. Table 10. supports this trend as 50% of the entrepreneurs reduced their employment numbers and 30% of the businesses remained static with the same or similar number of employees employed. This proves Kalogiannidis (2020), Jain et al., (2020) and Meahjohn and Persad’s (2020) findings in their respective studies in that the pandemic has resulted in large disruptions in the economy and entrepreneurship and as a result of these disruptions, employment generation has been impacted.

The graphs below aimed to identity trends in full-time and part-time employment numbers from before the programme (Year 0) to four years after the programme (Year 1,2,3 and 4 respectively). Table 4.12 is a key in order to understand the graphs from the twenty respondents from the questionnaire.

Table 4.12. Key for the graphs

Year	Key	Category	Number of employees
Year 0	Before entering into the programme	Category One	No employees, only the business owner
Year 1	One-year post completion of the programme	Category Two	1-3 employees in the business
Year 2	Two years post completion of the programme	Category Three	4-6 employees in the business
Year 3	Three years post completion of the programme	Category Four	7-10 employees in the business
Year 4	Four years post completion of the programme	Category Five	11+ employees in the business

Full-time employees:

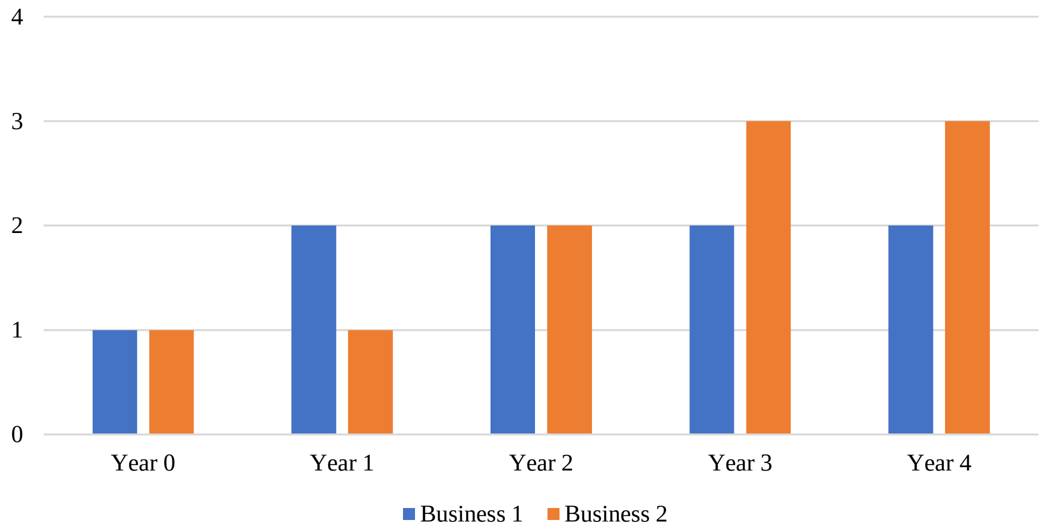


Figure 4.3 Businesses that entered into the programme with no full-time employees only the business owner.

In figure 4.3 business one increased employees post completion of the programme to 1-3 employees and remained stable for the first four years after the programme. Business two also showed a sustainable growth post completion of the programme. However there was only growth in employment numbers two years post completion of the programme with a steady increase between year two and year three indicating that business two's employment numbers grew and remained stable in year three and four post completion of the programme.

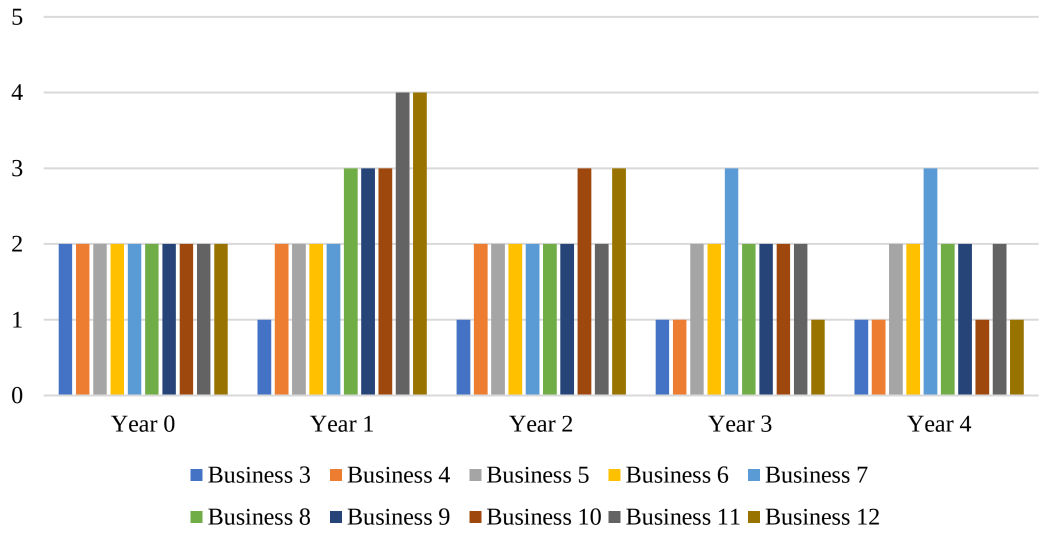


Figure 4.4 Businesses that entered into the programme with 1-3 full-time employees.

In figure 4.4 one-year post completion of the programme, business three decreased their employment numbers to no employees with only the business owner and remained the same until year four. Businesses four, five, six and seven's employment numbers remained the same from year one to year two. In years three and four, business three decreased their employment numbers. However, business seven increased their employment numbers during the same two-year period. Businesses eight to twelve increased their employment numbers in the year only after the programme and reduced those numbers in years two and three. It can be concluded that the majority of the businesses post completion of the programme increased their employment numbers in year one and then decreased their employment numbers in years two, three and four. This could be as a result of excess individuals being employed because of the expected business need one year post completion of the programme or due to business growth post completion of the programme and the temporary need for an increased labour force.

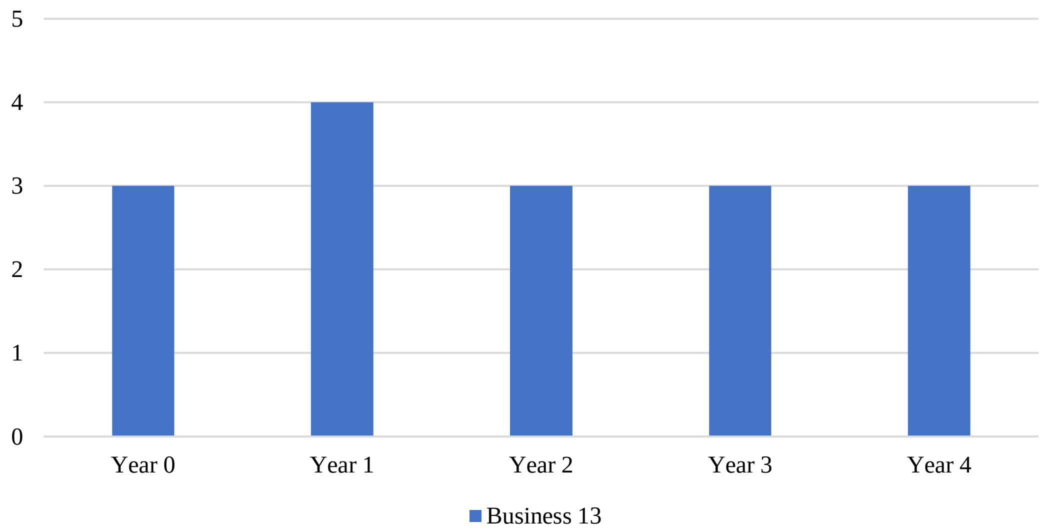


Figure 4.5. Businesses that entered into the programme with 4-6 full-time employees.

Figure 4.5 shows only one business that entered into the programme with 4-6 employees. The same conclusion in figure 4.4 can be drawn in figure 4.5 as one year after the programme, business thirteen increased their employment numbers to 7-10 employees and then in year two to year four the employment numbers decreased to the same as before entering the programme.

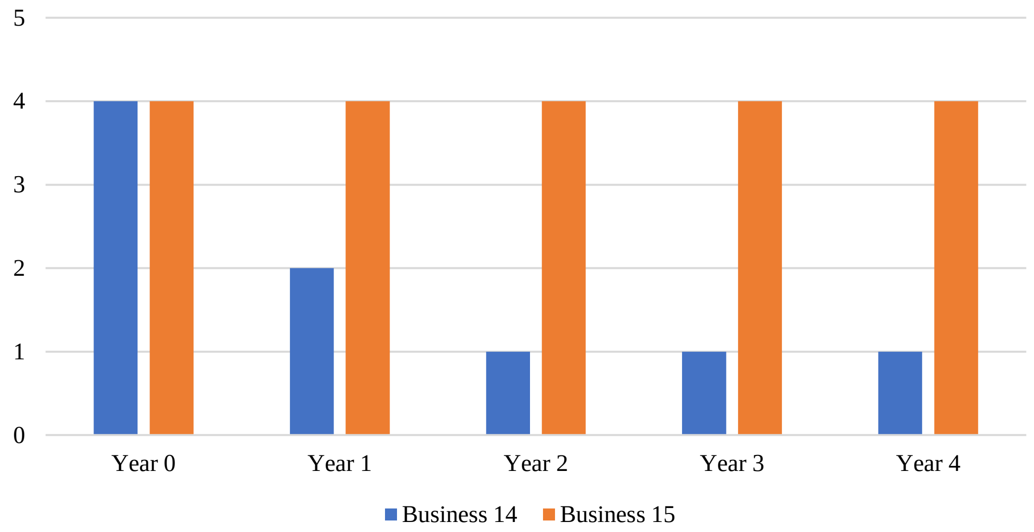


Figure 4.6. Businesses that entered into the programme with 7-10 full-time employees

Figure 4.6 shows two businesses that had 7-10 employees before entering into the programme. Business fourteen halved their employment numbers one-year post completion of the programme to 1-3 employees and in years two to four, there was a further decrease as there were no employees, only the business owner. Business fifteen showed sustained employment numbers throughout the five-year period.

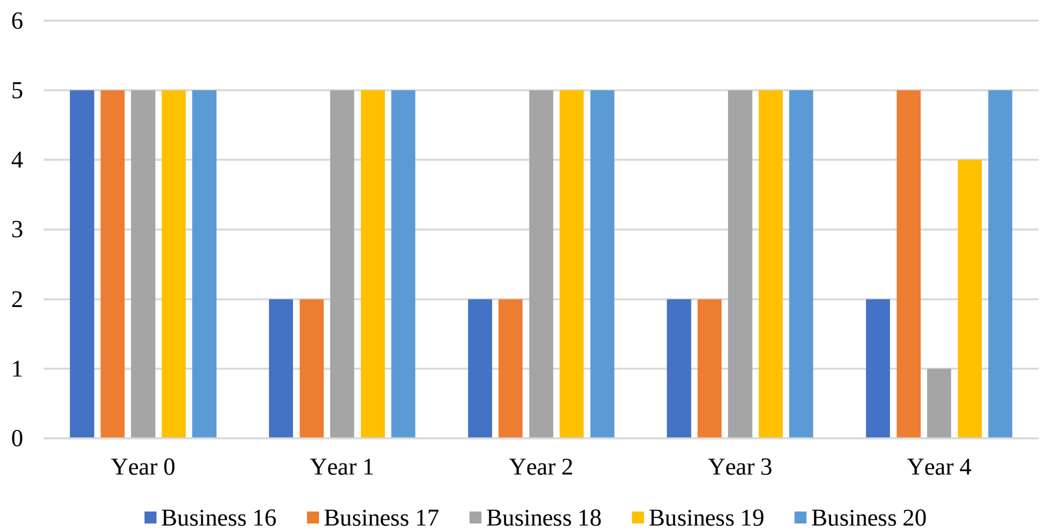


Figure 4.7. Businesses that entered into the programme with 11+ full-time employees.

Figure 4.7 shows five businesses that entered into the programme with over 11 full-time employees. Business sixteen decreased their employment numbers post completion of the programme to 4-6 employees and sustained this throughout the four years. Business seventeen followed a similar pattern to business sixteen except in year four, business seventeen increased their employment numbers to the same employment numbers as before entering into the programme. Businesses eighteen and nineteen sustained their employment numbers until year four post completion of the programme where both businesses saw a decline in employment numbers. Business eighteen had to reduce their entire staff, this could have been due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Business nineteen saw a slight decrease in employment numbers to 7-10 employees in year four. Business twenty was the only business that was able to sustain their employment numbers throughout the five-year period. This could be associated to this business being established and the beneficiary understanding the importance of a stable workforce.

It can be deduced that from Table 4.13 there was a general trend of employment growth amongst the twenty businesses post completion of the programme. 55% of employers maintained their full-time employees and 20% of businesses showed an increase in employment numbers. The remaining 25% of businesses either ‘failed’ wherein there were no employees employed besides for the business owner or there was an overall decrease in employment numbers.

Table 4.13. Number of full-time employed post completion of the programme in comparison to Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

Trend	Post completion of the programme
Grew	4
Static	11
Shrank	1
‘Failed’ = lost all employees	4

Part-time employees:

The graphs below aimed to identity trends in part-time employment numbers from before the programme (Year 0) to four years after the programme (Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively). Table 4.13 is a key in order to understand the graphs from the twenty respondents from the questionnaire. The beneficiaries’ part-time employees are business cycle and demand dependent as many of their businesses are in the hospitality industry. Therefore, the more growth a business has and the more sustainable it is, the more chance there is of improving conditions for part-time employees.

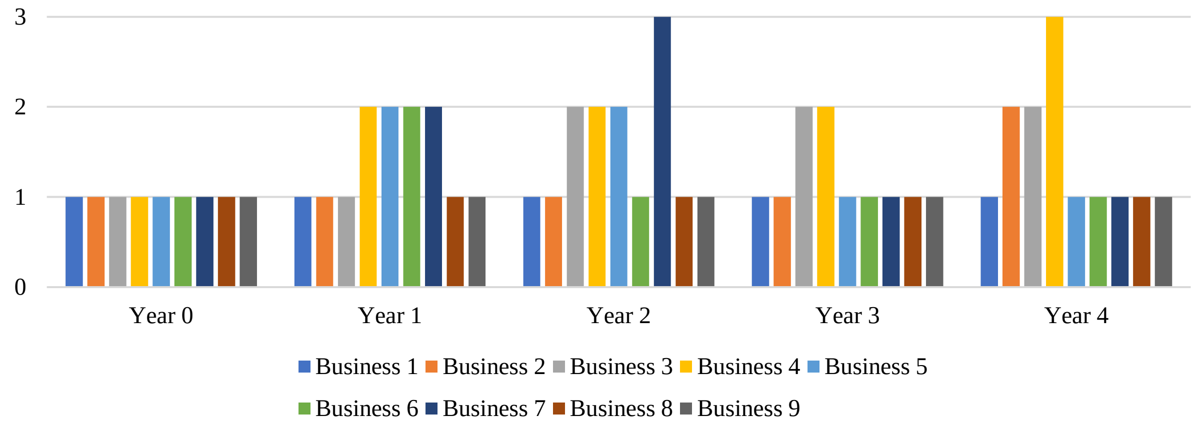


Figure 4.8 Businesses that entered into the programme with no part-time employees.

Figure 4.8 shows businesses that entered into the programme with no part-time employees. Businesses one, eight and nine did not employ part-time employees throughout the five-year period. Business three increased their employment number of part-time employees in year two post completion of the programme and maintained their employment numbers of 1-3 employees until year four. Businesses four and five showed similar employment growth patterns in years one and two where their part-time employment numbers rose to 1-3 employees. In year four, business four increased their part-time employment numbers to 4-6 employees which indicates a growth in business demand resulting in a growth in part-time employment numbers. Business seven, saw a large growth in part-time employment numbers in year two from 1-3 employees to 4-6 employees. However, in years four and five, the business no longer employed part-time employees. This could be as a result of changes in the business supply or demand and/or the Covid-19 pandemic which drastically impacted employment, especially part-time employment numbers for the beneficiaries.

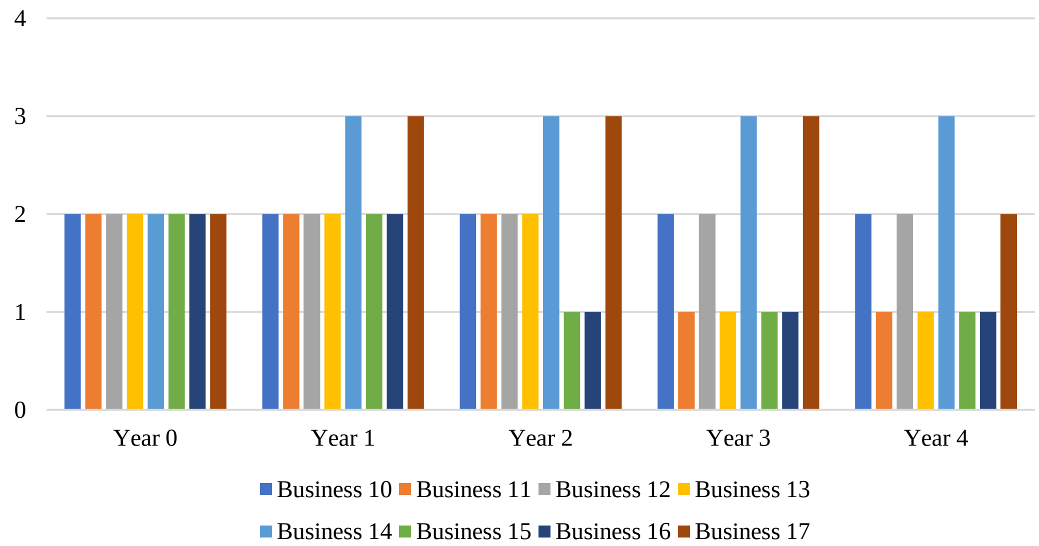


Figure 4.9. Businesses that entered into the programme with 1-3 part-time employees.

Similar to figure 4.8, figure 4.9 shows businesses with part-time employees in the range of 1-3 employees. Businesses ten and twelve maintained their part-time employment numbers throughout the five-year period. Business eleven was able to sustain their part-time employment numbers of 1-3 employees until year three where this decreased to no part-time employees. In years three and four, business thirteen decreased their part-time employment numbers which were stable from year zero to year two of 1-3 employees to no part-time employees. Businesses fourteen and seventeen showed an increase in year one post completion of the programme and were able to sustain their employment numbers of 4-6 employees until year four where business seventeen decreased their employment number to 1-3 employees. Businesses fifteen and sixteen had a stable part-time employment number of 1-3 employees in before entering into the programme and year one. However from year two, both businesses did not employ part-time employees.

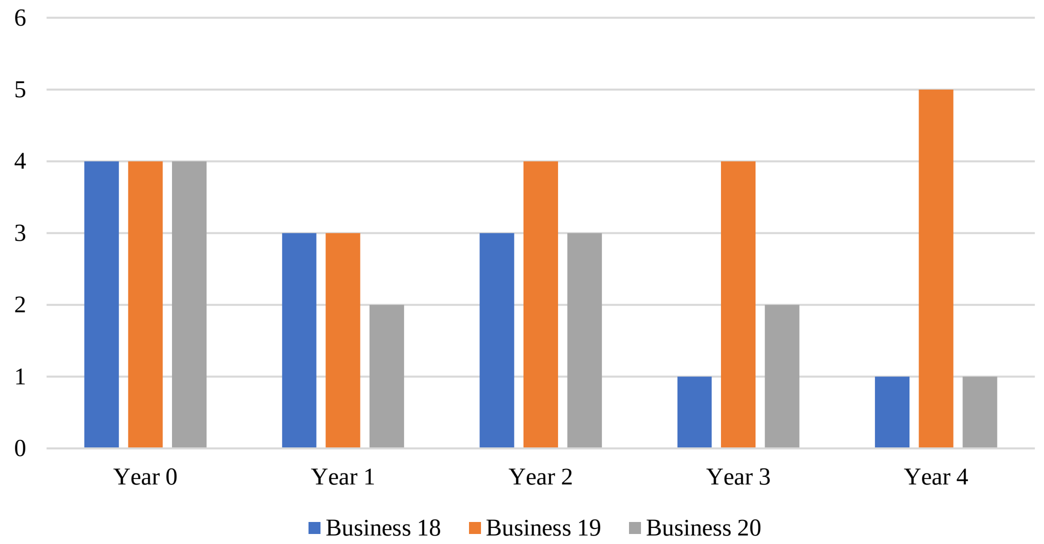


Figure 4.10 Businesses that entered into the programme with 7-10 part-time employees.

The beneficiaries did not enter into the programme with 4-6 employees thus there is no category three for the part-time employees. Category four in table 4.11 shows three businesses that entered into the programme with 7-10 employees. Business eighteen showed a steady decline in their part-time employees from year one to year four. Years three and four could be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic thus meaning business eighteen not employing part-time employees. Business nineteen experienced a slight decrease in employees in year one post completion of the programme followed by an increase in employees from year two to year four. Business twenty decreased their part-time employment numbers to 1-3 employees one-year post completion of the programme. In year two, business twenty increased to 4-6 employees. However in year three there was another decrease to 1-3 employees followed by no part-time employees being employed in year four.

It can be deduced that from Table 4.13 there was not a general trend of employment growth amongst the twenty businesses post completion of the programme. 45% of the employers noted a decline in part-time employees and only 25% of the businesses showed an increase in employment numbers. 25% of the businesses remained static and 5% of businesses ‘failed’ which indicates that there were no part-time employees in that particular business. The reason that 25% of the businesses remained static in their part-time employment numbers could be attributed to the fact that the need for part-time employees remained cyclical during the four year period and these businesses only required part-time employees during their busy season.

Interview Data:

Table 4.14. Number of part-time employed post completion of the programme in comparison to Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

Trend	Post completion of the programme
Grew	5
Static	5
Shrank	9
'Failed' = lost all employees	1

In terms of this study, a sustained improvement in profitability versus number of people employed will be equated to an increase in productivity. The mean for all three samples was taken from the data to identify if the programme aided in a growth in employment numbers. This was done to further support the findings from the questionnaire. It was also done to deduce whether or not there was a trend of employment growth before the programme in comparison to post completion of the programme and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on employment numbers.

The results from the interviews prove that there was a general growth in employment numbers post completion of the programme (Table 4.13). 85% of the beneficiaries indicated growth in employment numbers post completion of the programme and employee growth ranged from one to 66 employees. This proves the research objective that post completion of the programme it can be concluded that the beneficiaries showed sustained growth in employment numbers. This is due to the fact that post completion of the programme a majority of the beneficiaries increased their employment numbers by a minimum of one employee. 30% of the beneficiaries from the structured interviews expressed that they had to retrench a mean of 7 employees indicating a 'failed' employment generation (Tables 4.14 and 4.16). 35% of the beneficiaries stated that they had to shrink their workforce. 35% of the beneficiaries indicated that the employment numbers did not change throughout the pandemic because of operational measures which were put in place.

Table 4.15 Quotes that highlight employment generation capabilities of the businesses of the beneficiaries

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
Employment Generation	**Once business begins to stabilise, do you believe you will have capacity to employ more people?**	- Yes, o Introduced a new product so will need more employees o Based on the economy o Since business was closed for over a year, will need to employ more employees o Want to reduce my responsibilities and plan to expand business o Competitors have gone out of business and the market is large with a high demand o Growth dependent because main focus is to be profitable and sustainable

The beneficiaries believed that their businesses had the opportunity for growth in employment numbers once business begins to stabilise again. It can be noted that many of these beneficiaries noted that their business is based on supply and demand and thus an increase in employment numbers will only be possible once there is an increase in the demand. Interviewee seventeen noted *"There will only be an increase in employment numbers once my business shows growth again"*. This is an important factor to consider because the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in this business and many of the other interviewees' businesses showing a decline in profitability thus impacting the businesses' sustainability. Interviewee thirteen expressed *"there is capacity to employ more people since our competitors have gone out of business"*. Interviewee nineteen shared a similar viewpoint to interviewee thirteen and stated that *"I will take a different approach to employing more people in the future in that only once my business recovers will I start employing more skilled labour for my business"*. This was evident with many of the beneficiaries' businesses within the programme as many businesses did not survive (C. Tothill, personal communication, 19 February 2021). Table 4.14 supports this and provides a content analysis of the number of businesses that grew post completion of the programme, 85% noted an increase. The same cannot be said during the Covid-19 pandemic as no business grew, whereas 35% noted a shrink in employment numbers and 30% expressed that they had to let go of all their employees.

Table 4.16. Employment numbers from the interview beneficiaries

Trend	Post completion of the programme	During Covid-19
Grew	17	0
Static	2	7
Shrank	1	7
'Failed' = lost all employees	0	6

Table 4.17. Comparative means between employment numbers from the interview data

	A	B	B	C
	Before entering into the programme	**Post completion of the programme**	**Post completion of the programme**	**During the Covid-19 pandemic**
Mean	11.45	21.60	21.60	7
Mean Difference	10.15		7.00	

The mean difference was calculated to compare the data from before entering into the programme to post completion of the programme and post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Table 4.17 compares the mean between the employment numbers upon entering into the programme (A) and post completion of the programme (B) and then post completion of the programme (B) and during the Covid-19 pandemic (C). It can be noted that between column A and B there was an increase of 10 employees throughout the twenty beneficiaries interviewed. However the same cannot be concluded for columns B and C. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the mean difference dropped to 7 employees throughout the twenty beneficiaries. Therefore, indicating that the programme was beneficial in improving employment numbers post completion of the programme. As the Covid-19 pandemic was an exogenous shock to individuals, businesses and the world, a decrease in employment numbers was to be expected.

Entrepreneurship is considered a powerful economic agent as it proposes to alleviate the high unemployment rates in Africa and South Africa (Kuratko, 2014; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). There was an evident relationship between employment generation capabilities of the beneficiaries and the literature because post completion of the programme there was a stable growth in employment numbers from both the interview and questionnaire data. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) affirm that entrepreneurship has become more valuable to developing countries as it can potentially reduce unemployment and improve the standard of living of many since entrepreneurship generates employment. The beneficiaries were able to support the viewpoint of Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) because of their ability to create employment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many beneficiaries were forced to reduce their workforce because of economic circumstances but some of the beneficiaries maintained their workforce by means of reduced pay and working hours. The beneficiaries noted that once their business begins to stabilise again there would again be growth in employment numbers which could improve the unemployment rate in South Africa by providing a small proportion of the unemployed with employment.

It can therefore be concluded that post completion of the programme, the questionnaire and interview respondents noticed an overall growth in employment numbers which therefore answers the research question of whether a majority of the businesses showed a sustained growth in employment numbers post completion of the programme. However, the same cannot be concluded for employment numbers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Data from both the questionnaire and interview beneficiaries indicated that there was a general decline in employment numbers thus there was no sustained growth post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview beneficiaries expressed that at present (November 2021), there was little growth in employment numbers to pre-Covid-19 levels. However it was noted that once businesses stabilise, there will a growth in employment numbers which may exceed that of those pre-Covid-19. Therefore, the research question about the proportion of businesses showing a recovery in employment numbers cannot be answered at present (February 2022).

4.4.3. Measures, adaptability and resilience

Herbane (2013), states that crisis management is an interrelationship between preventative planning and the individual’s response to unforeseen circumstances such as failures and interruptions. Tothill (personal communication, 19 February 2021) expressed that in the present day the pandemic has been the most significant crisis. Ratten (2021) identified that entrepreneurs are beneficial in a time of crisis due to their ability to identify opportunities as well as improve the quality of products and services.

Research questions

1. How many of the beneficiaries and their businesses successfully adapted to the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic in order to be able to sustain the profitability of their businesses?

2. What measures did the beneficiaries take to try and sustain their businesses through the pandemic?

Interview Data:

Table 4.18 shows the main constructs identified from the theme of measures and adaptation from the structured interviews with the twenty beneficiaries.

Table 4.18. Coded main constructs for the theme measures and adaptation

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
Measures and adaptation	**If your business survived the toughest times of 2020, what measures did you implement to ensure that it survived?**	- Reduced expenses - Reduced overheads - Registered business as an essential service - Looked into expanding into different markets - Took new opportunities and diversified - Used personal funds - Applied for payment holidays from the bank - It was beneficial to exist in different industries - Implemented systems to improve efficiency - Pivoted and changed business to become more indirect client focussed
Measures and adaptation	**Did you have to change your business model to adapt your business to the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?**	- Adjusted prices of products and services to be more competitive - Outsourced less and upskilled internal employees more - Investigated and strategized for new products and services - Found new business opportunities and ventured into new markets - Prepared for one year of lockdown instead of a short period of time - Re-marketed products and services - Marketed products and services to online platforms and on social media - Researched into new opportunities and alternative markets and business sectors
Measures and adaptation	**How did you cope emotionally and physically during the pandemic?**	- It was stressful and psychologically draining - Lockdown restrictions impacted business - It was emotionally taxing - Learnt that needed to be flexible and adaptive - Pandemic aided in reflection and introspection

The beneficiaries from the interviews were asked two questions to understand the crisis management capabilities (Table 4.18). The first question was ‘if your business survived the toughest times of 2020, what measures did you implement to ensure that it survived?”. The second question was in relation to changes in the business model to adapt to Covid-19. The two questions relate to Herbane’s (2013) statement of how crisis management is an interrelationship, and, in this case, the crisis is the Covid-19 pandemic and the two questions identify the measures in place to ensure business survival. The first measures that the beneficiaries implement into their businesses were financially related such as a reduction in overheads and expenses, using personal funds and payment holidays provided for by the bank. Although the beneficiaries did not find these measures entirely successful, they stated that it ensured business survival. Small businesses were forced to reduce costs and take on additional debt to sustain their business during the lockdowns (Kalogiannidis, 2020). Interviewee five stated *“the lockdown forced me to realise the necessity of business plans, saving and working within a budget”*.

Interviewee thirteen said *"the lockdown taught me the importance of personal relationships, and talking with other beneficiaries about their struggles also helped me overcome mine".* Although the programme provides the beneficiary with a financial mentor for the year, many of these beneficiaries were only able to properly utilise what was learnt in the programme during the crisis. Interviewee thirteen stated that through this crisis they understood the importance of professional financial planning. Seetharaman (2020) expressed that the first impacts of the pandemic were large shifts in supply and demand. The same was noted for the beneficiaries as many of their businesses are reliant on supply and demand of their product and/or service.

Entrepreneurs are the risk takers in society through their ability to identify opportunities, formulate business proposition from opportunities and therefore, diversify their businesses (Ratten, 2021). The constructs of identifying opportunities, pivoting business models and exploring new markets were identified in both questions as the measures the beneficiaries implemented to ensure survival also had an impact on their business model/s. Although interviewees one and seventeen were able to register as an essential service, the success of this new opportunity was hindered by the strict initial lockdown restrictions in South Africa. Some beneficiaries used the initial lockdown to implement plans, adjust service offerings and improve efficiency through service implementation. Interviewee seventeen stated "*time without business due to lockdown allowed me to strategize and re-look at the business plan on a whole*". Interviewee ten said *"I felt as if I was pressured to implement systems to improve business efficiency because there was nothing else to do during the lockdown"*. Although these systems were tedious when first implemented, interviewee ten stated that this assisted with skills development and was beneficial for the future of the business. Some of the beneficiaries learnt to re-market their products and services and utilize online platforms which was an expansion for business models and some beneficiaries' business markets. Digitalisation and alternative market exploration were two methods that businesses were able to utilize (Seetharaman, 2020). Interviewee fifteen stated *"I opted to focus on the alternative market of a mass market rather than having their product considered custom-made and a luxury"*. Interviewee eighteen stated that *"I was able to pivot and change my business model to be more e-commerce focused, which contributed to an exponential growth during the initial stages of lockdown"*. According to, Tronvoll et al., (2020) , businesses must be flexible and adaptable in the economy post the pandemic as these qualities will aid them in the changing business world. It is believed that many of the beneficiaries have learnt the importance of agility in these unprecedented times and some are researching and investigating new changes within the market. This research aided in understanding their business within the current markets and future markets and if necessary, methods to diversify immediately.

The theme of emotional resilience and adaptability became evident in the structured interviews in the question 'how did you cope emotionally and physically during the pandemic?'. The respondents noted that emotionally and physically the pandemic was stressful and psychologically draining. Interviewee one expressed *"the pandemic was stressful because the only source of income for my employees was me which made me concerned about my employees wellbeing".* Interviewee fourteen stated *"although the pandemic forced me to slow down and take a breather, it was scary because of the unknown, and frustrating as there was a lack of human interaction"*. According to Southwick et al. (2014), entrepreneurs must adopt a variety of different coping methods which can be adapted according to the situation faced in order to be resilient. Interviewees eleven, sixteen and nineteen expressed that the pandemic provided the ability to rethink, reflect and introspect which aided in holistic understanding of the pandemic and the challenges that the beneficiaries had to overcome. The continuity of the business after the crisis is imperative for the business's survival. However, this is a continuous process as the entrepreneur's preparedness allows for the business to cope with the crisis in a functional manner (Ivanus & Repanovici, 2016). Interviewees fourteen and seventeen support Ivanus and Repanovici (2016) view and noted that flexibility and adaptability within themselves and their business model aided them in readiness for the pandemic and for the future.

Governments around the world imposed restrictions to the movement of people and lockdowns which forced some businesses to close temporarily and unfortunately some permanently (Tang et al., 2021). The same was also seen in South Africa and affected majority of the businesses in the country as trading ceased and lockdown measures were not in favour of business survival. Interviewee one stated that the lockdown restrictions left them feeling uncertain and with many 'what if' questions. Kalogiannidis (2020) supports this as his research states that "a lockdown in a single economy can result in the complexity of the global supply chain and can cause major ripple effects all over the world" (p. 389). Interviewee sixteen experienced that as this businesses' main consumer was outside of South Africa and within the travel sector abroad. According to interviewee sixteen *"I was left with the feeling of 'paralysis' because the South African government told me that I had to cease operations in my business with immediate effect"*. Interviewee sixteen and many other entrepreneurs of the programme experienced the same feeling when their businesses too had to cease trading with immediate effect.

The beneficiaries' ability to adapt during the Covid-19 pandemic was partially due to the agility and flexibility of the beneficiaries as well as their internal resilience. Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021) expressed that "that necessity is the mother of invention and therefore I suspect that through need and determination, they became extremely industrious". Internal resilience was critical during the initial stages of the pandemic due to the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of this type of crisis. Many of the beneficiaries were able to pivot their business models, identify new opportunities in alternative markets and diversify their product and service offering which allowed their business to survive. Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021), "The industriousness of the entrepreneurs enabled the survival of their business as a result of the ability of the entrepreneur to diversity their service and product offerings with some even adding unrelated offerings".

A relationship between crisis management from the researched literature and the beneficiaries' measures and adaptations to the Covid-19 pandemic was noted. Herbane (2013), states that crisis management is an interrelationship between preventative planning and the individual's response to unforeseen circumstances such as failures and interruptions. Although the beneficiaries were unable to prepare for a crisis of this degree, the rapid measures implemented and the flexibility the beneficiaries exhibited was commendable in a crisis as grave at the Covid-19 pandemic. Crisis management and business continuity are strategies the business must adopt to allow for the essential functionality of the business (Ivanus & Repanovici, 2016). The beneficiaries strategized methods and measures to ensure the businesses had cashflow, employees were paid, and the business survived.

It can therefore be concluded that during the Covid-19 pandemic, a majority of the interview respondents were able to successfully adapt to the crisis of the pandemic. However, these beneficiaries were unable to sustain pre-Covid-19 levels of profitability as the main focus was on business survival rather than an increase in profitability. The main measures which were implemented were cost and overhead reduction, new business markets and product and/or service offerings and applied for loans and relief from the banks and/or governments. These measures allowed the beneficiaries to sustain their business and ensure it survived during the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.4.4. Sustainability

Sustainable development refers to an organisation's ability to meet the needs of the organisation today without undermining the potential for future generations to have the same ability to meet their needs (Foley et al., 2016). The questionnaire had a three-point Likert Scale where respondents chose one option. The Likert Scale responses were measured along the negative to positive to identify the beneficiaries' perceived business sustainability.

Research question:

1. Did a majority of the beneficiaries' businesses achieve long-term sustainability, thereby indicating overall success of the entrepreneurial development programme?

Questionnaire data:

Figure 4.11 shows a Likert Scale for the questions asked in the questionnaire to the beneficiaries about their perceived business sustainability. Gladwin et al. (1995), explain that achieving sustainable development is a process in which development must be inclusive, equal and in a protected manner to ensure that the organisation is sustainable for the future. It is the researcher's opinion that the questions asked were to identify if the businesses were inclusive, equal and protected as suggested by Gladwin et al. (1995). These questions include support provided by the hotel group, financial conservation and preservation and technology within the business. These questions were aligned to Geus's (2002) model which include adaptability to the business environment, distinctiveness within the community, business flexibility and lastly, the optimal deployment of finances as the study used a subset of his model for corporate sustainability.

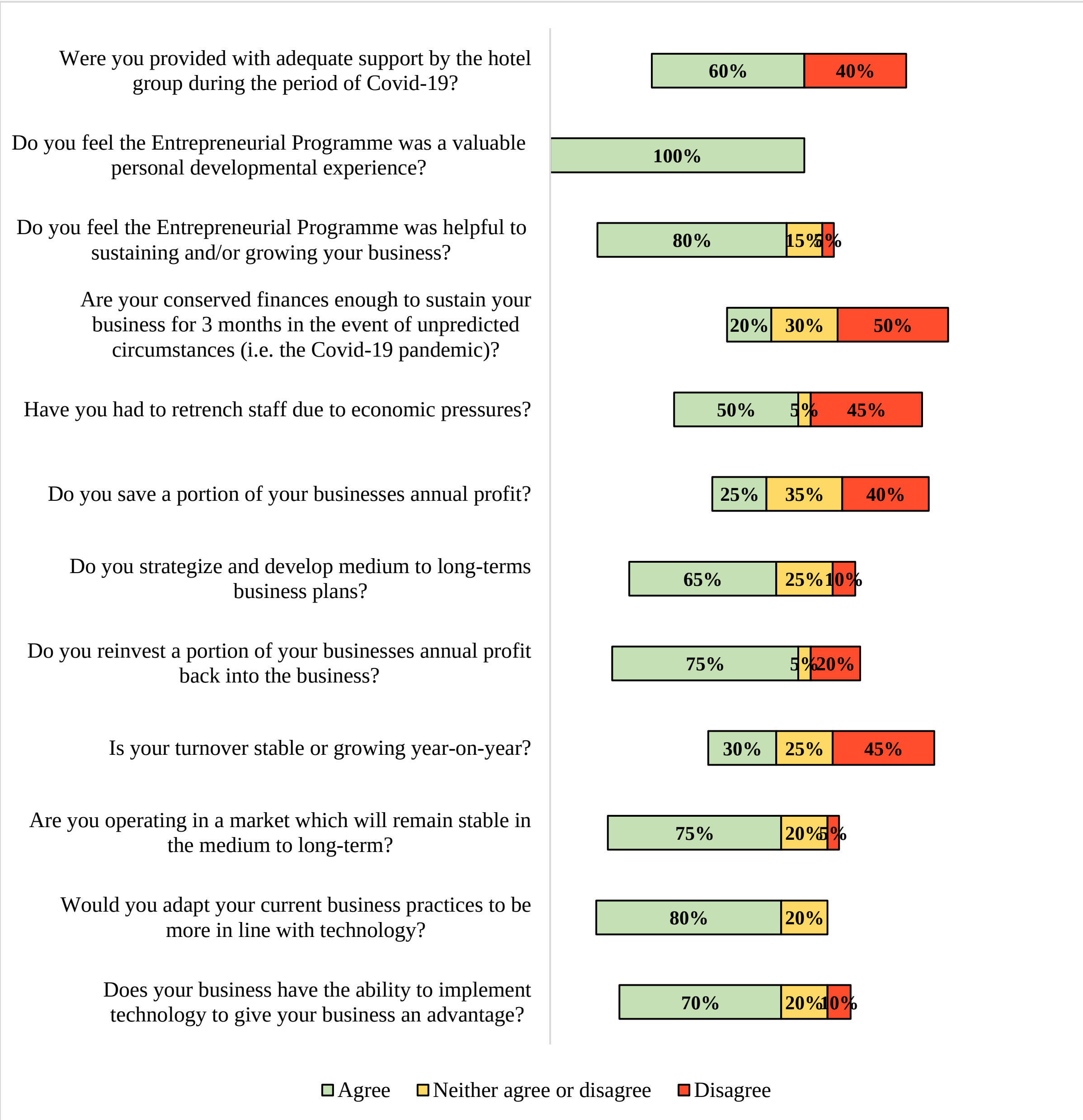


Figure 4.11. Likert Scale for Sustainability

As the entrepreneurial development programme was temporarily suspended during the pandemic, the beneficiaries were provided motivational support via WhatsApp groups with 60% indicating that they were provided with adequate support during Covid-19. Although this was all the hotel group could assist with, the beneficiaries became intra-networkers amongst themselves and were able to support each other and motivate each other. 80% of the beneficiaries noted that the programme was helpful in growing and sustaining their business while 100% of the same beneficiaries believed the programme was a good personal developmental experience.

As the hotel group instils financial preservation, 50% of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire indicated that they did not have enough finances conserved for 3 months. The pandemic emphasised the importance of saving and conserving finances for an unforeseen circumstance. Employment generation is included in the optimal development of finances in Geus's model as employment has a direct effect on the financial position of the business. 50% of the beneficiaries noted that they had to retrench staff due to economic pressure which is another indicator to long-term sustainability. If a business has the inability to sustain its employees especially during economic pressures, it could indicate that initially there was overemployment of unnecessary staff or the business is not financially sound as a result of changes in supply and demand.

25% of the beneficiaries also indicated that they did save a portion of their annual profit. Saving and conserving finances is important in any business because it provides a backup in the event of unforeseen circumstances as well as allows for growth and expansion if necessary. Tothill C (2020) stated that many of the beneficiaries are not in a position to invest into the business during the programme but are encouraged to invest into their business five years post completion of the programme. As many of the beneficiaries that responded to the questionnaire completed the programme between 2017 to 2019, the statement by Tothill (personal communication, 05 August 2020) is relevant. However it is still a concern for their ultimate long-term sustainability. However, this statement is not supported because 75% of the beneficiaries indicated that they reinvest a portion of their annual profit back into the business. 65% indicated that they strategize and develop medium to long-term business plans which is imperative to identifying new opportunities, areas for improvement and methods in which to improve current product and service offerings. Only 30% of the beneficiaries noted that their turnover was growing year on year, which does impact the businesses' long-term sustainability as the turnover is not increasing with inflation.

75% of the beneficiaries noted that they were operating in a market that is perceived to be stable, however, the Covid-19 pandemic did identify that perceived stability within the market is not always the case. Kalogiannidis (2020) supports this as in their study it is explained that worldwide the travel and tourism industry was the most affected business sector. This is as a result of travel bans, restrictions on movement of people and lockdown regulations (Kalogiannidis, 2020).

A change in supply and demand emphasises the importance of identifying new opportunities and ensuring the business is aligned with modern technology. Over 80% of the businesses from the questionnaire data stated their businesses would adapt to implement technology into their business. 70% of the same beneficiaries indicated that their business has the ability to implement technology to provide their business with a competitive advantage. This indicates that their business intends to survive in modern times. This links to Geus's (2002) model of business flexibility. As the entrepreneurial development programme has a holistic approach and each entrepreneur is unique and in essence their business is an extension of the entrepreneur.

Perceived business sustainability is an important factor to consider as the beneficiary has the ability to ensure the business survives and grows. The interview with the manager of the programme supports the beneficiaries' response to the programme being helpful in growing and sustaining business. Post completion of the programme, the beneficiaries enter into the alumni phase of the programme where there is continuously quarterly monitoring of business performance and support and recommendations where required. Post completion of the programme there is a general consensus by the manager that turnover and profitability improved as the financial mentor tracked the performance on a quarterly basis.

Interview Data:

Table 4.19 shows main constructs from the thematic analysis from the twenty interviewees.

Table 4.19. Coded main constructs for the theme sustainability

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
Sustainability	**Before the Covid-19 pandemic, did you believe your business had long-term sustainability and resilience?**	- Yes, had business plans for 5-15 years - Very good existing clientele - Had the intention of expanding the business - Business is in a high demand industry - Intention when business was started was to create something that was sustainable and durable
	Do you believe your business will survive another crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic?	- Yes, o If able to register as an essential service in future o If there are no lockdown restrictions o If there is the right supply and demand o If there are detailed business and scenario plans - If you can survive Covid, you can survive anything - No, the pandemic decimated everything and was the worst experience of a lifetime - Networks really helped business to survive pandemic
	Once business begins to stabilise again, do you believe you will have the capacity to employ more people?	- Dependent as business is based on supply and demand - Dependent on the economy of South Africa - Legacy Series with the hotel group has allowed for more business opportunity - Yes, but will hire skilled labour before unskilled labour as do not have the resources to train the unskilled labour anymore

There were three main questions asked in the interviews with the beneficiaries about their perceived business sustainability (Table 4.19). The purpose of these questions was to understand that the beneficiaries believed their businesses were actually sustainable. The first question asked regarding sustainability was if the business had long-term suitability and resilience before the pandemic. All twenty of the respondents believed their businesses would be sustainable due a number of factors such as existing clientele, industry demand, intention of business expansion and existing business plans. The entrepreneur's attentiveness is based on the ability that entrepreneurs have to utilise their cognitive ability and exploit this as an opportunity for new business ventures (Groves et al., 2011). The above constructs identified about the beneficiaries' businesses indicate that they had the cognitive ability to explore new markets and exploit opportunities. Interviewee nine expressed *"I had a stable business structure that was consistent with contingency plans in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances"*. Interviewee ten indicated that their business was *"built on a foundation of purpose and vision before profit"*. This interviewee is passionate about their business and created this business with the intention of succeeding and being sustainable. As all the beneficiaries stated that before the pandemic their business was sustainable, this is an indication of the success not only the entrepreneur but also the programme. This is supported by the interview with the manager of programme whereby it was expressed that the programme is dual focussed - teaching and doing. The beneficiaries are provided with the knowledge through teaching and learning and then shown how to run, show up and enhance their business. This is crucial as the entrepreneur's attentiveness and their former knowledge can provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to successfully venture into new business opportunities.

Saebi et al. (2017), explains that there are a variety of factors which influence adjustments and changes to a business model, such as technology, external stakeholders, business performance and exogenous shocks. The second question asked whether the beneficiaries believed if their business would survive another crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. 75% of the beneficiaries noted that their businesses would survive another crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall it was a yes their businesses would survive provided certain factors are met. These factors include being able to register as an essential service, there are no operational restrictions in terms of lockdowns and there are detailed plans and contingency plans in place. Interviewee five said *"I believe my business will survive another crisis but I still have lots to learn and I need to make sure that I am continuously improving myself and my business"*. Interviewee thirteen stated *"I need to diversify my product more and adapt my target market. If I do this and move my business away from the hospitality industry, I will survive another crisis"*. Interviewee eighteen shared similar sentiments about the hospitality and tourism industry, *"the tourism and hospitality industry is another crisis because of the delay in business recovery compared to other industries"*. A future crisis may have a more predominant impact on another industry and as such, if the beneficiaries are able to ensure their business and contingency plans are detailed and they have a good networking circle, the businesses have a chance at surviving another crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the interview with the manager of the programme, it was explained that whether or not the beneficiaries would survive another pandemic is uncertain as it is dependent on the social state and the economic state of the country as a whole. However, according to Kuckertz et al. (2020) the business must have characteristics of adaptability and flexibility because as opportunities present themselves, the business must have the ability to pivot their business models to the 'new' business environment. Interviewee fifteen said *"the pandemic taught me to have more detailed business plans and the importance for the need to continually strategize"*. Many of the beneficiaries also stated that if the economic situation of the country is improved for a future crisis, these factors should include registering as an essential service, improved lockdown restrictions and the right supply and demand. The beneficiaries of the programme are at an advantage to register as an essential service as many of them are directly or indirectly involved in the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry played an important role during the Covid-19 pandemic as quarantine and isolation sites for individuals and large corporate quarantine sites. Geus' (2002) model identified the importance of networking and the beneficiaries, especially interviewee two, noted the importance of networking during the Covid-19 pandemic as it aided with business survival.

The last question asked with regards to the theme of sustainability was whether or not there would be a growth in employment numbers if their business stabilises. Manolova et al., (2020) supports the responses from the interviewees in their feelings towards the pandemic causing a supply and demand shock to their businesses. Interviewees eight, nine and sixteen in particular expressed that there will only be a growth in employment numbers once there is an improvement in the supply and demand within their businesses. One of the constructs which emerged was that some of the beneficiaries had the intention to opt for skilled labour to join their workforce rather than unskilled because of the time and financial constraints associated with training these new employees. Interviewee nineteen said *"I will adopt another approach to new employment and there will be more of a focus on upskilling existing employees within the business which in turn will be beneficial for future new employees and business growth"*. Interviewee one shares similar sentiments, "*I will have capacity to employ more people because I have introduced a new product onto my brand but these people will have to be trained with the new product in mind"*. Another construct which arose in the interview was the economy of South Africa as this would also influence whether the beneficiaries have the capacity to employ more employees. Interviewee three said *"I will employ more people if there is an improvement in the economy"*. Interviewee eighteen expressed the same view, *"I do not have the ability to employ more than three people at the moment so once the economy improves, I will be able to employ more people"*.

Entrepreneurial alertness is critical to the success of the organisation and forms the link between opportunity exploitation, socio-economic advantage and innovation (Valliere, 2013). Interviewee fifteen said "*the Legacy Series has allowed for more business opportunity in my business which will improve employment numbers because of my aim to expand and grow my business"*. "This Legacy Series is a mini documentary series which aims to uncover and showcase everyday heroes within the South African entrepreneurial landscape" (C. Tothill, personal communication, 15 December 2021). Season two aims to document the stories of the entrepreneurs and reflect on their lives and their stories (C. Tothill, personal communication, 15 December 2021). The manager of the programme supports the viewpoint of interviewee fifteen, that the pandemic taught them to have more detailed business plans and the need to continually strategize. The programme assists in the development of growth objectives and by meeting growth objectives, there is a potential to increase the client base and income which in turn will require the need for additional human resources.

Through the development programme, the knowledge and skills learnt, and the networking opportunities provided by the hotel group the beneficiaries' businesses were better equipped to be sustainable in the long-term. According to Tothill (personal communication, 29 November 2021), the sole purpose of the programme is to develop small or emerging enterprises and to help them become sustainable. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the beneficiaries from both data sets believed that their businesses would be sustainable. The measures that the beneficiaries implemented to their business through the pandemic aided in the survival of their businesses. Education, networking, knowledge and entrepreneurial attentiveness of the beneficiary can be attributed to the survival throughout the pandemic. Although most beneficiaries' main focus was predominately on current business survival, many implemented plans and adjusted current long-term business plans to be more aligned with the present exogenous shock.

There is a relationship between research from the literature review and the results. Foley et al. (2016) noted that sustainable development refers to an organisation's ability to meet the needs of the organisation today without undermining the potential for future generations to have the same ability to meet their needs. The beneficiaries' businesses were on track for long-term business sustainability post completion of the programme. This was as a result of existing clientele, industry demand, intention of business expansion and existing business plans. The Covid-19 pandemic hindered long-term business sustainability because of the beneficiaries' focus being shifted to business survival. According to Geus' (2002) model, adaptability to the business environment and business flexibility are factors for business sustainability. The beneficiaries were able to adapt their businesses to the rapid changes that the pandemic imposed on businesses and remain flexible with the constant change in the business environment as a result of lockdown restrictions. This adaptability and flexibility is a contributing factor to the business survival of the beneficiaries within the programme.

4.4.4.1. Economic sustainability

Table 4.20 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses to the economic success questions in the interviews. Three main questions were asked in relation to economic sustainability from the structured interviews. The aim of these questions was to delve into the reasoning behind changes in the beneficiary's turnover and profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 4.20. Coded main constructs for the theme economic sustainability

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
Economic Sustainability	**Pre-Covid-19, did you have any substitute solutions in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances? Such as business plans, investments, markets in which your business operates, or enough finances conserved?**	- Majority no, during the pandemic: ○ Tapped into business savings ○ Tapped into personal savings ○ Disposed of easily disposable assets ○ Some business and personal investments helped ○ Substitute solutions in the form of knowledge and skills ○ Branched into new business markets
	How did you manage your cashflow when lockdown restrictions were imposed?	- Used personal finances - Took out loans from the bank - Utilised government relief funds and TERS - Arranged for payment holidays from the banks - Cut down on expenses - Disposed of assets - Reduced insurance premiums - Some businesses had no cash flow
	Is there anything you could have done differently to improve your profitability last year?	- Ensure better planning for the future - Look into improving target markets - Look into exposure into different markets - As there was no business or sales, there was no turnover or profit - Business is based on supply and demand and Covid-19 impacted this

Table 4.21 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses from the interviews to the whether or not there are substitute solutions in place.

Table 4.21. Content analysis from interview questions about substitute solutions in place

Question	Yes	No
Pre-Covid-19, did you have any substitute solutions in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances? Such as business plans, investments, markets in which you operate, or enough finances conserved.	4	16

The analysis (Table 4.21) aided in quantifying how many beneficiaries had substitute solutions in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The first question regarding pre-Covid-19, 'did you have any substitute solutions in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances, such as business plans, investments, markets in which your business operates, or enough finances conserved?'. Only 20% of the twenty beneficiaries had substitute solutions in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The main solutions included business plans, investments, sufficient finances conserved and a variety of business markets. Interviewee four said "I was blindsided by the pandemic, I only had a business plan as my contingency plan and had to dip into my personal savings because I did not have investments". Interviewee eight shared a similar sentiment, "I had some savings to carry me through a bit of the pandemic but they were depleted early on because I diversified my business before the pandemic started with the intention of a good return on investment". Financial literacy can be understood by entrepreneurs through three main factors, namely budget management, financial planning and basic insight into investment (Oseifuah, 2010). The main constructs which the beneficiaries had to adopt during the pandemic were tapping into business and personal savings, disposing of assets and withdrawing investments. Manolova et al., (2020) in their research uncovered that the Covid-19 pandemic caused a disastrous impact on the supply and demand of the global economy. The stopping of business in contact intense industries and lockdown restrictions imposed by the government negatively influenced the supply of products and services and the demand for products which were not necessities decreased (Manolova et al., 2020). For example, interviewee thirteen said *"my business is mainly supply and demand focussed and pivoting the business product was the only solution to covering basic expenses"*. Interviewee twenty stated *"Before the Covid-19 pandemic, I believed business plans were important as it reminded me of the main objective. During the pandemic, my viewpoint changed and I believed that a business plan was not valuable during the pandemic because of how much my business changed and pivoted"*. Kalogiannidis (2020) believed that the pandemic greatly influenced small businesses because of the lack of preparation of unforeseen events and a lack of funding.

The next question delved into was the management of cashflow during the pandemic as cashflow has a direct impact on turnover which in turn influences profitability. The main constructs identified included ensuring there was better planning for the future, different markets were investigated and new target markets were explored. The beneficiaries overcame cashflow issues through improving their business finances and utilising government relief. Interviewee two overcame their cashflow issues by *"I borrowed money from my personal account, took a loan from the bank and any spare money was used towards the cashflow. The UIF and TERS relief fund aided towards paying salaries of my staff"*. Some of the improvement in finances included reducing expenses, reducing overheads, disposing of assets, reducing premiums on insurance and arranging payment holidays from the bank. Interviewee fourteen manged their cashflow through *"downsizing, restructuring, moving my staff to short-time. These measures helped with managing my cashflow"*. These measures were able to assist the beneficiaries in keeping their businesses running and covering the day-to-day expenses. Interviewee two, among others, noted that it *was "touch and go, even now and we are going from week to week"*. Jain et al., (2020) expressed that "due to preventative procedures taken by the governments of many countries, numerous small-scale businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs are the most vulnerable groups that are greatly impacted in this time of crisis" (p. 1166). A couple of the beneficiaries were fortunate to utilise government relief funds and TERS. The manager from the programme mentioned in the interview that some of the beneficiaries were able to sustain their cashflow through conservation and elimination of costs, concessions from lenders and relief funding through the government. Jain et al. (2020) study introduces the emergency social insurance relief fund called Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (TERS) which some of the beneficiaries resorted to in order to pay their staff. In the interviews, a common trend of employers using the TERS relief fund as a means of income for themselves and their staff was noted. Interviewee nine said *"I was hesitant to accept the financial relief from the government because of the uncertainty of the future financial implications on my business"*. This interviewee believed this grant to be a loan from the government. Interviewees seven, thirteen, sixteen and twenty stated that they did not have any cash flow in their business and the only reason their business survived was due to personal finances and loans from the government. A reduction in the income of many consumers is directly linked to the change in their spending pattern during the pandemic and many businesses overextended their credit which led to bankruptcy (Kalogiannidis, 2020). These businesses and so many more in South Africa suffered greatly as a result of lockdown restrictions and a change in supply and demand. The Covid-19 pandemic posed many challenges on businesses' economic growth because of the constraints on trade between countries and disruptions in the markets due to the initial restrictions by governments (Maritz et al., 2020).

The financial literacy of entrepreneurs is important to the success of the business in terms of ensuring a turnover and anticipating a profit (Oseifuah, 2010). The third question asked is in relation to how the beneficiaries would have improved if they had the ability to. The common response in the interviews was better planning and diversification to new target markets. Interviewee one stated that they *"would plan for future unforeseen circumstances better because this will aid with business profitability and the business will be more sustainable because of it"*. Interviewee five said *"I would have restrategised on service offering and introduced a combination offering to help me continue my services on a monthly basis"*. Two other common responses were evident where the beneficiaries indicated that as there were no sales or business, there was no turnover and profit and the pandemic greatly influenced business supply and demand. Interviewee sixteen was an example of this, *"there is nothing that I could have done differently because the businesses turnover was just sufficient to cover basic operational costs and no profits came from this"*.

In summary, before the Covid-19 pandemic and post completion of the programme, the beneficiaries were on track to achieving long-term sustainability. This therefore is indicative that the entrepreneurial development programme was successful in sustaining and growing the businesses of the beneficiaries. The same cannot be said during the Covid-19 pandemic as a majority of the beneficiaries' main focus was to survive, ensure cashflow into the business and maintain some business operations rather than focus on long-term business sustainability.

4.4.5. Demographics

Demographics as a research question was important as the aim was to understand whether there was a direct measurable relationship between the demographic and profitability. The following demographics were considered:

1. Networking
2. Geographic Location
3. Economic Sector
4. Level of Education

Age, gender and race were purposefully not investigated. This was because of a requirement of admittance onto the entrepreneurial development programme is to have a business that has been in existence for over one year and have a business that is micro or qualifying small enterprise with B-BBEE ownership.

Research question:

1. Have relevant demographics had a measurable impact on the profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses who completed the programme and post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. The four main demographics are discussed in relation to the questionnaire and interview questions below.

4.4.4.1. Networking

Maecki (2018) explains that the entrepreneurial ecosystem is similar to any organisation's internal and external environment and includes all levels of the entrepreneur's network. The beneficiaries of the programme are granted access to the group's markets and networks which contributes to their businesses being given access to networking opportunities. The theme of networking is pertinent in this study. It identifies whether the programme was successful in developing the networking capabilities of beneficiaries, the value of networks to the entrepreneur and ultimately the impact of these networks on growth in profitability post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 4.22 and 4.23 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled from the networking questions in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire data:

Table 4.22. Value of networking from the questionnaire data

Did the programme make you aware of the value of networking?	
Yes	19
No	1

Table 4.23. Comparison between access to networking before entering the programme and post completion of the programme from the questionnaire data

	Respondents	**Before the programme**	**Post completion**	**Difference**	**Delta percentage**
Access to Social and Personal Networks	*20*	*13*	*19*	*+6*	*+46%*
Access to Business Networks	*20*	*15*	*17*	*+2*	*+13%*
Access to Political Connections	*20*	*2*	*3*	*+1*	*+50%*
Access to Connections provided by the hotel group	*20*	*5*	*15*	*+10*	*+200%*

Overall, before entering the programme, many beneficiaries lacked social and personal networks, political connections and connections provided by the hotel group. According to Maecki (2018), as the entrepreneur's business expands and transforms, the relationships between the parties in his/her network would need to change in order to be beneficial and true to the core nature of the business. The hotel group was successful in assisting 95% of questionnaire beneficiaries to be aware of the value of networking (Table 4.22). This is evident in the questionnaire responses from the beneficiaries as there was a general increase in networking opportunities post completion of the programme. The delta percentage for the difference in networking opportunities before entering in the programme showed a large increase once beneficiaries had completed the programme. Table 4.23 shows that there was a 200% increase in connections provided by the hotel, a 50% increase in political connections from two the three beneficiaries post completion in the programme, a 46% increase in social and personal connections and a 13% increase in access to business networks. As Tothill (personal communication, 05 August 2020) states, networking is beneficial to the beneficiaries because it allows an overall improvement and growth in business. This therefore concludes that there has been an overall increase in networking amongst the questionnaire beneficiaries post completion of the programme.

Interview Data:

Table 4.24 shows main constructs extracted from the thematic analysis from the twenty interviewees.

Table 4.24. Coded main constructs for the theme networking

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
NETWORKING	**Did the programme open up networks for you?**	- Similar challenges were experienced across different business sectors - Networks assisted with personal and business brand recognition - Networks aided in creating supplier networks - Provided additional value to clientele - New opportunities and connections were created - Exposure on the Legacy Series was beneficial
	Do you believe that networking is valuable?	- Very valuable - Helped with approaching new and existing market opportunities - Allowed connections to be built - Additional knowledge and skill were gained from the hotel group and fellow beneficiaries - Aided with personal self-discovery - Networking with peers, suppliers and competitors was beneficial to the business - Assisted with business survival before and during Covid-19 - Networking is based on the right time, place and who you know

The main questions posed in this section were aimed at addressing whether networking is influential in achieving economic growth, more specifically in achieving a growth in profitability. Beneficiaries noted that the programme did open up networks and that they believed that networking was valuable. This corresponds to the question in the questionnaire of whether or not the programme made the beneficiaries aware of the value of networking (Table 4.22). Interviewee five stated *"a limited amount of networks opened up by the programme provided the opportunity to outsource, meet others and gain new opportunities with similar businesses"*. This is similar to what interviewee seven said *"my business was hospitality inclined before completing the programme and networking was beneficial in the transitioning into different business sectors"*. Interviewee fourteen stated that the networks created by the hotel group were important as *"networks can be seen as people I can leverage from".* Networks have the ability to provide valuable resources to entrepreneurs, such as transfer of information. This aids in evaluating alternative opportunities and ensuring purposeful strategic decision-making (Carnahan, Agarwal & Campbell, 2010). Interviewee nineteen concurred with this statement as other entrepreneurs in the programme were treated as potential future clients or connections for new clients. Two beneficiaries did not believe that the programme opened up networks for them. Interviewee four stated that 'networks and other affiliations have been through self-development and not the programme. Interviewee two said *"I believe the programme should provide more network opportunities, especially in the hospitality industry"*. These two beneficiaries were unable to expand their network through the programme. Brown and Mason (2017) state that entrepreneurs' ecosystem provides support and is an interdependent relationship between the network provided and the entrepreneur. Therefore, if the entrepreneur does not actively engage with the opportunity for networking presented, he/she will not benefit from the opportunity.

According to Dyer and Singh (1998) networking capabilities create inter-organisational relationships which are beneficial in creating strategic opportunities and resources. The main constructs obtained from the question 'Do you believe networking is valuable' from the interviews were:

- Assistance in approaching new and existing markets
- New connections built
- Knowledge and skill gained

Interviewee one expressed that networking allowed for *"product expansion because of a more in-depth understanding of the market"*. New connections were built by interviewee eleven who believed that 'networking with peers, suppliers and competitors is as important and pertinent as networking with people outside of your business sector'. The research into the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme identified that the beneficiaries are granted access to the hotel group's markets and networks which contributes to the beneficiaries' businesses being given access to networking opportunities.

Brown, Rocha and Cowling (2020) in their study explain that by identifying collaborative relationships, there is a requirement for interpersonal connections, such as support and reciprocity, rather than relying solely on economically focussed relationships. However, interviewees four, twelve and sixteen disagree, stating that networking must be done with the business objective in mind. They believe that not all individuals in your network are relevant resources to the business and can divert you from the primary reason for networking. Interviewee eighteen found networking especially valuable during the Covid-19 pandemic because *"although the economy slowed down, networks were able to aid with business survival".* A study by (Zuliani et al., 2020, p. 3) states "developing collaborative relationships takes time. Do not wait for the crisis to cultivate them". Interviewee nine expressed the same in terms of new relationships from networks requiring time to ensure the relationship is solidified.

Interviewees fourteen and fifteen stated that the Legacy Series that was filmed for the hotel group and aired on ETV opened up additional networks, opportunities and improved brand recognition. "This Legacy Series is a mini documentary series which aims to uncover and showcase everyday heroes within the South African entrepreneurial landscape" (C. Tothill, personal communication, 15 December 2021). Season two aims to document the stories of the entrepreneurs and reflect on their lives and their stories (C. Tothill, personal communication, 15 December 2021).

Although Zuliani et al. (2020) study was focussed on Brazilian SME's, there are many similarities between the results from that study and the main themes identified from the interviews. The existing networks used by the SME's in Brazil aided them in business relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic (Zuliani et al., 2020). Similar sentiments were shared by the interviewees as not only personal relationships with clientele but also business relationships were able to contribute to the survival of businesses during the Covid-19 crisis.

Relationship between networking and profitability

Table 4.24 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses to the profitability questions in the questionnaire. Post completion of the programme, 95% of the questionnaire respondents expressed that networking was valuable; whereas 5% did not believe that it was valuable. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, those 5% expressed a shift in opinion. Therefore 100% of the questionnaire beneficiaries believed that networking is valuable. Table 4.25 aims to identify if there is a relationship between networking and profitability.

Table 4.25. Profitability in comparison to the perceived value of networking post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic from the questionnaire data

Post completion of the programme – 19 believed networking was important and 1 did not.			
	Decrease	**Remained the same**	**Increase**
Profitability	1	5	14
During the Covid-19 pandemic – 20 believed networking was important and 0 did not			
Profitability	**Decrease**	**Remained the same**	**Increase**
	19	0	1

The value of networking was assessed in the question of 'did the programme make you aware of the value of networking' and before the Covid-19 pandemic, 95% of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire found networking to be valuable (Table 4.25). 70% of beneficiaries from the questionnaire stated that post completion of the programme, their profitability increased and 25% of beneficiaries profitability remained the same (Table 4.25). Having stated this, the research question of whether beneficiaries having access to networks influences growth in profitability in a period of at least two-years post completion of the programme would appear to be supported.

However, the same cannot be concluded during the Covid-19 pandemic because 95% of the beneficiaries who participated in the interviews showed a decrease in their profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic even though 100% of them stated that networking is valuable. All 20 beneficiaries from the interviews stated that their business struggled during the Covid-19 pandemic and many of them expressed that there was a lack of cash flow, product and services, sales and a demand for the product or service. This influenced not only their turnover but their profitability too. According to Cacciolatti et al., (2020), an organisation's credibility and discrepancies in financial performance can be alleviated through strategic alliances (i.e. networks).

It can be concluded that under normal business operations, networking seems to have a direct impact on profitability. However, during strained business operations such as the pandemic, the main focus for business is survival and ensuring some cash flow and sales of products and services. The pandemic thus resulted in many businesses and beneficiaries switching into survival mode and networking provided a good basis for business survival.

4.4.4.2. Geographic Location

Hayter (1997) states that the geographic location of a business can be viewed as an investment because it not only can have strategic purposes, but it can aid in the growth of the business's profits. Geographic location as a variable has been studied to identify whether geographic location impacts business success through an increase in business profits. Figure 4.12 and 4.13 show the geographical location of the beneficiaries from both the questionnaire and interview data. In the questionnaire data set 40% of the beneficiaries are in the Gauteng region, 30% are in the Western Cape and 15% are in Mpumalanga indicating that these three regions are where 85% of the beneficiaries' businesses are based. In the interview data, 42% of the beneficiaries' businesses are in the Gauteng region, 23% are in the Western Cape and 15% respectively are in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu Natal, thus indicating that 95% of the beneficiaries' businesses are based in these four regions.

Figure 4.14 represents the combined beneficiaries from the questionnaire and interview data sets. Both data sets contained twenty beneficiaries in each. There were three beneficiaries who partook in the questionnaire and the interviews and the duplicate basic demographic data was removed. Overall, 43% of the 37 beneficiaries are from Gauteng, 22% are from the Western Cape and 16% are from Mpumalanga.

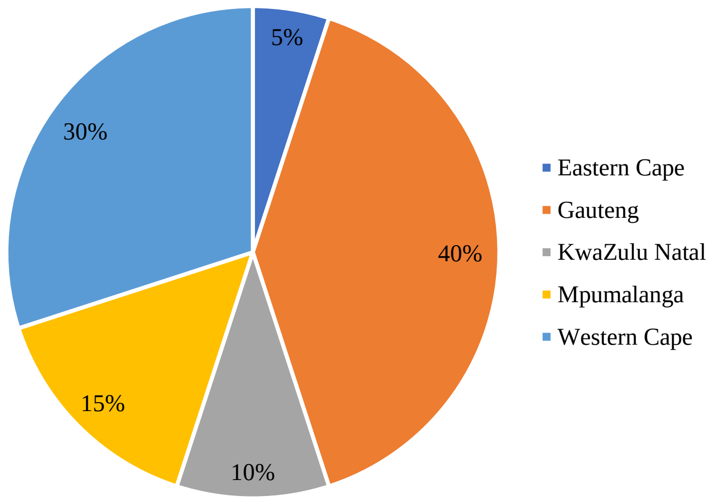


Figure 4.12. Pie chart of the geographic location of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire data

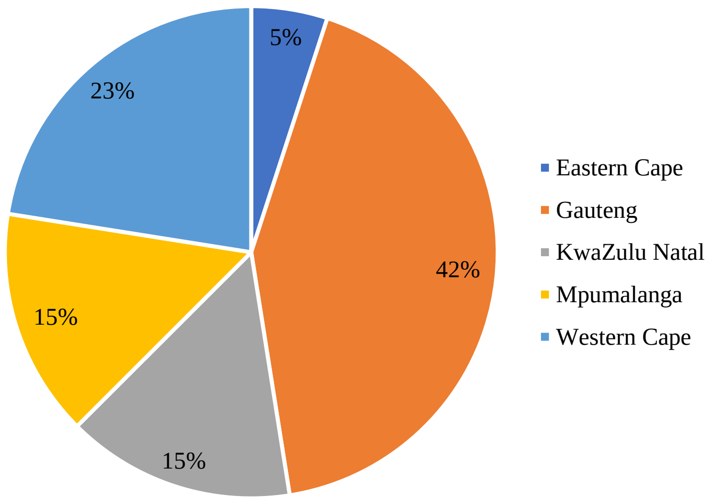


Figure 4.13. Pie chart of the geographic location of the beneficiaries from the interview data

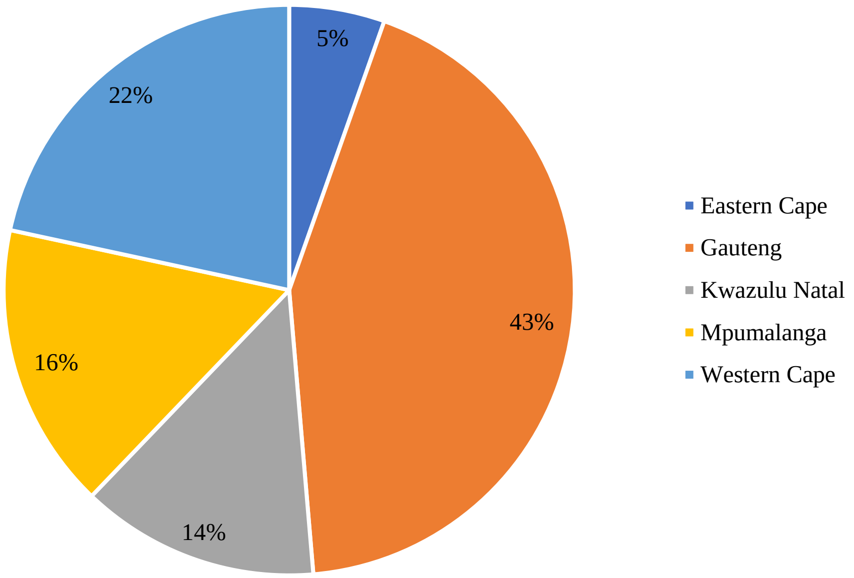


Figure 4.14. Pie chart of geographic location of combined beneficiaries from the questionnaire and interview data

Relationship between geographic location and profitability

Questionnaire data:

Table 4.26 and 4.27 show the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses to the profitability questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.26. Geographic location in comparison to profit post completion of the programme from the questionnaire data

Profit in the first two years after completing the programme			
Geographic Location	Profits decreased	Profits remained the same	Profit increased
Eastern Cape			1
Gauteng		4	4
KwaZulu Natal			2
Mpumalanga			3
Western Cape	1	1	4

Table 4.27. Geographic location in comparison to profit from during Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

Profit during Covid-19			
Geographic Location	Profitability decreased	Profitability remained the same	Profitability increased
Eastern Cape	1		
Gauteng	7	1	
KwaZulu Natal	2		
Mpumalanga	1		2
Western Cape	5		1

The beneficiary who stated that their profit decreased (Table 4.26) is in the manufacturing economic sector. This is the only beneficiary who stated that his/her profitability decreased post completion of the programme. In table 25 three beneficiaries stated that their profitability increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Both the questionnaire and the interview data sets have twenty beneficiaries each, the aim of asking the beneficiaries their geographic location was to investigate whether their business was impacted by the location of their business and how the Covid-19 pandemic affected profitability. The questionnaire data in Table 4.26 and 4.27 shows that Gauteng with 40% and Western Cape with 30% are where the majority of the beneficiaries' businesses are based. The interview data shows that Gauteng with 42%, Western Cape with 23% and Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal with 15% each are where a majority of the beneficiaries are based.

Table 4.26 and 4.27 represents a comparative analysis between the geographic location to whether the profitability of their businesses changes from the questionnaire responses of the beneficiaries, the data has been collected both post completion of the programme and during the pandemic. Post completion of the programme, 70% of the beneficiaries stated their profitability increased. However, although their profitability increased, there was a general increase across all geographic locations post completion of the programme, thus indicating that it is unlikely that there is a correlation between geographic location and profitability. According to (Buheji, 2020), geographic locations have the ability to ensure better access to capital resources and are beneficial in relevant regional networks, this therefore would result in further business development thus resulting in economic development. Gråsjö, Karlsson and Bernhard (2018), express that communities and a country can benefit from specific locational factors such as an increase in labour, competition and customer demand. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, 65% of the beneficiaries from Gauteng and the Western Cape stated that their profitability post completion of the programme either increased or remained the same whereas during the Covid-19 pandemic, the same two regions 60% of the beneficiaries stated their profitability decreased and 5% of the beneficiaries stated their profitability remained the same. (Gråsjö et al. (2018) point is valid as profitability during the Covid-19 pandemic was impacted based on geographic location especially in the Gauteng and Western Cape region where the greatest number of beneficiaries' businesses are located. Table 4.27 and 4.28 show similar findings from the questionnaire and interview data.

Interview Data:

Table 4.28 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses to the profitability questions in the interviews

Table 4.28. Profitability in comparison to the geographic location during Covid-19 from the interview data

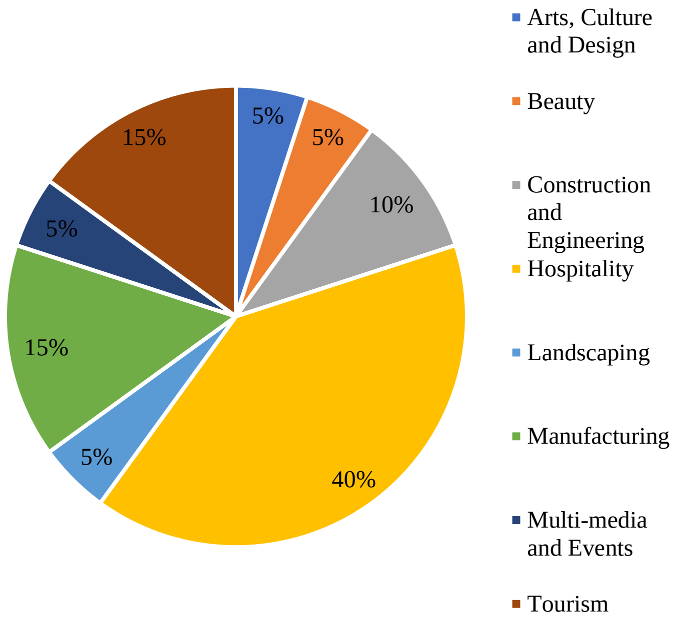
	Description of business profits			
Geographic Location	Profitability increased	Profitability remained the same	Profitability decreased	**Grand Total**
Eastern Cape		0	1	1
Gauteng		0	9	9
KwaZulu Natal		0	4	4
Mpumalanga	1	0	2	3
Western Cape		0	3	3
Grand Total	**1**	**0**	**19**	**20**

Duarte et al. (2020) identifies that Covid-19 has had devastating effects on a large proportion of businesses primarily due to the lockdown restrictions. These effects have been amplified within the hospitality industry. As most of interview responses are from businesses based in Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape, it is evident that the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced these businesses in the hospitality industry directly and indirectly (Table 4.28). Interviewee nineteen stated that *"if one industry is impacted, then there is a knock-on effect or direct impact with other industries"*. 95% of the beneficiaries from the interview responses stated that their businesses' profits decreased, however, 5% of the beneficiaries indicated an increase in profits. Interviewee five indicated the reason for this increase in business profitability was due to some high-income months as a result of a completion in projects.

As this study has a small sample size in both the interview and questionnaire data sets, drawing conclusions between whether there is a relationship between geographic location and profitability as posed in the research questions and research objectives is challenging. It can be noted that from the sample size in both the questionnaire and interview data sets and post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is no evident relationship between geographic location and profitability.

4.4.4.5. Economic Sector

An increase in opportunities would result in an increase in growth and expansion for the entrepreneur, which ultimately would result in greater economic growth (Acs et al., 2009). The market or economic sector in which an entrepreneur operates is imperative to the recognition of new opportunities and the ability to leverage off of these opportunities (Devece et al., 2016).



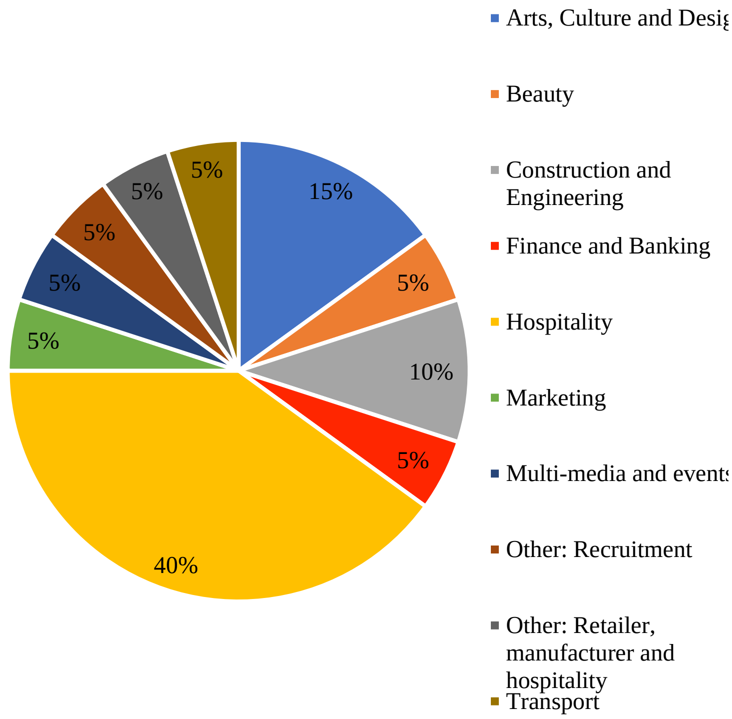


Figure 4.15. Pie chart of the economic sector of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire data

Figure 4.16. Pie chart of the economic sector of the beneficiaries from the interview data

Both figure 4.15 and 4.16 show that the majority, 40% respectively, of the beneficiaries' businesses are in the hospitality industry.

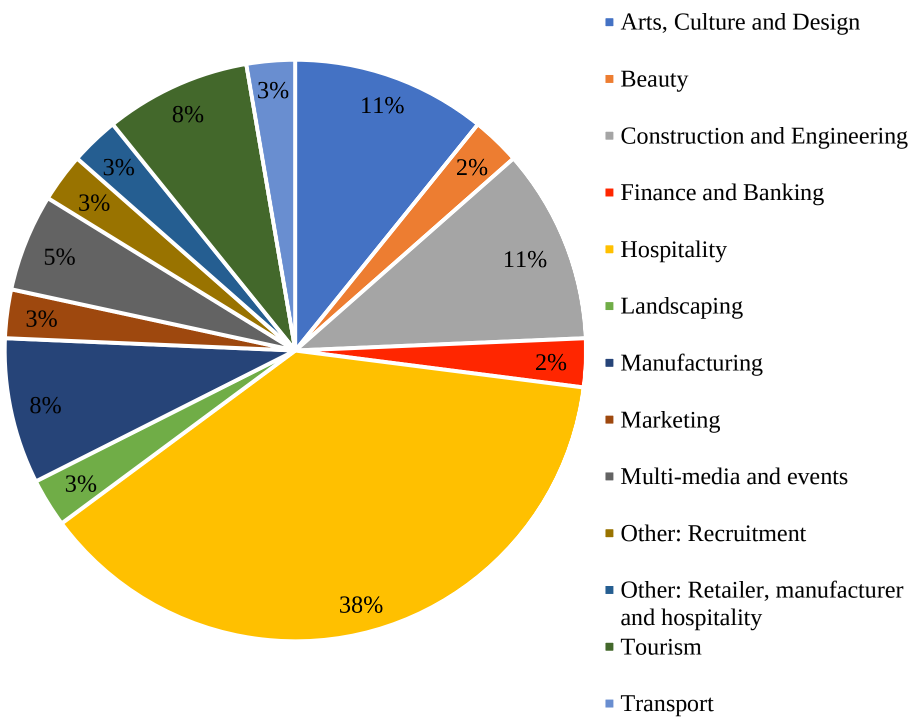


Figure 4.17. Pie chart of economic sector of combined beneficiaries from the questionnaire and interview data

Figure 4.17 represents the combined beneficiaries from the questionnaire and interview data sets. Both data sets contained twenty beneficiaries. There were three beneficiaries who partook in both the questionnaire and the interviews and the duplicate basic demographic data was removed. Overall, 38% of the 37 beneficiaries are in the hospitality industry, 11% are in the construction and engineering sector, 11% are in the arts, culture and design sector and 8% are in the tourism sector and the manufacturing industry respectively.

Relationship between economic sector and profitability

According to Kumar (2020), "the tourism sector is currently the hardest-hit by the outbreak of Covid-19, with impacts on both travel, supply and demand". Although this article's main focus is on Indian businesses and business sectors, economic sectors in South Africa and globally were also crippled. Arndt et al. (2020) supports this finding in their article as they note that the lockdown restrictions in South Africa had a knock-on effect to the whole economy. Since the lockdown affected supply and demand of non-essential products and services, there was a disruption in the overall supply and demand for the country as well as for global exports (Arndt et al., 2020). Another factor noted in Arndt et al. (2020) study was that the lockdown impacted the tourism industry because of the restrictions imposed to limit movement and travel. Interviewee twenty further supports this and expressed his/her opinion in that if one industry is hit, then there is a knock-on effect or direct impact with other industries.

Questionnaire data:

Table 4.29 and 4.30 address whether there was a relationship between economic sector and profitability.

Table 4.29. Economic Sector in comparison to profit post completion of the programme from the questionnaire data

	Profit in the first two years after completing the programme		
Economic Sector	Profit increased	Profits remained the same	Profits decreased
Arts, Culture and Design	1		
Beauty	1		
Construction and Engineering	2		
Hospitality	5	3	
Landscaping	1		
Manufacturing	1	1	1
Multi-media and Events	1		
Tourism	3		
Grand Total	**15**	**4**	**1**

Table 4.30. Economic Sector in comparison to profit during Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

	Profit during Covid-19		
Economic Sector	Profit increased	Profits remained the same	Profits decreased
Arts, Culture and Design	1		
Beauty			1
Construction and Engineering	2		
Hospitality			8
Landscaping			1
Manufacturing			3
Multi-media and Events		1	
Tourism			3
Grand Total	**3**	**1**	**16**

Table 4.29 and 4.30 represents a comparative analysis from the questionnaire data collected between the economic sector and whether there is a change in the profitability of their business. Post completion of the programme, 75% of the beneficiaries stated that their profitability increased indicating there could be a correlation between economic sector and profitability. One beneficiary stated that post completion of the programme their profitability decreased; this beneficiary's profit may have been affected by external events. 55% of the beneficiaries from the questionnaire results are in the tourism and hospitality industry. Post completion of the programme, these beneficiaries stated that their profitability increased or remained the same. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the same beneficiaries indicated a decline in their profitability during the Covid 19 pandemic. Meahjohn and Persad (2020) supports this as their study also investigated the impact of the pandemic on global entrepreneurship and noted that these two industries were negatively impacted due to travel bans and restrictions and these are external forces which are not under control of the entrepreneurs. During the pandemic three beneficiaries in the arts, culture and design and construction and engineering sectors noted an increase in profitability. As

these responses were gathered via questionnaire there was no further exploration as to why their profitability increased.

Interview Data:

Table 4.31 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses to the profitability questions in the interviews

Table 4.31. Profitability in comparison to the economic sector during Covid-19 from the interview data

	Profit during Covid-19		
Economic Sector	Profit increased	Profitability remained the same	Profitability decreased
Arts, Culture and Design			3
Beauty			1
Construction and Engineering			2
Finance and Banking	1		
Hospitality			8
Marketing			1
Multi-media and events			1
Other: Recruitment			1
Other: Retailer, manufacturer and hospitality			1
Transport			1
Grand Total	**1**	**0**	**19**

Responses from the interviews collected through structured interviews concluded that 95% of the beneficiaries profitability was impacted during the pandemic. The beneficiaries concluded that the effect on profitability was due to little to no business, disruptions in the supply and demand of goods and services also due to businesses being survival focused rather than profit focused. Interviewee five who is in the finance and banking sector expressed that their profitability increased during the pandemic. This beneficiary’s service is necessary to business continuity because of the accounting focus of this business and income coming in because of completion of longer-term projects. Meahjohn and Persad (2020) identified similar conclusions in their study stating that “many small-scale entrepreneurs were compelled to close their business while some were just working ‘hand to mouth’ and struggling with their businesses” (p. 6). Interviewee thirteen, who is in the hospitality and events industry, emphasised that the lockdown restrictions in South Africa dramatically impacted the ability to provide this/her product and services at social events.

It can be concluded that although the hospitality and tourism industry was globally the most impacted industry, other support industries were also impacted because of the knock-on effect on direct business relationships and supplier networks with the hospitality and tourism industry. Post completion of the programme, the majority of beneficiaries from the questionnaire data identified an increase in profitability across all economic sectors. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the same beneficiaries experienced a decrease in profitability across all sectors. Therefore, it can be noted that from a small sample size of twenty respondents in the questionnaire data, there is no evident relationship between economic sector and business profitability. The results from the interview respondents concur with this finding as there was a general decrease in profitability during the pandemic across all business sectors. During the pandemic, businesses were mainly focused on business survival and ensuring that the income flow into the business was sufficient enough for basic operational needs of the business.

4.4.4.6. Level of education

Education is a link between knowledge and new opportunities because not only does education increase awareness for alternative career choices, but it prepares the individual for new ventures (Reddy, 2011). The questionnaire responses note that 35% of the beneficiaries' highest level of education is a matric certificate whereas only 10% of the beneficiaries from the interview responses do not have a matric certificate. The questionnaire and interview responses show that a majority of the beneficiaries' highest level of education falls in the tertiary level diploma or degree category. This is indicative of formal learning amongst the entrepreneurs. The programme enrols the beneficiaries on courses in short business management, basic accounting, marketing, and social media marketing. These courses are purposefully included in the programme in order to empower the beneficiaries to grow their businesses (R. Nadasen, personal communication, 2 June 2020).

Table 4.32 is a comparison of the level of education from the questionnaire and the interviews interview.

Table 4.32. Level of education from the questionnaire and interview data

Level of Education	Questionnaire Responses	Interview responses
High School (Grade 8-11)	2	1
Matriculate (Grade 12)	7	2
Tertiary Level Diploma or Degree	9	15
Honours Degree or above	2	2
Grand Total	**20**	**20**

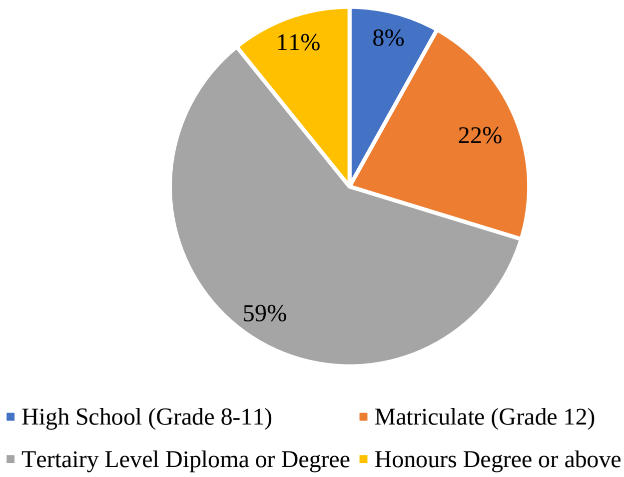


Figure 4.18. Pie chart of level of education of combined beneficiaries from the questionnaire and interview data

Figure 4.18 represents the combined beneficiaries from the questionnaire and interview data sets. Both data sets contained twenty beneficiaries in each. There were three beneficiaries who partook in the questionnaire and the interviews and the duplicate basic demographic data was removed. Overall, 59% of the 37 beneficiaries have a tertiary level diploma or degree and 22% of the beneficiaries have a matric certificate (Grade 12).

Table 4.33 and 4.34 are comparisons of the level of education from the questionnaire post completion of the programme and during the Covid-19 pandemic. A research objective in the questionnaire research design aimed to identify whether there was a relationship between economic sector and profitability table 4.33 and 4.34 aim to address this.

Table 4.33. Level of Education in comparison to profit post completion of the programme

	Profit in the first two years after completing the programme		
Level of Education	Profitability increased	Profitability remained the same	Profitability decreased
High School (Grade 8-11)	1	1	
Matriculate (Grade 12)	4	2	1
Tertiary Level Diploma or Degree	8	1	
Honours Degree or above	1	1	
Grand Total	**14**	**5**	**1**

Table 4.34. Level of Education in comparison to profit during Covid-19 from the questionnaire data

	Profit during Covid-19		
Level of Education	Profitability increased	Profitability remained the same	Profitability decreased
High School (Grade 8-11)			2
Matriculate (Grade 12)	1		6
Tertiary Level Diploma or Degree	1	1	7
Honours Degree or above	1		1
Grand Total	**3**	**1**	**16**

Table 4.33 and 4.34 are questionnaire comparisons of the level of education to profitability post completion of the programme and during Covid-19. 55% of the responses from the questionnaire data have a formal tertiary education. Education provides entrepreneurs with the opportunity to develop their talent and develop their confidence (Dumitrașciuc, 2020). Post completion of the programme, 70% of the beneficiaries noted that their profitability increased and 25% of the beneficiaries noted that their profits remained the same. However, the same cannot be said for the beneficiaries' profitability during Covid-19 as 80% of the beneficiaries noted a decrease. During the pandemic, 15% of the beneficiaries noted an increase in profitability and their level of education ranged from a matric certificate to an honour's degree or above. Tothill (personal communication, 05 August 2020) and Urban et al. (2011) identified that the mindset of entrepreneurs on the programme is developed through short courses and practical training sessions which enable them to recognise that the environment in which they trade and operate is dynamic and volatile. Interviewees four, nine, seventeen and nineteen expressed in their interviews that from an education perspective, the programme provided financial knowledge, especially

since this knowledge allowed the entrepreneurs to rapidly pivot their business models to survive the pandemic. Therefore, it can be concluded that the knowledge learnt from the programme provided a solid knowledge base for the entrepreneur. Reddy (2011) states that an entrepreneur's level of education is the link between knowledge and new opportunities which provides the preparation for new ventures.

Relationship between level of education and profitability

Table 4.35 shows the number of responses from twenty respondents polled in relation to their responses to the profitability questions in the interviews.

Table 4.35. Profitability in comparison to the level of education during Covid-19 from the interview data

	Profit during Covid-19		
Level of Education	Profitability increased	Profitability remained the same	Profitability decreased
High School (Grade 8-11)			1
Matriculate (Grade 12)			2
Tertiary Level Diploma or Degree	1		14
Honours Degree or above			2
Grand Total	**1**	**0**	**19**

Table 4.35 is a comparison of the interview responses from the structured interviews. 95% of these beneficiaries noted a decrease in their profitability and the majority of the beneficiaries have a tertiary level degree or diploma. This indicates that education does not impact business profitability during times of crisis but rather the ability to adapt and find new opportunities. According to Koellinger (2008), the entrepreneur's level of education is important during a time of crisis as education assists in the development of abstract thinking and problem-solving capabilities. Tothill (personal communication, 05 August 2020) and the hotel group identified the importance of financial literacy among its entrepreneurs. The financial literacy of entrepreneurs is important to the success of the business in terms of ensuring a turnover and anticipating a profit (Oseifuah, 2010). However, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in many businesses struggling to survive, which supports the results of profitability decreasing drastically.

It can be concluded that although tertiary education is the beneficiaries' main form of formal education, there is no clear relationship between the level of education and profitability. This conclusion is supported by the manager of the programme. The manager, in the interview, expressed that formal education is dependent on the entrepreneur because the entrepreneur must have the basics at his/her disposal, accompanied by experience and knowledge learnt overtime. However, it was also noted that the entrepreneur must be able to read financial statements in order to ensure he/she stays on track financially. This knowledge is provided by the hotel group by means of short courses. Therefore, education is imperative for an entrepreneur. However formal education does not seem to have a direct relationship on profitability due to the overall increase post completion of the programme and overall decrease during the pandemic.

4.4.4.7. Conclusion on demographics

As the sample population used was small sample, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions between the relationship between the demographic and profitability. A relationship between the results from the demographic data and the literature review are evident. Through networking, as noted in Ratten's (2020a) study, networking is imperative for entrepreneurs to utilise because opportunities can be recognised through access to networks. This was evident in the results as a majority of the beneficiaries stated that networking was beneficial to their businesses post completion of the programme and became more beneficial during the Covid-19 pandemic. The relationship between the level of education from the literature review and the results was evident especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the knowledge learnt on the programme was not aligned with the Covid-19 pandemic some of the knowledge from the programme was able to be transferred to the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic which aided the beneficiaries in pivoting their businesses for survival. The literature review did explore the influence of geographic location and economic sector being influential to the businesses. However no clear relationship between the literature and the results was able to be drawn. This is as a result of the beneficiaries' businesses not being defined by geographic location of economic sector. In general, geographic location, economic sector and level of education appear to be poor predictors of business success and failure because there are no clear trends from the data with relation to the profitability increasing and decreasing. Networking as a demographic is the only demographic that appears to influence profitability. This was largely due to the networks opened up by the hotel group for the beneficiaries. As a result of the inability to draw conclusions from demographic data, the conceptual framework was modified to the updated conceptual framework below.

Although at first glance this conceptual framework looks similar to the conceptual framework proposed before, the framework was modified to be more align with the findings of the study. As a majority demographic data did not prove to be have an impact on the profitability, demographic data was removed from the conceptual framework. The only demographic that proved to have an impact on profitability was access to networks hence in the new proposed conceptual framework it can be noted. The modified conceptual framework can be seen below.

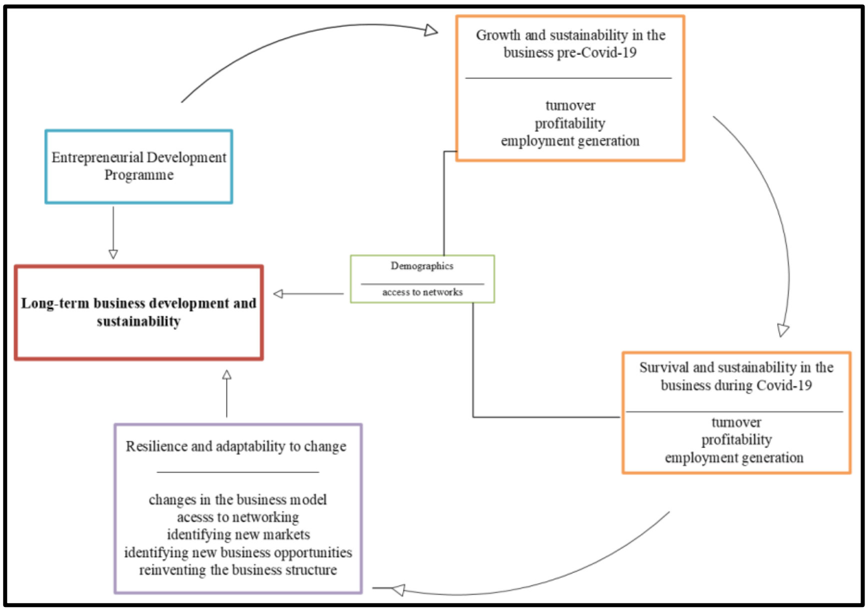


Figure 4.14. Modified conceptual framework

4.4.6 Perceived success of the programme

An increase in turnover, profitability and employment generation can be considered a proxy measure of sustainability. An interview with the manager of the programme stated that the sole purpose of the programme was to develop small and emerging enterprises through a one-year development programme to help them become sustainable. Therefore, if their businesses become sustainable, it can be deemed that the programme too is successful.

When comparing the questionnaire and interview responses in Table 4.36 there is a similar response in whether the programme was helpful in sustaining and growing their business as well as if the knowledge learnt was beneficial during the Covid-19 pandemic. This indicates that majority of the beneficiaries believed that the programme was beneficial towards their business success.

Table 4.36. Comparison between the success of the programme questions between the questionnaire and interview data

Success of the programme	Questionnaire Responses	Interview responses
Do you feel the programme was helpful in sustaining and/or growing your business?	16	18
Do you feel what you learnt on the programme helped your business survive the Covid-19 pandemic?	20	17
Grand Total	**20**	**20**

Table 4.37. Coded main constructs for the theme success of the programme

Table 4.37 shows the main constructs identified from the theme of the success of the programme from the structured interviews with the twenty beneficiaries.

Theme	Question from interview	Constructs emerging from the interview
Success of the programme	**Do you feel the programme was helpful in sustaining and/or growing your business?**	- Yes, o Valuable support systems created overall o Holistic programme o Ongoing networking was helpful to business o Business relationships and brand recognition improved o Became a direct supplier to the hotel group o Beneficial in developing strengths and overcoming weaknesses o Courses equipped with practical knowledge and ways in which to sustain and grow business o Legacy Series strengthened networks - No, o Seems programme fell short with business growth and support
	Do you feel what you learnt on the programme helped your business survive the Covid-19 pandemic?	- Yes, o Financial knowledge learnt aided in tackling challenges on the pandemic o Learnt how to be proactive which enabled business survival o Propelled forward and taught how to persevere o Improved ability to pivot business model to survive o Knowledge absorbed on programme helped during survival mode of pandemic - No, o Knowledge was broad and not business specific o Growth only on a personal level which did not help during the pandemic
	Do you feel that the programme was a valuable personal developmental experience?	- Yes, o Encouraged to think outside the box o It had a huge positive impact on business and growth plans o Boosted personal confidence and public speaking ability o Very valuable practical knowledge learnt o Good connections and networks fostered o WhatsApp groups and online sessions with mentors during Covid-19 was motivational and the right push
	In your opinion, what could the hotel group do differently?	- Specific business needs and assistance from mentors should be improved - Invite investors and line managers from within the group to a 'meet and greet' session - Improve fruitfulness of opportunities from the Legacy Series for the beneficiaries - Leverage off beneficiaries' businesses and include them as suppliers to the group and in the supply chain - Find avenues to assist with business funding for future growth opportunities

In the interview with the manager, it was indicated that during the pandemic, the hotel group was unable to continue with the programme due to their own operational challenges. As a support system for the beneficiaries, WhatsApp support groups were created, and the beneficiaries were listed on a supplier club directory. These two measures created the ability for intra-networking between the beneficiaries and preferred suppliers within the group were further strengthened during this period. Many of the beneficiaries indicated that the WhatsApp support groups and online sessions with the mentors of the programme were beneficial in creating support systems and some even found the Legacy Series to be a powerful networking tool

The manager of the programme believed that the programme was successful up until 2020, however, the pandemic hindered it and thus impacted on its success. The last 18 months (March 2020 to December 2022) had been a period of learning and once the hotel group recovers an improved programme will be reintroduced. As seen in table 4.36, 90% of the beneficiaries indicated that the programme was helpful in sustaining and growing their business. Interviewee nineteen stated "*the programme enabled me to think differently and introduced my business to different markets and because of that, the programme was the best thing that could have happened to my business"*. Interviewee twelve said *"the programme empowered me and my business and provided an opportunity to network and exchange resources with others".* Table 4.37 delves into the reasoning behind their response in which the common answers were that the programme was holistic in nature with ongoing networking whilst simultaneously aiding in the improvement of business relationships and brand recognition. Another common response was that the courses provided by the hotel group equipped the beneficiaries with practical knowledge which in turn created sustainability and growth in the business. 10% of the beneficiaries indicated in their individual interviews that they felt the programme fell short in terms of business growth and support. Interviewee twenty concurred with this statement and said *"the programme did not aid me in growing my businesses because the goal of the programme did not align with my goal for my business. There was also no growth in terms of networking opportunities and there was no assistance with an introduction into the suppliers of the hotel group"*. Upon further investigation, these beneficiaries believed the programme was a 'one-stop-shop' where the work would be done for them by professionals. It is the researcher's opinion that these beneficiaries were not mature enough in their business journey and therefore expected more of the programme. The businesses which were able to survive the pandemic underwent pivots to the business model and this ability was taught to them through the programme. The financial and general business knowledge gained was a powerful tool for some beneficiaries as it aided them in overcoming the challenges presented by the pandemic. It must be noted that some beneficiaries did not find the value of the programme during the pandemic as it was not something anyone was able to prepare for. Interviewee five was one such beneficiary, they stated that *"before the Covid-19 pandemic, training and networking aided in overall business operations and provided the correct knowledge about how to tackle challenges. During the Covid-19 pandemic the same support was not provided and the online training was not beneficial in assisting with the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic"*. Thus, the knowledge learnt aided some beneficiaries on a personal level rather than a business level.

One question asked to the beneficiaries was whether the programme was a good personal developmental experience and all of them indicated yes. Some of the main reasons which arose were: outside the box thinking, confidence boost, assistance with public speaking, fostering connections and networks; and provision of useful and practical knowledge. Interviewee nine said "*the programme was beneficial in expanding my knowledge, improving my networks and growing me personally. It also aided me in developing business connections with other entrepreneurs and I am still using what I learnt in the* *programme today"*. Interviewee thirteen shared similar sentiments and stated *"the programme helped me learn a lot and it provided me with the knowledge to improve my weaknesses"*. These reasons contributed to the beneficiaries holistically as the knowledge learnt and absorbed was beneficial to the beneficiary as an individual and as a businessman/woman. Interviewee eleven even indicated that the programme *"made a positive impact on my business and my growth plans and the timing could not have been more perfect".*

The last question which was asked in the interview was in relation to improvements in the programme for future. Many beneficiaries indicated that an improvement in an entrepreneur-supplier relationship with the hotel group and its suppliers will be beneficial. Interviewee eighteen stated *"the programme fell short in terms of an entrepreneur-supplier relationship because there were not enough linkages between the two and this was not beneficial for my business"*. It was also noted that sessions with potential external investors and line managers within the group would contribute to further business growth and expansion into new avenues. Interviewee five said *"if there is more of a link between the entrepreneurial development programme and those the hotel group is wanting to promote, it will be beneficial for my business and my fellow entrepreneurs businesses"*. Interviewee twenty expressed a need for funding in the programme , *"the hotel group should implement funding opportunities for our businesses because that will help some of us break into new markets"*. The feedback about funding opportunities for future beneficiaries may not be a useful improvement for the programme as the hotel group purposefully does not fund the beneficiaries' businesses.

The research surrounding the entrepreneurial development programme and the perceived success of the programme concur with one another. The sole focus of the relationship between the group and the beneficiary is purely on business and entrepreneur development, rather than financial investment into the business in terms of grants and joint ventures (C. Tothill, personal communication, 05 August 2020). Upon collating and analysing the research, the beneficiaries of the programme believed the programme to have been successful post completion of the programme and expressed improvements for the hotel group to make for future entrepreneurial development programmes. This concurs with the research about the programme because the structure of the programme was altered and the entrepreneurs were not afforded the opportunity of the hands-on support as they were in previous years (C. Tothill, personal communication, 19 February 2021).

4.4.7 Conclusion

The beneficiaries of the programme noted an improvement in their turnover, profitability and employment generation capabilities post completion of the programme. The results from both the interview and questionnaire data concluded that post completion of the programme there was an improvement in turnover, profitability and growth in employment numbers in the business. During strained business operations like the Covid-19 pandemic, the beneficiaries were focused on basic business survival rather than making a profit and growing their business. Demographics as a variable did seem to show a clear indication of a conclusive relationship with profitability. Networking was the only variable that appeared to have a direct impact on profitability. Before the Covid-19 pandemic the beneficiaries' businesses were on track for long-term sustainability. The Coivd-19 pandemic upset many businesses' plans, processes and hopes for growth in the businesses of the beneficiaries. Although changes to business models were implemented, growth in turnover, profitability and employment generation were hindered. This was attributed to the circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and the turmoil that the pandemic caused throughout the world. The beneficiaries were influenced by these circumstances and changed their focus from business growth and long-term sustainability to business survival which ultimately led to their businesses being in existence today.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, there will be a discussion of the literature methodology, overall success of the programme and conclusions drawn from the findings in the previous chapters. Recommendations for future research in the field of entrepreneurship with specific reference to entrepreneurship during the Covid-19 pandemic will also be made.

A mixed methods approach was employed in the study and this approach was undertaken to understand the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme (questionnaire research design) post completion of the programme in comparison to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic (interview research design) on the businesses of the beneficiaries. The information gathered from the interview process provided a degree of context to the questionnaire data, while also allowing for complementary analysis where comparisons and conclusions could be drawn between the results of the two data types.

5.2. Summary of literature

This study followed Schumpeter, Drucker and Stevenson's (Simpeh, 2011) opportunity-based entrepreneurial theory in which the entrepreneur explores techniques and systems that must be changed in order to uncover and respond to the present opportunity.

Doern et al. (2019) explained that unexpected and unpredictable events as a result of a crisis results in urgent responses from organisations. Due to the disruptions in the marketplace, many face themselves with new opportunities which arise in the market. Opportunity-based entrepreneurs must exploit these opportunities in order to secure robust, resilient and sustainable businesses during a time of crisis. This case study was an example of how an organisation could act as a potentially powerful catalyst for entrepreneurs. The programme's main aim was to develop small businesses through transformation, education and employment generation thus promoting improved business sustainability. The study used a subset of Geus's (2002) model, drawing conclusions about adaptability to the business environment, entrepreneur attentiveness, former knowledge and access to networking. The entrepreneurs' attentiveness and their former knowledge was able to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to successfully venture into new business opportunities.

This study did not follow similar studies in terms of the impact of an entrepreneurial development programme on businesses as there are no reported similar studies in South Africa or other developing countries. The study was also unique in that it explored the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses of the beneficiaries. However, recent studies by Morgan et al. (2020), Castro and Zermeño (2020), Sawalha (2020) and Ratten (2020 & 2021) have investigated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of lockdown restrictions, entrepreneurs' coping mechanisms and their ability to be resilient and adaptive during a time of crisis.

5.3. Summary of results

This study was carried out with the purpose of investigating the relationship between economic success, employment generation capabilities and long-term sustainability of the businesses of the beneficiaries who partook in the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme. The study also aimed to investigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the beneficiaries who partook in the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme.

The main research objectives from research design with their findings are discussed below.

Research objective: To obtain an insight into the turnover and profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses subsequent to the completion of the programme and identify if there had been a recovery in economic growth post the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings from the questionnaire and interview data indicated that post completion of the programme there was an overall growth in turnover and profitability in the beneficiaries' businesses. This could be directly attributed to the overall improvement in financial literacy of the beneficiaries because of the knowledge learnt on the programme and well as the short course that the beneficiaries were enrolled in. An overall growth in turnover and profitability post completion of the programme may also be attributed to the financial mentor that the beneficiaries were assigned as this mentor was able to equip the beneficiary with the correct skills required to accurately prepare their own financial records and business plans. The Covid-19 pandemic came as a shock to not only the beneficiaries' businesses but all businesses around the world and South Africa. The detailed business plans, long-term goals and any prospect for economic growth was placed on the backburner. The beneficiaries' main goal during the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic was to ensure their business survived. A majority of the beneficiaries took the first 21-day lockdown period as a chance to reflect, pivot their business models, re-strategize and plan the way forward through the uncertainty. These strategies are believed to have defined the survival of the beneficiaries' businesses. A growth in turnover and profitability was not evident in a majority of the beneficiaries' business during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research objective: To determine to what effect the beneficiaries have contributed to employment generation in South Africa once completing the programme and during the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings from the questionnaire and interview data showed that there was an overall growth in employment numbers post completion of the programme. A pattern was noticed from the questionnaire data. One-year post completion of the programme a majority of the beneficiaries increased their employment numbers and two years post completion of the programme, their employment numbers gradually grew for the remainder of the four years. This is believed to be due to the notion that post completion of the programme, the beneficiaries over-exceeded their business growth expectations in year one and therefore in years two to four post programme, there was a realization for stable employment numbers which gradually grew year on year. Before entering in the programme, a majority of the beneficiaries grew their employment numbers to post completion of the programme employment numbers. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the beneficiaries noted a sharp decline in their employment numbers with majority of them shrinking their workforce. The beneficiaries who did not terminate employment contracts during the Covid-19 pandemic were reliant on government relief funds and employee relief funds as a means of income for these employees. These beneficiaries, however, are hopeful for a growth in their employment numbers when business begins to stablilise again and there is an increase in the supply and/or demand of their product or service.

Research objective: To determine whether the crisis of the current Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the beneficiary successfully adapting their business practices in order to sustain profitability.

The findings from interview data prove that the beneficiaries were able to successfully adapt to the crisis of the pandemic. It is believed that this ability to adapt under crisis is as a result of the episodic knowledge learnt throughout the period that the beneficiary has run their business. This ability to adapt may also be a contribution of the learnings from the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme with the various different mentors and coaches. However, these beneficiaries were unable to sustain pre-Covid-19 levels of profitability as the main focus was on business survival rather than an increase in profitability.

Research objective: To determine what measures were put in place by the beneficiaries to try and sustain their businesses during the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The interview data brought light to the main measures implemented by the beneficiaries to try and sustain their businesses. These measures included cost and overhead reduction, new business markets and products and/or service offerings and application for loans and relief from the banks and/or government. These measures allowed the beneficiaries to sustain their business and ensure they survived during the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research objective: To evaluate if the entrepreneurial development programme can be deemed to have been successful in achieving its objectives in terms of promoting long term sustainability of the beneficiaries' business pre Covid-19 and post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The questionnaire and interview findings indicate that post completion of the programme, the beneficiaries were on track to achieving long-term sustainability. This is as a result of an increase in turnover, profitability and employment numbers which in this study was a proxy measure of sustainability. During the Covid-19 pandemic, long-term sustainability was not the primary focus of the beneficiaries. Their main focus was to ensure their business survived with sufficient cash flow into the business whilst continuing basic business operations. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme was deemed to have been successful in their main objective of business sustainability of the beneficiaries. As the programme was suspended at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme was not successful in promoting long-term sustainability during the pandemic because like the beneficiaries, their main focus too was business survival.

Research question: To determine if relevant demographics have a measurable impact on the profitability of the beneficiaries' businesses who have completed the programme and post the initial crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The four main demographics analysed and discussed in this study were access to networks, geographic location, economic sector and level of education. Geographic location, economic sector and level of education appeared to be poor predictors of having a measurable impact on the profitability on the beneficiaries' business. This could be attributed to the small sample size and the holisticness of the entrepreneurial development programme in that these three demographics do not define business success and therefore profitability. As the entrepreneurial development programme places emphasis on networking, the networking variable appearing to have an influence on business profitability is understandable. The hotel group opened up networks for the beneficiaries and these networks were especially advantageous to the beneficiaries during the Covid-19 pandemic. The beneficiaries not only networked amongst themselves during the Covid-19 pandemic but with other corporations due to them being listed in the supply club directory.

5.4. Research contribution

Theoretical contribution

This study aimed to contribute to the discipline of entrepreneurship and management in providing insight into this particular entrepreneurial development programme in South Africa. This was achieved through an in-depth discussion on opportunity based entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship under crisis. The beneficiaries within the programme were both opportunistic and resilient. The beneficiaries identified the need to revolutionise existing products and services in the market through improved product and supply chain. The beneficiaries were able to expand on their episodic knowledge, knowledge production through the knowledge and courses provided by the hotel group. This was achieved from the holistic 1-year development programme provided by the hotel group.

The theory of entrepreneurship under crisis was evident throughout the pandemic as this was an extremely unexpected and unpredictable event. The beneficiaries and their businesses needed to utilise and leverage off opportunities based on available resources. Many of the beneficiaries resources were decimated during the pandemic. The beneficiaries exploited the opportunities presented to them and utilised networks provided to them through the entrepreneurial development programme. The level of education of the beneficiaries allowed for abstract thinking and problem solving. This study also proved that demographics, such as age, gender, level of education and geographic location do not directly contribute towards profitability. These demographic factors are still pertinent especially for the beneficiary and their business, however in this study, there no evident relationship between profitability and demographics was drawn.

Practical contribution

This research also aimed to extend the knowledge of entrepreneurs responding to crisis with particular reference to the Covid-19 pandemic. As there is limited research investigating the measures implemented by the beneficiaries to sustain and ensure their businesses survived during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, this could be a valuable contribution to literature. One contribution of this study lies in investigating the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses of the beneficiaries. The coping mechanisms of the beneficiaries, their access to networks and their ability to face adversity is important to evaluate, especially with the current Covid-19 pandemic.

A further contribution of this study lies in investigating the value that the programme provides to beneficiaries and whether enrolling in the hotel group's entrepreneur development programme is a worthwhile and valuable experience. It is important to understand the investment value of the programme for the hotel group in terms of their corporate social responsibility and if the financial investment is translating into business success for their beneficiaries. The programme can be advantageous to the hotel group as well because a supplier-business relationship can be created. The success of the entrepreneurs' businesses can impact socio-economic factors such as a contribution to the country's gross domestic product and employment generation.

This study aimed to provide literature and research on one particular entrepreneurial development programme. This study also aimed to contribute to the effective of the pandemic on small business in South Africa and the measures and adaptions implemented by the beneficiaries to survive. Despite extensive research, the impact of enterprise development programmes had not been investigated to date, especially within the South African context. This study aimed to close the gap in this regard as well as provide research surrounding economic growth, employment generation capabilities and the long-term sustainability of the beneficiaries business post-completion of the programme. Research on these three factors can further provide other entrepreneurial development programmes with a deeper understanding of the impact of the programme and provide ways to improve.

5.5. Limitations of this study

A limited number of constructs were used to attempt to evaluate the degree of success or failure of beneficiaries subsequent to the completion of the programme. The study only targeted an entrepreneur development programme from one hotel group and as such the beneficiaries in the study were predominantly from the Gauteng and Western Cape region, so extrapolation of the results of this study to other jurisdictions may not be applicable. The study used mixed methods with predominant focus on an interview approach. Drawing statistical conclusion in explanations was thus limited as the questionnaire did not lend itself to a statistical analysis. Statistical analysis would have allowed better conclusions to be drawn, especially between profitability and the relevant demographics. The sample size from the questionnaire and interview research design was small therefore drawing firm conclusions with regard to the demographic data and profitability of the businesses was not possible.

5.6. Recommendations for further research

As this was a limitation for this study, a similar study should be carried out with similar entrepreneurial development programmes in South Africa and in other developing countries. By doing this it could establish whether other entrepreneurial development programmes help develop small businesses in terms of economic success, employment generation capabilities and ultimately long-term sustainability of the beneficiaries of these programmes. Another area for future research would be the aspect of adversity faced by entrepreneurs. This study was limited to the beneficiaries of the programme with predominant focus in the Gauteng and Western Cape region, further research could also consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on other entrepreneurs and SME's in South Africa as well as in developed countries to establish the main impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As this study concentrated on the beneficiaries' businesses from one hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme, further studies should consider investigating to what extent these small businesses can contribute to the gross domestic production (GDP) in South Africa.

5.7. Recommendations for the hotel group' s entrepreneurial development programme

This study was to identify gaps and areas of improvement for the hotel group's entrepreneurial development programme. The hotel group should find new avenues to assist the beneficiaries with business funding to allow to for future growth opportunities. An improved relationship between the beneficiary and hotel group's supplier network would be beneficial to both parties as the supplier network has the ability to leverage off the beneficiaries from the programme and in turn the beneficiaries would improve their business network. The programme for future beneficiaries should be aligned to be more technologically focussed where the possible creation of a telephone application may be beneficial to both parties for learning and knowledge sharing opportunities. A recurring point from the beneficiaries was that the mentors, and coaches must focus on the specific needs of each individual business rather than applying a one-size-fits all approach. To potentially improve business opportunities for the beneficiaries, an invitation to potential investors and line managers may be beneficial for additional networking opportunities and knowledge sharing. A practical recommendation for management is to allow for the Legacy Series to be broadcasted more regularly and across different media platforms to improve the fruitfulness for additional opportunities for the beneficiaries in the market.

5.8. Ethical considerations

This research complied with all the ethical requirements of the University of Witwatersrand The researcher was aware of and ensured adherence to the research ethical considerations, such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, non-disclosure, anonymity and the use of research data. Ethical clearance was authorised (**H21/09/17**) from the University of Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical). Participants were presented with a letter that provided them with adequate information about the research project as well as with a consent form for the beneficiaries to complete. Participants were advised that they were free to refuse to participate in the survey and that no personal data will be used for the study. All personal data was stored in a password protected computer and will be deleted once the researcher's degree has been obtained.

5.9. Conclusion

The study investigated whether the entrepreneurial development programme had a meaningful impact on the economic success, employment generation capabilities and long-term sustainability of the businesses of the beneficiaries. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the businesses were found to have benefitted from the programme in terms of economic growth, employment generation and long-term sustainability; thus, indicating that the programme was beneficial to these beneficiaries in terms of establishing and growing their businesses. This study concluded that there was an overall growth in turnover, profitability and employment numbers post completion of the programme. This was evident in both data sets. However, the same cannot be concluded during the Covid-19 pandemic, which greatly influenced turnover, profitability and employment numbers across the businesses from both data sets. The identification of these conclusions was made possible through the analysis, presentation and thematic conclusions from the data. However, as both data sets were small, drawing conclusions on the impact of demographics of geographic location, networking, economic sector and level of education proved inconclusive as no relationship could be found. The same can be noted with the demographic section during the Covid-19 pandemic as the businesses were mainly focused on survival and ensuring that income flow into the business was sufficient for basic operational needs. Networking, however, did appear to provide a good basis for business survival.

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in an overnight paradigm shift with external factors beyond the control of the beneficiaries that severely impacted their businesses. Overnight the businesses had to pivot from growth and long-term sustainability into survival mode. The beneficiaries implemented changes to their business models through business plan adaptations, flexibility within the business schedule and adaptability to external influences such as lockdown restrictions. By doing this, the beneficiaries were able to sustain their businesses and ensure their businesses survived. However, during constrained business operations during Covid-19 an increase in profitability was not a main focus for the beneficiaries but they focused rather on ensuring sufficient cash flow to sustain the business. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, a majority of the beneficiaries noted an increase in turnover, profitability and employment numbers thus indicating long term sustainability and therefore proving the programme to be successful. The same cannot be noted during the Covid-19 pandemic as all knowledge, skills and experiences were focused on ensuring the survival of the business. The study indicated that from the interviews, the knowledge and skills learnt on the programme were beneficial to the beneficiaries and their businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic as this knowledge contributed to the survival of their business. As the entrepreneurial developmental programme operated in a steady business paradigm, some refinements to the knowledge and skills taught to the beneficiaries about rapidly adapting their business to an uncertain business market might be valuable.

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7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A: Permission letter to conduct research

TSOGO SUN
HOTELS

22 July 2021

Confidential

Francesca Maria Lobetti
per e-mail: flobetti@gmail.com

Dear Francesca

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE 'TSOGO SUN ENTREPRENEURS' PROGRAMME

I, the undersigned, grant permission for you to collect data and conduct research (as outlined in your letter of 19 July 2021) from the Tsogo Sun Entrepreneurs Programme for your study titled "A Case Study of Beneficiaries and their Businesses in an Entrepreneurial Development Programme in South Africa".

I wish you every success with your efforts.

Yours sincerely,

CANDY TOTHILL
GM: CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Tsogo Sun Hotels Limited
Registration No : 2002/006356/06
Palazzo Towers West, Montecasino Boulevard, Fourways 2055 | Private Bag X200, Bryanston, South Africa 2021
t +27(0)11 510 7500 | tsogosun.com

Directors: JA Copelyn (Chairman)* MN von Aulock (Chief Executive Officer) L McDonald (Chief Financial Officer)
MH Ahmed (Lead Independent)+ SC Gina+ LM Molefi+ JG Ngcobo+ R Nicolella* CC September+
(* Non-Executive Director | + Independent Director)
Company Secretary : Southern Sun Secretarial Services (Pty) Ltd

7.2. Appendix B: Questionnaire information sheet

Date 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

The hotel group has been running this entrepreneurial development programme since 2005. The programme is a serious financial and social commitment by the hotel group. Having run this programme now for 16 years, the Hotel Group would like to try and evaluate if this programme is in fact making a significant success in the careers and businesses of the beneficiaries who have completed this programme.

My name is Francesca Lobetti and I am a master's student in Business Management at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme under the supervision of Dr Robert Venter. The aim of this research project is to find out the effects of the entrepreneurial development programme on you and your business.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in answering a questionnaire. This activity will involve a Google form (link below) and will take around 15 minutes.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, you will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The questionnaire will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this research project will be stored in password protected computer and will be kept for 3 years. With your permission the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,
Francesca Lobetti (researcher) - 076 156 6541
flobetti@gmail.com

Dr Robert Venter (supervisor)
Robert.Venter@wits.ac.za

7.3. Appendix C: Questionnaire Consent form

Dear Participant,

Thank you for accepting to participate in this study. The completion of this consent form pertains to your consent for audio and/or visual and photographs, recordings to be taken of the conversation with regard to this study. Please complete this consent form as you see appropriate. By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you have read and understood the description of this study and that you agree to the terms as described below:

	Mark with X	
	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information about this study as provided in the participant's information sheet.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any penalties or negative consequences against me.		
I agree that the information I provide may be treated as strictly confidential and anonymous and only the researcher will have access to the data.		
I agree that the results of this study may be recorded in academic journals and at conferences.		
I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study and I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction.		
I understand that I may request a report summary, which will come as a result of this study.		

With full knowledge of all above-mentioned terms, I agree to participate in this study.

Participant		Consent taken by (Researcher)	
Name		Name	
Signature		Signature	
Date		Date	

7.4. Appendix D: Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

1. **Gender (please tick):**

Male		Female		Prefer not to say	

2. **Age (years) (please tick):**

Under 25		26-35		36-45		46-55		56-65		Over 66	

3. **Race (please tick):**

Asian	
Black African	
Coloured	
Indian	
White	
Other	

4. **Highest level of education <u>completed (please tick)</u>:**

No education	
Primary School	
High School (Grade 8 – Grade 11)	
Matriculate (Grade 12)	
Tertiary level diploma or degree	
Honours degree or above	

5. **Geographic location (please tick):**

Eastern Cape	
Free State	
Gauteng	
KwaZulu Natal	
Limpopo	
Mpumalanga	
North West	
Northern Cape	
Western Cape	

6. **Economic Sector/Industry (please tick):**

Agriculture and Forestry		Manufacturer	
Alcohol and tobacco manufacture and/or supply		Marketing	
Arts, Culture and Design		Multi-media and events	
Beauty		Retail and E-commerce	
Construction and Engineering		Safety and Security	
Education and Training		Sport and Recreation	
Finance and Banking		Textiles	
Hospitality		Tourism	
Information Technology (IT)		Transport	
Landscaping			
Other (please specify)			

7. **When did you join the programme (please tick)?**

2005		2012	
2006		2013	
2007		2014	
2008		2015	

2009		2016	
2010		2017	
2011			

Section B: Sustainability

1. **Before Covid-19 did you believe your business, was sustainable? i.e. Did you believe your business would be in existence in 2025?**

Yes		No		Uncertain	

2. **Did your business survive Covid-19?**

Yes		No		Uncertain	

3. **If yes, do you believe your business will survive another crisis like Covid-19?**

Yes		No		Uncertain	

4. **Before entering the programme, did you have access to networks?**

	Yes	**No**
Social and Personal connections		
Business networks		
Political connections (to open opportunities to tender)		
Connections provided by the Hotel Group		

5. **Did the programme open up networks for you?**

	Yes	**No**
Social and Personal connections		
Business networks		
Political connections (to open opportunities to tender)		
Connections provided by the Hotel Group		

6. **Did the programme make you aware of the value of networking?**

Yes		No	

7. **Was this knowledge of value to you?**

Yes		No	

8. **Please tick the option most appropriate to you**

	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree
Does your business have the ability to implement technology to give your business an advantage?			
Would you adapt your current business practices to be more in-line with technology?			
Are you operating in a market which will remain stable in the medium to long-term?			
Is your turnover stable or growing year-on-year?			
Do you reinvest a portion of your businesses annual profit back into the business?			
Do you strategize and develop medium to long-terms business plans?			
Do you save a portion of your businesses' annual profit?			
Have you had to retrench staff due to economic pressures?			
Are your conserved finances enough to sustain your business for 3 months in the event of unpredicted circumstances (i.e. the Covid-19 pandemic)?			

9. Please indicate which mentoring you underwent with Hotel Group

Formal mentoring and coaching with a professional		Peer mentoring with an alumni of the programme	

Section C: Employment Generation

1. Did you employ more people after completing the programme? (please tick)

Yes		No	

2. **How many employees were employed by your business BEFORE completing the programme? (please enter the amount)**

Full-time/Permanent Employees	
Part-time Employees	
Casual Employees (on average/estimated)	

3. **How many employees were employed by your business AFTER completing the programme? (please enter the amount in each year)**

	1 year after the programme	**2 years after the programme**	**3 years after the programme**	**4 years after the programme**
Full-time/Permanent Employees				
Part-time Employees				
Casual Employees (on average/estimated)				

4. **How many employees did you have to retrench during Covid-19?**

Full-time/Permanent Employees	
Part-time Employees	
Casual Employees (on average/estimated)	

5. **Have you seen a recovery in employment numbers since the initial crisis of the pandemic?**

Yes		No	

Section D: Success of Programme

1. **Do you feel the Hotel Group Entrepreneurial Programme was helpful to sustaining and/ or growing your business**?

Highly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Highly agree

2. **Do you feel the Hotel Group Entrepreneurial Programme was a valuable personal developmental experience?**

Highly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Highly agree

3. **Were you provided with adequate support by Hotel Group during the period of Covid-19?**

Yes		No	

4. **Please tick the appropriate support provided**

Support provided	**(Tick)**

WhatsApp support groups	
Check-in's from peers of the programme	
Financial support	
Business support in terms of improved supply of product/service to Hotel Group	
Reduction/temporary termination in annual subscription fees	

Section E: Business Turnover

1. **What figure would you give your business's profitability upon entering the programme? ____________**
2. **How would you describe your business's turnover, in the first two years after completing the programme?**

Turnover increased		Turnover remained the same		Turnover decreased	

3. **If your turnover has INCREASED, which percent best describes the increase? (please tick one)**

0-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
41% - 50%	
Above 50%	

4. **If your turnover has DECREASED, which percent best describes the decrease? (please tick one)**

0-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
41% - 50%	
Above 50%	

5. **How would you best describe your business demand? (please tick)**

Non-seasonal		Seasonal Demand		Cyclic demand	

X

6. **During Covid-19, how would you describe your business turnover?**

Turnover increased		Turnover remained the same		Turnover decreased	

7. **By what percentage did your turnover increase or decrease?**

0-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
41% - 50%	
Above 50%	

8. **During Covid-19, how would you describe your business demand?**

Non-seasonal		Seasonal Demand		Cyclic demand	

Section F: Business Profitability

1. **What figure would you give your business's profitability upon entering the programme? ____________**
2. **How would you describe your business's profits, in the first two years after completing the programme?**

Profits increased		Profits remained the same		Profits decreased	

3. **If your profits have INCREASED, which percent best describes your increase? (please tick one)**

0-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
41% - 50%	
Above 50%	

4. **If your profits have DECREASED, which percent best describes your decrease? (please tick one)**

0-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
41% - 50%	
Above 50%	

X

5. **During Covid-19, how would you describe your business profitability?**

Profitability increased		Profitability remained the same		Profitability decreased	

6. **By what percentage did your profitability increase or decrease?**

0-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
41% - 50%	
Above 50%	

7.5. Appendix E: Interview Information Sheet (Focus Group)

Letter 1: Pre-communication to the beneficiaries

Date 2021

Dear *(Person's Name)* of the Entrepreneurial Programme,

Congratulations on completing programme.

The hotel group has been running this entrepreneurial development programme since 2005. The programme is a serious financial and social commitment by the hotel group. Having run this programme now for 16 years, the Hotel Group would like to try and evaluate if this programme is in fact making a significant success in the careers and businesses of the beneficiaries who have completed this programme.

My name is Francesca Lobetti and I am a master's student in Business Management at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme under the supervision of Dr Robert Venter. The aim of this research project is to find out the effects of the entrepreneurial development programme on you and your business. As part of this project, I would like to invite you in taking part in a focus group discussion. This activity will involve an online meeting with a small group of your fellow graduates of the programme and will take around 1 hour of your time. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using the built-in recorder on the meeting platform we choose. This recording will be stored on a password protected computer and only the researcher will have access to this recording. It will be deleted after 1 year.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, you will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The questionnaire will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this research project will be stored in password protected computer and will be kept for 3 years. With your permission the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

If you do choose to participate in the interview, I would be delighted to send you a copy of the results once completed. Can you please respond to this email and indicate if you are willing to participate or not, and if you would like a copy of the final results or not? If you are willing to participate, I will send you a date, time and the link for the interview either for an interview over Microsoft Teams, Skype or Zoom.

Sincerely,

Francesca Lobetti (researcher)
076 156 6541
flobetti@gmail.com

Dr Robert Venter (supervisor)
Robert.Venter@wits.ac.za

Letter 2: Communication to beneficiaries for interview

Date 2021

Dear *(person's name)* of the Entrepreneurial Programme,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. I would like to ask, that you give your candid and honest opinion of the programme. This interview process should take no more than 1 hour of your time.

Below is a link to access the meeting to partake in the focus group. The focus group will take place on *date* and at *time* over *online platform*.

Your responses will be kept completely confidential and the results of this study will be presented in such a way that no individual or their individual responses can be identified. Please note that it is a requirement of the University of Witwatersrand to inform you of the following:

- There will be no personal cost to you if you participate in this project.
- You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study.
- You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me

Thank you for your help,

Francesca Lobetti (researcher)
flobetti@gmail.com
076 156 6541

Dr Robert Venter (supervisor)
Robert.Venter@wits.ac.za

7.6. Appendix F: Consent form (Interview with beneficiaries)

A case study of beneficiaries and their businesses in an Entrepreneurial Development Programme in South Africa

Researcher: Francesca Lobetti

I ……………………………………………, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his/her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be recorded	YES	NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their on-ethics clearance being obtained
YES
NO

……………………………………. (signature)

……………………………………. (name of participant)

…………………………………… (date)

7.7. Appendix G: Interview with beneficiaries (Guide)

Topic: The effect of an entrepreneurial development programme on the economic success, long-term sustainability and employment generation capabilities of its beneficiaries

Section 1: Economic success

Turnover

1. What happened to your business's turnover during Covid-19?

Profitability

2. Looking back, is there anything you could have done differently to improve your profitability last year?

Section 2: Employment Generation

3. On average, how many people did you have to retrench last year?
4. What was the reason behind you retrenching them?
5. Once business begins to stabilise again, do you believe you will have the capacity to employ more people? Why?

Section 3: Sustainability and networking

6. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, did you believe your business to be sustainable? i.e. in existence in the 2025? Why?
7. Do you now believe your business will survive another crisis like the Covid-19? Why?
8. Did the programme open up networks for you? Which ones?
9. Do you believe that networking is valuable? Why or why not?
10. If your business survived the toughest times of 2020, what measures did you implement to ensure that it survived?
    a) Why do you feel these measures were successful or not successful?
    b) Looking back, would you have done anything differently if you could?
11. Pre-Covid-19, did you have any preparations in place for the event of unforeseen circumstances? Such as business plans, investments, market which you operate it, enough finances conserved
    a) Were these preparations sufficient enough to prepare for the pandemic? Why or why not?
12. How did you cope emotionally and physically during the pandemic? What would you do differently if you could?
13. Did you have to change your business model to adapt your business to the crisis of the covid-19 pandemic? What did you have to change to help your business survive?
14. How did you manage your cash flow when lockdown restrictions were imposed?
    a) What would you have done differently if you could have?

Section 4: Success of the programme

15. Do you feel the entrepreneurial development programme was helpful to sustaining and/or growing your business? Why?
16. Do you feel that the programme was a valuable personal developmental experience? Why?
17. In your opinion, what could the hotel group do differently? Why?

7.8. Appendix H: Interview Information Sheet (Manager of the Programme)

Date 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Francesca Lobetti and I am a master's student in Business Management at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the impact of the entrepreneurial development programme under the supervision of Dr Robert Venter. The aim of this research project is to find out the effects of the entrepreneurial development programme on you and your business.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you in taking part in an interview. This activity will involve an online meeting and will take around 1 hour of you time. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using the built-in recorder on the meeting platform we choose. This recording will be stored on a password protected computer and only the researcher will have access to this recording. It will be deleted after 1 year.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, you will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The questionnaire will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this research project will be stored in password protected computer and will be kept for 3 years. With your permission the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

If you do choose to participate in the interview, I would be delighted to send you a copy of the results once completed. Can you please respond to this email and indicate if you are willing to participate or not, and if you would like a copy of the final results or not? If you are willing to participate, I will send you a date, time and the link for the interview either over Microsoft Teams, Skype or Zoom.

Sincerely,

Francesca Lobetti (researcher) – 076 156 6541
flobetti@gmail.com

Dr Robert Venter (supervisor)
Robert.Venter@wits.ac.za

7.9. Appendix I: Consent form (Manager of the Programme)

A case study of beneficiaries and their businesses in an Entrepreneurial Development Programme in South Africa

Researcher: Francesca Lobetti

I ……………………………………………, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his/her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be recorded	YES	NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their on-ethics clearance being obtained
YES
NO

……………………………………. (signature)

……………………………………. (name of participant)

…………………………………… (date)

7.10. Appendix J: Structured Interview Guide (Manager of the Programme)

1. Do you believe the entrepreneurs' businesses to show sustained growth in turnover once they complete the programme? Why?
2. Do you believe the entrepreneurs' businesses to show sustained growth in profitability once they complete the programme? Why?
3. Do you believe the entrepreneurs to show growth in employment numbers once they complete the programme? Why?
4. Do you feel the knowledge and skills the entrepreneurs learnt on the programme allowed them to grow and sustain their business once they completed the programme? Why?
5. Do you believe demographics (in terms of the below) play a role in their profitability?
    a) Age
    b) Gender
    c) Geographic location
    d) Access to networks
    e) Level of education
6. Do you think that if the entrepreneurs' businesses are successful, it automatically deems the entrepreneurial development programme successful? Why?
7. Do you feel that many of the entrepreneurs were able to sustain their businesses to survive the pandemic? What do you think they did that helped them survive?
8. Did the access to networking from the hotel group assist any of the entrepreneurs in any way? Why
9. Do you think the programme equipped the entrepreneurs with methods to cope during adversity?
10. How do you think the entrepreneurs coped with adversity?
11. Do you know how some of the entrepreneurs were able to sustain their cash flow when the first restrictions were imposed?
12. Do you think the knowledge and skills the entrepreneurs learnt on the programme allowed them to sustain their business during the covid-19 pandemic? Why or why not?
13. What would you change on the current entrepreneurial development programme for future entrepreneurs and why?
14. Do you believe the entrepreneurs would be able to sustain another crisis like the covid-19 pandemic?
15. What support did the entrepreneurial development programme offer the entrepreneurs during the coivd-19 pandemic?
16. Ultimately, do you still believe the entrepreneurial development programme to be successful?

7.11. Appendix K: Employment numbers for questionnaire data

TABLE 5.1. Full Time Employees employed before entering into the programme (Year 0) and four years post completion of the programme

Beneficiary	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Trend
1	0	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Grew
2	0	0	1-3	4-6	4-6	Grew
3	1-3	1-3	1-3	4-6	4-6	Grew
4	1-3	7-10	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
5	1-3	4-6	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
6	1-3	7-10	4-6	0	0	Failed
7	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
8	1-3	0	0	0	0	Static
9	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
10	1-3	4-6	4-6	1-3	0	Failed
11	1-3	4-6	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
12	1-3	1-3	1-3	0	0	Failed
13	4-6	7-10	4-6	4-6	4-6	Static
14	7-10	7-10	7-10	7-10	7-10	Static
15	7-10	1-3	0	0	0	Static
16	11+	11+	11+	11+	0	Failed
17	11+	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
18	11+	11+	11+	11+	7-10	Shrank
19	11+	11+	11+	11+	11+	Static
20	11+	1-3	1-3	1-3	11+	Grew

TABLE 5.1. Part-Time Employees employed before entering into the programme (Year 0) and four years post completion of the programme

Beneficiary	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Trend
1	0	0	0	0	1-3	Grew
2	0	0	1-3	1-3	1-3	Grew
3	0	1-3	1-3	1-3	4-6	Grew
4	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
5	1-3	1-3	1-3	0	0	Shrank
6	7-10	4-6	4-6	0	0	Shrank
7	0	1-3	1-3	0	0	Shrank
8	0	1-3	0	0	0	Shrank
9	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static
10	0	1-3	4-6	0	0	Shrank
11	7-10	4-6	7-10	7-10	11+	Grew
12	1-3	1-3	1-3	0	0	Shrank
13	1-3	4-6	4-6	4-6	4-6	Grew

TABLE 5.1. Part-Time Employees employed before entering into the programme (Year 0) and four years post completion of the programme						
Beneficiary	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Trend
14	0	0	0	0	0	Static
15	1-3	1-3	0	0	0	Shrank
16	7-10	1-3	4-6	1-3	0	Failed?
17	1-3	1-3	0	0	0	Shrank
18	1-3	4-6	4-6	4-6	1-3	Shrank
19	0	0	0	0	0	Static
20	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3	Static

TABLE 5.1. Employees employed during the Covid-19 pandemic			
Beneficiary	**Full-time Employees**	**Part-time Employees**	**Trend**
1	1-3	1-3	Shrank
2	1-3	0	Shrank
3	0	1-3	Shrank
4	7-10	7-10	Failed?
5	1-3	1-3	Shrank
6	0	0	Static
7	0	0	Static
8	0	0	Static
9	1-3	1-3	Failed?
10	4-6	4-6	Shrank
11	1-3	1-3	Shrank
12	1-3	1-3	Shrank
13	1-3	1-3	Shrank
14	1-3	0	Shrank
15	4-6	1-3	Failed?
16	0	1-3	Static
17	4-6	1-3	Failed?
18	4-6	1-3	Shrank
19	0	0	Static
20	0	0	Static

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
SUSTAINABILITY	**Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, did you believe your business had long-term sustainability and resilience? i.e. in existence in 2025?**	1	- Yes, projection plans were in place for 5, 10 and 15 years and were updated regular. - Did this to see where improvements needed to be made and where we could adjust	- Yes, had business plans for 5-15 years - Very good existing clientele - Had the intention of expanding the business - Business is in a high demand industry - Intention when business was started was to create something that was sustainable and durable
		2	- Yes. It was a good plan we see a lot of new a returning business. - Ranking online is good. - First three years were difficult.	
		3	- Yes. We were contracted to a major hotel group. - They knew us as an existing client, and we depended on that.	
		4	- Yes, based on growth of the business and how it was growing year on year and had positive growth in the market	
		5	- Yes, business has been operating for a long time. Long term belief it would be sustainable because of my 5-10-year plan. - Did not anticipate Covid	
		6	- Yes, services provided and industry are in high demand for the hospitality services the company provides	
		7	- Yes, moved into different sector completely so pre-Covid had a very positive outlook. - Acquired another company before Covid-19 so had future growth plans	
		8	- Yes, cleaning industry was always sustainable and new clientele was attainable and it is an industry there will always be a demand for	
		9	- Yes, the structure and the plan of the business was stable and consistent - There were ups and downs but had contingency plans and it was easy to recover	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			- Covid was unplanned and business was not resilient enough	
		10	- Yes, relationships were solid, and business was built on foundation of purpose and vision before profit - Driven by passion	
		11	- Pre-Covid gearing up for business expansion through new tender opportunity	
		12	- Business had been in existence since 2005 and main target market was the international market	
		13	- Pre-Covid I was under the impression that I was building something that was sustainable and durable	
		14	- Had the intention of expanding pre-Covid-19 and business has been in existence for over 11 years.	
		15	- Believed business was able to make it for a long-time because have the right product for the correct clientele.	
		16	- Yes, I am an entrepreneur so I am not set in my ways and can adapt quickly	
		17	- When business is created, created with the intention to be sustainable and creating a legacy	
		18	- Yes, had long term business plans for 2,5 and 10 years so believed I was creating a sustainable business	
		19	- Yes, my business was sustainable. South Africa is a country where there is a large gap in the market especially between government and private sector with new ideas and therefore opportunities for entrepreneurs	
		20	- Yes, didn't go into business without the intention of growing	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			especially with niche markets and service offerings	
	Do you now believe your business will survive another crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic?	1	- We were also able to register as an essential service - Yes, we will survive because we were affected by the pandemic but not as much as other businesses because our services were needed	- Yes, ○ If able to register as an essential service in future ○ If there are no lockdown restrictions ○ If there is the right supply and demand ○ If there are detailed business and scenario plans - If can survive Covid, can survive anything - No, the pandemic decimated everything and was the worst experience of a lifetime - Networks really helped business to survive pandemic
		2	- Yes, useful networks such as other guesthouses and similar businesses.	
		3	- Yes, it helped the recognition of my brand on whole. - It opened doors, no direct channels or new clients. But small business will be able to benefit from each other and grow.	
		4	- No, struggling to survive currently and operations are at a minimum	
		5	- Yes because, learnt a lot during Covid and had to make lots of changes in the businesses and go digital (previously communicated with clients in person and through system communication - Learnt to think outside the box and learnt about needing to keep learning at the same time	
		6	- Yes, if survived Covid, can survive anything and have to believe in yourself	
		7	- No, Covid decimated everything. Went 6 months with no trading - Been trying to survive but in panic mode with future lockdowns and further restrictions	
		8	- No, business is based on supply and demand and ventured into some company rental properties which were market dependent and affected	
		9	- No, business is struggling as it is	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
		10	- Yes, lessons learnt is to prepare for the unseen and unexpected and increase cash flow by preparing savings for longer than 3 months - But also propelled further to invest into easily disposable assets	
		11	- Tough question because Covid was the worst that any individual or business would experience in this lifetime	
		12	- Business was already struggling since 2018 because of government construction around my main entrance to my business but the pandemic gave me a new perspective - If a person is versatile and resourceful, you can find means for an income and just take it one day at a time	
		13	- Lockdown restrictions drastically impacted my ability to provide my product to social events so I will need to diversify in the future - Future: Need to have a short and long-term goals and have a sufficient plan for the future	
		14	- Need to be flexible and adaptive to grow business and use skills to substantiate business and business products - To survive another crisis will also involve changing systems and learning new ways to conduct business which are still aligned with main objective - For the future, make sure business focus is to be more aligned with the times.	
		15	- During Covid learnt to have more detailed business plans and continually strategize	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			- Need to have different scenario plans in the event of different unforeseen circumstances	
		16	- Had to use my skills and knowledge to keep myself sustainable - Yes, I am resilient in my business and can quickly change and look at business in different ways to make things work	
		17	- Think outside the box, work with the circumstances and adapt, shift and shape business to conform with external environment - For the future, make sure business focus is to be more aligned with the times.	
		18	- No, Covid has been so severe on business especially on tourism so another delay would hinder recovery in business	
		19	- Covid opened up a can of worms for businesses, large corporate and individuals. Everything I knew about being financially and strategically prepared, I was wrong - If there will be another crisis, then business will be affected - If one industry is hit, then there is a knock-on effect or direct impact with other industries	
		20	- Yes, I have a distorted view of my business and it will survive. Covid-19 is just a hurdle and having a business is not an easy route. As business sector is very people focused, it will survive	
NETWORKING	**Did the programme open up networks for you?**	1	- Yes, we were encouraged to seek more networks in similar businesses - This helped with understanding similar challenges and	- Similar challenges were experienced across different business sectors

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
			understanding job market opportunities and learning what we did not already know	- Networks assisted with personal and business brand recognition - Networks aided in creating supplier networks - Provided additional value to clientele - New opportunities and connections were created - Exposure on the Legacy Series was beneficial
		2	- Yes, useful networks such as other guesthouses and similar businesses.	
		3	- Yes, it helped the recognition of my brand on whole. - It opened doors, no direct channels or new clients. But small business will be able to benefit from each other and grow.	
		4	- No, every networking and affiliation has been self-developed and not through the programme	
		5	- Yes, but not many, used it as an opportunity to help outsource and meet others and gain new opportunities with similar businesses	
		6	- Yes, with other entrepreneurs and could have conversations with them on how to grow and sustain their businesses	
		7	- Yes, before business sector move was more hospitality inclined and networks were beneficial in transition to business sector move which would have created employment for other SMME’s	
		8	- Yes, within the hotel group and entrepreneurs too - Was able to source products from entrepreneurs – supplier network was created	
		9	- Yes, leads and connections for business were sourced through the hotel group and the entrepreneurs in the programme	
		10	- Yes, but takes time to see the traction of networks and in solidifying the relationship	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
		11	- Programme helped us navigating a way forward - Provided a very good support structure	
		12	- Information became readily available	
		13	- Very valuable because talking can help to know how to add value to the client and companies - Personal relationships are also very important with the client because it helps with carrying through Covid	
		14	- See networks as people I can leverage from - ETV/Legacy Series opened additional networks - Opened up new markets	
		15	- Networking provided lots of new business opportunity, especially the Legacy Series	
		16	- New connections around the country	
		17	- Different people to collaborate with - Pre-Covid: Networking provided a good connection. During Covid-19, networks fell away which caused isolation	
		18	- No, programme did not open networks but was able to network with entrepreneurs in the programme	
		19	- Yes, meet different individuals and discovered all businesses experience similar challenges (labour, payroll, etc.) - I treated entrepreneurs in the programme as potential clients too - Structure of the programme is beneficial to business because offers support especially with the mentoring	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
		20	- No, disappointed that it did not open up networks. Expected this to be the case	
	Do you believe that networking is valuable?	1	- Very valuable, taught how to approach new and existing markets - Helped with viewing new opportunities such as product expansion by understanding the market better	- Very valuable - Helped with approaching new and existing market opportunities - Allowed connections to be built - Additional knowledge and skill were gained from the hotel group and fellow beneficiaries - Aided with personal self-discovery - Networking with peers, suppliers and competitors was beneficial to the business - Assisted with business survival before and during Covid-19 - Networking is based on the right time, place and who you know
		2	- Yes, both business networking and personal. It provides emotional support which is very valuable.	
		3	- Yes. It allows you to build links. Links you with other people. Introduces you to more opportunity.	
		4	- Yes, it is valuable, but it must be done with business objection in mind	
		5	- Yes, learnt a lot from other businesses and how to improve my business and do better	
		6	- Yes, very valuable - Learnt public speaking, confidence, met new people and the do's and don'ts of business	
		7	- Yes, good knowledge and skill gained - Helped to look into other avenues in different sectors and diversify into other industries too	
		8	- Yes, training helps and taught how to survive pre-Covid - During Covid, networking was unattainable in person but able to keep in touch over social media	
		9	- Yes, most business comes through networking and word of mouth, so business had to be consistent and the quality needed to support the brand name	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		10	- Yes, 100% but need to be selective in terms of networks and don't want to dilute the essence of the business	
		11	- Networking with peers, suppliers and competitors is as beneficial and pertinent as people outside of your business sector	
		12	- Can side-track you from initial reason of networking as not everyone can be resourceful to your business	
		13	- Being associated with a brand like the hotel group helps add some credibility and recognition to your company	
		14	- Contributed to my personal self-discovery - Learnt to think smarter and strategically	
		15	- Taught me confidence which was beneficial with networking personally and for your business	
		16	- Valuable but do not need to network throughout entire market - Networking with already existing networks was beneficial with consulting aspect of business	
		17	- Helped with confidence with public speaking	
		18	- Yes, valuable because during Covid, economy slowed down but networks able to benefit with business survival	
		19	- Yes, business success is also based on the right time, place and who you know - Businesses need to be open to networks because that assists with business growth	
		20	- Yes, affords the space to be in different spaces that we would not have initially gone into, but I	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			struggle with networking because I am an introvert	
MEASURES AND ADAPTATION	**If your business survived the toughest times of 2020, what measures did you implement to ensure that it survived?**	1	- Most of our services were closed, it was difficult to cope because it was something, we did not plan for - Opening us as an essential service helped but the lockdown restrictions did not help our business or our networks	- Reduced expenses - Reduced overheads - Registered business as an essential service - Looked into expanding into different markets - Took new opportunities and diversified - Used personal funds - Applied for payment holidays from the bank - It was beneficial to exist in different industries - Implemented systems to improve efficiency - Pivoted and changed business to become more indirect client focussed
		2	- Been in survival mode. No one was prepared, not even big corporates. I received a payment holiday on my home loan. - No, I don't think so. I tried a number of different things - the use of rooms as day offices, tried specials, approaching people. But there was no travel, so it made it really tough.	
		3	- 6 Months lockdown and the hotel was closed. - Used and borrowed money. Used personal funds, I am currently paying it back now.	
		4	- Aggressive in targeting sales to clients but market was facing challenges and direct clients were the hospitality industry - Operationally stayed the same - Looking back, I would have focused more on expanding and moving in more domestic markets - Processes put in place failed – went to selling basic consumer needs - Created a small business which is self-sustaining now but not income generating	
		5	- Looked into my savings because had struggles paying staff - Saved the petty cash from the business and used it elsewhere	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			- Cutting costs - Learnt that needed to have a plan and savings and work with a budget - Importance of insuring business equipment	
		6	- Business expanded into other markets. - Before Covid, assumed that with the hospitality industry can't go wrong as there is always business - Would have diversified into other markets sooner pre-Covid which would have allowed for better and bigger growth	
		7	- Negotiated for payment holidays – successful because 3-5 months of relief - Landlord auctioned some of my equipment because I was unable to pay rent - If could go back, would not have acquired new business but would have moved into different markets sooner	
		8	- Income took a knock - Used reserves - It was strenuous and if I could have, would have tried everything to reduce rates and staff	
		9	- Took opportunities and diversified which was helpful in sustaining the business - The measures were successful in saving business - Would have saved and invested more and found more alternative opportunities pre-Covid-19	
		10	- Pressured to implement systems to improve efficiency and running of business	
		11	- Networks built from the programme were helpful in the	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			pandemic because we were able to support each other - Started cutting down expenses and made applications for payment holidays - Because of a long supplier relationship, they assisted me and helped me along	
		12	- Diverged into different products for some income into the business which helped with the salaries for my staff - Investigated into best sort of deals overseas for exporting products.	
		13	- Learnt how to diversify and to try and make the product a necessity rather than a luxury - Taught me to reduce responsibility and give others more responsibility - Professional financial planning is important - Only had long-term plan for 3 months in advance so needed to learn to have a 5-10-year plan	
		14	- Reduce overheads by employing consultants rather than fixed employees - Shift focus to be more aligned with current technology (e.g. virtual and digital marketing) and source different skilled staff	
		15	- Relook at fixed expenses and strategize into managing business smarter and try keep brand alive - Started consulting	
		16	- Started consulting to and coaching SMME’s in the early stages of their business. - Different products made with already existing machinery. Big corporates were then able to offer	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			the same products at a reduced rate - Started consulting and started selling my older stock to online shops to try get them to sell	
		17	- Look at new products and services (registered as an essential service, approached developers and offered and targeted businesses that needed additional staff for Covid-19 services) - Reducing fixed expenses with the aim of not letting go of employees - Researched into businesses that were operating during the initial lockdown and targeted them for services	
		18	- Pivoted and changed to be more indirect client focused which helped when the e-commerce space boomed during initial stages of lockdown - Would have started earlier (when restrictions were first imposed) to improve business	
		19	- My business was ready for an unforeseen circumstance but not for Covid - Clientele based across different industries/sectors which helped it survive - Business was sustainable pre-Covid - Big projects slowed down, but the maintenance side of the business continued - In future, structure finances better and intensify market in which I operate to spread the net more	
		20	- Caught by surprise, no pre-planning for Covid. Looked into other service offerings and ways	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
			to re-package my product and pivot to different target markets - Believe that success is measured through long-term business sustainability not only profit based - Looking back, my business was unravelling in front of my eyes, so I had to take it one day at a time	
	Did you have to change your business model to adapt your business to the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic?	1	- Yes, had to adjust my pricing to be competitive in the market since I am the largest competitor in the market - Taught me to outsource less and upskill my own employees to help bring everything inside of the business	- Adjusted prices of products and services to be more competitive - Outsourced less and upskilled internal employees more - Investigated and strategized for new products and services - Found new business opportunities and ventured into new markets - Prepared for one year of lockdown instead of a short period of time - Re-marketed products and services - Marketed product and services to online platforms and on social media - Researched into new opportunities and alternative markets and business sectors
		2	- Stayed the same for the most part. Changed 80% to a B&B and 20 room only. We tried doing different packages. There have been repercussions in the market, the rates need to be competitive. - Competitors dropped price. We used to charge R995, it's now R700. The market is price sensitive.	
		3	- Yes. Because of the lockdown, we had to see how could relook at doing things differently. - We had little money which we had to make work.	
		4	- Formally no, something I am still investigating into but had to change products to help business survive	
		5	- Yes, was very client facing as first, but government regulation changed this - Moved business more into virtual business and kept working on my services and products online	
		6	- Currently investigating and researching into new changes that	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			will need to grow business both within my current business model and outside of the business model	
		7	- A little, 2 subcategories in business were still open so still running those smaller sections - Downsized staff and cut costs - Managed little cash flow and in the last few months there has been some recovery in the cashflow	
		8	- Yes, before Covid invested into some business rental properties to create BnB's which I wouldn't have done if I knew about covid and because of this I struggled with labour and salaries	
		9	- Yes, found opportunities and ventured into completely different markets and the business model changed to be channelled into new markets - Had to restructure model to incorporate new equipment needed - But lacked advertising and marketing so was unable to efficiently tap into social space through marketing	
		10	- Yes, adapted to promoting business on WhatsApp and promoting on social media - Implemented management systems - Started writing content towards business which will assist with staff skills development and be beneficial for business in the long run	
		11	- After initial 21-day lockdown, started preparing for 6 months to 1 year	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			- Hopefully strategies and work done in quiet time pays off now and for the future - No need to change the business model but adapt and adjust it - Need to still stick to the core business and make provisions in terms of resources and your ability to diversify as quickly as possible	
		12	- Had to look outside of SA to find new importers	
		13	- Currently in the researching phase to find new ways to market product to make things work during a crisis like this - Had to adapt business model and diverge current product to another business market - A lesson learnt during the pandemic is to delegate more and give more responsibilities to other employees	
		14	- Aggressive in approach instead of worrying about no business and looked into alternative business avenues - Trying to strategize to figure out where to gain income	
		15	- How to re-market products to target the mass markets - Partnership agreements with up and coming SMME's to assist them in building a client base	
		16	- At the time pivoting business model alongside the tourism route was a good idea but now it was the worst business decision because unable to register as an essential service, therefore unable to operate with lockdown restrictions	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
		17	- Time without business allowed me to strategize and relook at whole business plan	
		18	- Yes, moved into alternative markets - Would have adapted earlier into new market to have already established business section pre-Covid-19	
		19	- Yes, had to analyse and understand how to make the smaller income sustain business - Went back to basics without compromising quality, clientele but still make a small profit - Used the extra time at home to increase marketing on social media platforms and create brand awareness	
		20	- No, always had an online service offering so interaction was online and during lockdown was not able to operate because of lockdown restrictions	
ECONOMIC SUCCESS	**Pre-Covid-19, did you have any substitute solutions in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances? Such as business plans, investments, markets in which you operate, or enough finances conserved**	1	- Not really but the pandemic did teach me to comply with government regulations better - Only had savings for a 'rainy day' - Expanded into new markets which helped sustain the business a bit	- Tapped into business savings - Tapped into personal savings - Disposed of easily disposable assets - Some business and personal investments helped - Substitute solutions in the form of knowledge and skills - Branched into new business markets
		2	- No, and certainly not to the degree for what was needed for Covid. The business was still building it finances, so I had to use personal investments. Therefore, I guess you can say it was sufficient.	
		3	- No. we were hit by surprise. We were completely dependent on the client.	
		4	- Not many substitute solutions, had a business place but had to dip into savings which conserved business for 6 months	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		5	- No, only had a business plan. Savings were only sufficient enough for a short period. - Lost some big corporate clients because was unable to operate my business due to finances - Learnt to save more	
		6	- No, but working on it. Did have some savings which helped the company survive a little - There was a business plan in place	
		7	- Running two business concurrently (repair services and a laundry) - Would have grown two business simultaneously and not let the repair services downscale - It was a learning curve because business plans were initially planned with large corporates in mind and had to refocus to include smaller organisations	
		8	- Before Covid, diversified product offering which helped sustain business before Covid - Only had some short-term business plans - Savings were depleted after 6 months because of product diversification before Covid – ideally wanted a return on investment for the diversifications	
		9	- No, no substitutes only some personal savings which did not help the business - No plans for unforeseen circumstances	
		10	- No, had only recently opened second branch. Had to use personal finances to sustain during Covid-19	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			- Only way that the business survived was based on relationships built	
		11	- Relied solely on reserves and disposed of assets that were actually unnecessary and aim is to start increasing the reserves and investing more in easily disposable assets	
		12	- Had some savings but cannot only rely on savings	
		13	- Never seen anything as drastic - Experts doing financial planning is important to future business success - Had some investments but because no salary for 8 months – had to withdraw the investments 4-5 months into covid. - Did not receive any money from the government in terms of grants but borrowed money from family - Pivoted business product helped with covering basic expenses	
		14	- Necessary to always have working capital because of main business services	
		15	- Didn't think needed large reserves and did not have anything to fall back on because no savings due to large family situation - Realised the importance of investments	
		16	- Used my knowledge and skills to keep me sustainable	
		17	- Realised the importance of more detailed business plans and different scenario plans - Needed larger reserves than just savings for a 'rainy day'	
		18	- Yes, some investments and savings which lasted about 8 months	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
			- Tourism grants helped with paying overheads and instalments	
		19	- Yes, had savings with three different institutions and then set up mobile maintenance teams to assist in the different regions - Solutions were able to help the company survive	
		20	- Not as much as it is a new business. - No reserves to break into new markets and used personal finances. - No business plan because was not as valuable as a business model – did not refer back to business plan	
	How did you manage your cashflow when lockdown restrictions were imposed?	1	- Very difficult to manage, more outflow of money because cashflow decreased - In future, would have more capital for unexpected events to help sustain my business for longer	- Used personal finances - Took out loans from the bank - Utilised government relief fund and TERS - Arranged for payment holidays from the banks - Cut down on expenses - Disposed of assets - Reduced insurance premiums - Some businesses had no cash flow
		2	- Found money, personal money. - Begged and borrowed from the banks. - TERS and UIF. - Accessed spare money. - Be more resourceful. - Very much touch and go at the moment, we are going from week to week	
		3	- The business wasn't operating, so we paid with whatever cash we had on hand. - When the hotel opened, we had to take a reduced salary. - Only received TERS.	
		4	- Tapped into savings and TERS payments for my staff - I would not have done anything differently because did not misuse funds but made choices based on emotion rather logic	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		5	- Very tough, very little money which meant unable to pay business debt and landlord changed locks to business which meant that unable to retrieve basic business equipment - Most employees were interns so unable to receive government funding	
		6	- Did not have much cashflow, was only able to pay basic expenses because no income coming through - TERS income for staff received - If I could, I would have made sure I had more investments and insurance in place for business and income protection	
		7	- No cashflow, living hand to mouth - Abused personal finances - No government funding - Had business interruption insurance which did not pay out - No TERS, unable to pick up business details	
		8	- Tightened up non-liquid reserves - Tried to find more affordable products to use within the business - Looking into how to be different for improvements in future cash flow	
		9	- Cashflow was restricted so took it day by day - Applied for payment holidays from debtors - Had the opportunity for government grants but opted not to because of future financial implications (saw the grant as a loan)	
		10	- No revenue but made sure reporting and financial documents were up to date	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
			- No grants because business sector was excluded from the grants - TERS system was complex and had glitches so did not receive TERS either	
		11	- No government grants. Relied solely on reserves and disposed of assets that were actually unnecessary and aim is to start increasing the reserves and investing more in easily disposable assets	
		12	- Money from grants helped and we started harvesting our own vegetables for food - Cannot rely on savings only but had to come up with measures to not use all the savings	
		13	- Had some investments but because no salary for 8 months – had to withdraw the investments 4-5 months into covid. - Did not receive any money from the government in terms of grants but borrowed money from family - Lots of debit orders lapsed because ran out of finances to support them	
		14	- Cut down unnecessary expenses - Aggressively targeting new opportunity especially with staff shortages due to the pandemic - Struggled with additional cash flow because signed a new 2-year office lease and then offices in that province did not open because of lockdown restrictions - Restructure teams/regions that were not doing too well and implement short time to improve cashflow	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		15	- Applied for the entrepreneur relief source fund from the government and TERS funding - Reduced costs and expenses	
		16	- Literally survived with grant funding - No business because of lockdown restrictions	
		17	- Received funding from the Department of Tourism - TERS employee income fund which helped a lot	
		18	- Grants from the government - Cut down on expenses such as unnecessary travel and luxuries - Tapped into savings - Reduced insurance premiums - Would have looked into assisting with distribution of sanitizers when lockdown restrictions were first imposed	
		19	- For the first 6 months could not feel it because of Pre-Covid payment arrangements with clients (generating income from previous months) - Since it is a young company, did not have expertise to know what to do differently but will improve planning for the future	
		20	- No, used personal finances but not enough reserves - No grants or no TERS – purely survived on personal finances and lost permanent job too. So, had to make this work	
	Is there anything you could have done differently to improve your	1	- Did not have a plan for Covid-19 nor a plan for unforeseen events so I would plan better because I believe this will help with my profitability and make my business more sustainable	- Ensure better planning for the future

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
	profitability last year?	2	- No, I don't think so. I used every resource.	- Look into improving target markets - Look into exposure into different markets - As there was no business or sales, there was no turnover or profit - Business is based on supply and demand and Covid-19 impacted this
		3	- I don't think so. We only have one client. profit is dependent on the client and how well their business is doing.	
		4	- No, improvements were already implemented in target market and through business capabilities	
		5	- Re-strategize services more, offer more package deals with a once-off payment that covers 12-month premium which will increase profitability	
		6	- Think so, lots of lesson learnt and better exposure and knowledge on how to project business	
		7	- No, overheads pre-Covid were based on the trajectory on acquiring the other business so if did not have the overheads, profit would have improved a bit during Covid	
		8	- No, it was all unplanned and unexpected and had to take into account paying staff whilst on sick leave too	
		9	- No, nothing more could have been done. Lockdown regulations impacted my business drastically	
		10	- More local advertising because target market was international tourists - Be more proactive and would have adapted more to what was happening but had financial constraints	
		11	- No, did everything could have	
		12	- No, without sales business could not make a turnover nor profit	
		13	- Yes, look into planning better and different market avenues	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
		14	- No, did everything that I could have	
		15	- No, tried my best and put best foot forward	
		16	- No profit because turnover was able to only cover basic operational expenses	
		17	- No, did my best to make my business survive	
		18	- Try and look into different sectors earlier such as e-commerce space – missed opportunities because of this	
		19	- No, did what I had to do. Clients were also able to pay what they could. Would rather have had that then no income at all	
		20	- No, did all that I could have	
RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY	**How did you cope emotionally and physically during the pandemic?**	1	- Very stressful because business is the only source of income for employees and me - Very uncertain especially about restrictions - Lot of what if questions - But it did teach me to comply with government regulations and have insurance for salaries and for the business in the event of unforeseen circumstances	- It was stressful and psychologically draining - Lockdown restrictions impacted business - It was emotionally taxing - Learnt that needed to be flexible and adaptive - Pandemic aided in reflection and introspection
		2	- First three months were the worst. No one was prepared and the legislation did not make sense. I am unsure and it seems like there is no end in sight. My kids did home-school. The whole process was very tragic, the staff were distraught.	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified

Theme	Link to question	Interviewee Number	Main Points	New constructs
		3	- Relied on faith. I knew that financially we would be ok. - I would not have had all eggs in one basket. Would've had plans and pre-plans. - Insurance policies are good. I believed it would have helped us, but I have learnt to cover myself more in a financial aspect into the future.	
		4	- Frustrating and depressing - No money coming in and no savings - Tried to start up another business which also had its challenges	
		5	- Very difficult, had to persevere and step outside the comfort zone - Loosing big clients was tough - Had to reduce my staff and only pay staff for the projects they worked on - Had to pivot into beauty and fashion industry to sustain income	
		6	- Tough, very difficult time but with faith I survived. Whole duration was difficult - Learnt that investing is important and to protect my business through knowledge and disaster insurance	
		7	- Stressed, lack of sleep - Had to concentrate on the day-to-day and look at each situation as it came	
		8	- It was an experience, family and friends were able to keep emotionally afloat but ultimately needed to survive - Covid killed us and our businesses, missed the in-person interaction with fellow entrepreneurs	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		9	- Emotionally and physically draining, 2021 was the worst year financially. Lots of time to reflect and stress about family and staff's well-being	
		10	- Draining with a new family - Support from family helped to get through - Stressful with no salary - Support from WhatsApp group with entrepreneurs helped too	
		11	- Covid through these 18 months taught me to hope for the best but prepare for the worst - Covid-19 was the worst that an individual or business would experience in this lifetime - Had to take a step back and look at the situation holistically because had to worry about my business, family, friends - Good opportunity to introspect	
		12	- First 21-day lockdown left me with feelings of being paralysed but also happy to have a break from the mad rush of trying to make business and stay going - Emotionally did not cope because was not able to see family but women's group that I am apart of helped with guidance and emotional support	
		13	- Very depressed. Especially worried for how the staff we going to cope too - Worried about how to keep family afloat with no income - Emotionally draining - Learnt to plan better more than short-term because short-term planning was not sufficient like I originally thought	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		14	- Covid taught to be flexible and adaptive. - Health deteriorated which psychologically impacted me. I became isolated but forced me to look at the situation and how to make the most of it	
		15	- Be faster to move fast to grow business - Think outside the box and try and work with the circumstances - Just adapting to what is going on in the environment and shifting and shaping to business to conform to these changes	
		16	- Covid came as a welcomed breather to help with rethinking and give new perspective - Totally out of business since before Covid because of construction of road outside business - I personally am resilient in my business so I can change quickly and look at different ways and make things work or find ways to make it work - Versatility and resourcefulness are good qualities to find other means of income - Very tough experience, lost some family but being busy helped me distract my mind	

7.12. Appendix L$_1$: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		17	- Very scared. Really afraid but had to be ready and adapting to change if wanted to survive Covid and as well for the future - Very anxious and very tough. Went from full and busy day to nothing. Took a tool on emotions. Lots of what ifs. - Had to think outside my diary. I still carry anxiety around new restrictions being imposed, but it empowered me as well.	
		18	- 2021 was worse than 2020 because Covid started hitting close to home - Emotionally taxing and family support helped - Would have spoken more and reached out to more support groups	
		19	- First 21 days, I was in denial, it only hit when there was the lockdown restriction - Lost a separate company and as such, had to retrench mothers which broke my heart - Keeping busy and having a dream helped overcome feelings - And reflecting on achievements also helped to keep going	
		20	- Since I am a resilient and much stronger person. Was anxious but did not feel anxious	
	Once business begins to stabilise again, do you believe you will have the capacity to employ more people?	1	- Yes, we are going to introduce more in-house operations than outsourcing so the goal is to employ 3 more people	- Dependent as business is based on supply and demand - Dependent on the economy of South Africa - Legacy Series with the hotel group has allowed for more
		2	- No, due to the size. We have enough staff for a guesthouse. We would only need more staff if we opened a restaurant or tea garden.	
		3	- Yes, but it will have to be based on the economy.	

7.12. Appendix L1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		4	- Yes, because of simple business model adaptation and it is very capacity and product need dependent	business opportunity - Yes, but will hire skilled labour before unskilled labour as do not have the resources to train the unskilled labour anymore
		5	- Yes, once back to being fully operational because if large corporates reinstate my service then I will reinstate my employees	
		6	- Yes, since business was closed for 1 year will take a while - Currently working with skeleton staff but have the projection of growing them	
		7	- Yes, growth dependent and partnership dependent because want to employ almost all staff	
		8	- Yes, but it is all dependent on supply and demand	
		9	- Yes, demand dependent	
		10	- Yes, looking for opportunities in other provinces	
		11	- Yes, want to start reducing responsibilities and with business expansion plans will be able to	
		12	- Yes, business has prospects to grow with additional subdivisions planned	
		13	- Yes, competitors have gone out of business and business market is well established and large.	
		14	- Yes, as of now there are a few temporary employees which were on-boarded for a large contract. So would like to make them permanent	
		15	- Yes, new prospects with ETV Legacy Series and looking to open up new stores	
		16	- Maybe, dependent on upcoming business opportunity and tender process	

7.12. Appendix L_1: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions including new constructs identified				
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**	**New constructs**
		17	- Maybe, growth dependent – main focus is to be profitable and sustainable for now	
		18	- Maybe, would only employ to pre-Covid numbers again until there is an improvement in the economy	
		19	- Yes, but will take a different approach and hire expertise in the field rather than general employees at least until business recovers and grows	
		20	- Yes, looking to employ at least 2 more people	

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
ECONOMIC SUCCESS	What happened to your business's turnover during Covid-19?	1	- Decreased by 30%
		2	- Decreased by 85%
		3	- Decreased by 50%
		4	- Decreased by 88%
		5	- Decreased by 83%
		6	- Decreased by 100% - no income
		7	- Decreased by 70%
		8	- Decreased by 30%
		9	- Decreased by 80%
		10	- Decreased by 70%
		11	- Decreased by 70%
		12	- Decreased by 80%
		13	- Decreased by 98%
		14	- Decreased by 34%
		15	- Decreased by 80%
		16	- Decreased by 90%
		17	- Decreased by 85%
		18	- Decreased by 70%
		19	- Decreased by 33%
		20	- Decreased by 100% - no turnover
	What happened to your business's profitability	1	- Decreased by 30%
		2	- Decreased by 100%. I have not paid myself a salary in almost 2 years.
		3	- Decreased by 50%
		4	- Decreased by 70%

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
	during Covid-19	5	- Increased by 35% - some good months helped with this
		6	- Decrease by 100%
		7	- Decreased by 100%
		8	- Decreased by 30%
		9	- Decreased by 90% (turnover was survival based)
		10	- Decreased by 70%
		11	- Decreased by 70%
		12	- Decreased by 90%
		13	- Decreased by 100%
		14	- Decreased by 65%
		15	- Decreased by 70%
		16	- Decreased by 90%
		17	- Decreased by 100%
		18	- Decrease by 80%
		19	- Decreased by 47% - first 6 months was focused on survival mode
		20	- Decreased by 100% - no profit
EMPLOYMENT GENERATION	**In the first four years after the programme, did you employ more people?**	1	- Initially started with two people (myself and someone else) - During programme received funding from IDA and SEDA so was able to have 5 permanent and 1 casual - Now I still have 5 permanent and 1 casual
		2	- No, did not have to retrench. Retrenchments were mainly from Covid.
		3	- Yes. The business operations needed it. During busy periods we had 35 to 40 people. During quiet periods 30 people.
		4	- Yes, before had 3 and during and post there were 5 permanent and 6 casual staff
		5	- Yes, before the programme 4 people and post programme increased to 5 permanents - Now during Covid, have 2 employees
		6	- Yes, when I first joined the programme, I had 90 casual staff - 4 years after the programme have 95 casual staff
		7	- Yes, before 3 people, 2nd year moved to 12 and then 40 (when acquired the company
		8	- Yes, before 12 and after 48 (full time)
		9	- Yes, before 14. After 80 (able to maintain them). Now 66
		10	- Yes, before 14 and after 18 (with some students)
		11	- Yes, 20 before, 22 after and now 55
		12	- Yes 3 before, 15 after and now 9. Some additional casual employees if needed on ad-hoc basis
		13	- Yes, 2 before, 5 after (2 permanents and 3 part-time)
		14	- Yes, 15 before and 20 after
		15	- No, 6 (4 permanent and 2 part-time) before and 2 after (1 permanent and 1 part-time)
		16	- Yes, 4 before, 8 after and 5 now
		17	- Yes, 3 permanents before, 5 after and 6 now

7.13. Appendix L$_2$: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
		18	- No, 3 before the programme and 3 after the programme
		19	- Yes, before 3. After 43 and now 14. Also have 1000 casuals for ad hoc projects
		20	- Yes, before 1 person (owner) and after 2 people
	Did you employ new people last year?	1	- Employed 1 permanent person and 1 casual
		2	- No
		3	- No, but brought people back. We have little to no staff now.
		4	- None
		5	- No
		6	- Before the pandemic, 5 but during, no
		7	- Yes, only to replace staff
		8	- No
		9	- No
		10	- Yes, 4 people to replace
		11	- No
		12	- Yes, 1
		13	- No
		14	- No
		15	- No
		16	- No
		17	- No, only to replace
		18	- No
		19	- No
		20	- No
	On average, how many people did you have to let go of last year?	1	- None
		2	- None
		3	- None, they are all collecting TERS. However, they are all on rotational shifts now.
		4	- 11
		5	- Last year, 4 and this year 3
		6	- None, income through TERS
		7	- 36 – based on acquisition of the other company
		8	- No, moved them all to short time
		9	- 14 but some left on their own accord
		10	- 10
		11	- 15
		12	- 6
		13	- 0
		14	- 3
		15	- 3
		16	- 3
		17	- 0
		18	- 2 people
		19	- 29. 7 became upskilled to be sub-contractors

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
		20	- 1
SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAMME	**Do you feel the programme was helpful in sustaining and/or growing your business?**	1	- Yes, learnt a lot and was able to engage with other entrepreneurs and businesses - Mentors on the programme helped me with motivational letters for funding documents, business plans and more accurate financial projections
		2	- Yes. We learnt a lot through the course. Provided valuable support. Marketing and financial content was very valuable. The ongoing network has also helped.
		3	- Yes. It was motivating and inspiring. - It really helped during times of low prospects and helped believe our business were going to succeed.
		4	- Yes, some skills taught in the programme which are often neglected when running a programme - Holistic programme - Learnt to better understand financials and about marketing and sales
		5	- Yes and no, training was helpful with tackling challenges but not a lot of connecting with the hotel group on a supplier relationship level
		6	- Yes, business model change and business grew and expanded into new sub-sectors and gained a lot of knowledge
		7	- Yes, helped with relationships and brand recognition. Growth was dependent in year 3 and 4 of the programme because potential was huge before Covid-19
		8	- Yes, the educational course and the coaches, especially the financial mentor was beneficial to my business
		9	- Yes, uplifting for myself and benefitted employment - Good coaching which elevated business and personal growth - Applied the knowledge learnt to my business
		10	- Yes, helped grow and sustain business - Good relationships built - Short courses helped business
		11	- Helpful in navigating our way forward - Being a direct supplier to the hotel group propelled my business forward
		12	- Connected me to people who are encouraging and empowering - WhatsApp support groups provided me with daily nuggets to hang on and keep going
		13	- Assisted with developing strong points and overcoming weaknesses and the small management course was an excellent programme - Good exposure especially with Legacy Series but Legacy Series has not been fruitful in additional business growth - Good personal contact from the hotel group in the beginning but hotel group became less involved over time - Better than the other programmes because the hotel group wants to do more than just tick off the list, they have helped previously disadvantaged groups.
		14	- Programme very valuable experience - Courses equip with practical ways how to sustain and grow your business
		15	- Academically covers everything – ability to learn, study and understand business - Provides practical knowledge on how to sustain and grow business

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
		16	- Colour accounting course was very valuable - Biggest take: A good business must sustainable but also be a role model in my community too - ETV/Legacy Series was very valuable too – helped with further networking
		17	- Helped with networking which was beneficial to exchanging contact details and business details - Hotel group sets you up for success
		18	- Beneficial on personal growth but fell short with business growth. Expectation of the programme was that there would be more linkages with other businesses and opportunities, but expectations were not met.
		19	- Yes, learnt a lot and how to think differently - Mentorship was also beneficial - Was introduced into different markets - Best thing that could have happened to business
		20	- No, thankful for the growth opportunity but did not help grow my business - Seems as if the programme is based on an elementary introduction to business rather than a supportive programme
	Do you feel what you learnt on the programme helped with business survive the Covid-19 pandemic?	1	- It did a little but not much knowledge learnt could have helped with the pandemic because the situation had never been seen before
		2	- Helped with knowledge of how to put in place very detailed financial spreadsheets. Needed to know where every cent was going.
		3	- Yes, it helped with motivation and keeping our wits during the difficult times of Covid.
		4	- Yes, certain knowledge such as sales, financials and marketing helped sustain business - Knowledge learnt on programme helped business survive during Covid
		5	- Partially yes, programme did help tackle business challenges - Physically able to intervene when business equipment was locked in the offices after the landlord changed the locks
		6	- Yes, learnt financial basics and how long-term goal setting and ways in which to achieve these goals
		7	- Yes, programme taught how to carry on during normal times and I adapted these to help be survive. Survival was not done by the books - Pre-Covid would have allocated space finances to marketing and saving more
		8	- Yes, knowledge was beneficial because learnt to be proactive to keep myself afloat
		9	- Yes, knowledge which I absorbed helped me during survival mode - Shared connections through entrepreneurs
		10	- Yes, improved my business transparency and kept in touch with potential clients - Focused on passion more than the bottom line
		11	- Propelled me forward and taught me that possibilities are endless
		12	- Learnt a lot and empowered to preserve
		13	- Small business knowledge learnt was helpful in sustaining business
		14	- Yes, what learnt in business development and knowledge it was good

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
		15	- Improved ability to pivot and change quickly to help business survive - Helped sync better with other people
		16	- Yes, helped with confidence and putting self out there for the business
		17	- Knowledge learnt was helpful with pivoting business and surviving
		18	- No, only on a personal growth level - Expected programme to create more linkages with business opportunities and it did not meet expectations in that regard
		19	- Yes, if had not learnt financial element then business would have been in more trouble because I was taught to separate business and personal accounts
		20	- No, aim of the programme was different to my personal aim - Very broad programme but some knowledge learnt in the short courses helped
	Do you feel that the programme was a valuable personal developmental experience?	1	- Yes, because in 2018, before the programme I had my business to survive whereas now my mentality changed, and I learnt to chase after my dream and make it something tangible - Covid-19 reduced my opportunity to learn more from the programme and gain more knowledge and insight
		2	- Yes. Got to meet new people in the industry. - I learned to do different things. - Saw places where we could improve.
		3	- Yes. It encourages you to do better and to think outside of the box. - Helped to be with other people in the same situation as yourself.
		4	- Yes, liked the human aspect of meeting new people and working with others from the entrepreneurial programme
		5	- Yes, learnt a lot of practical knowledge from discussions with people and connections with businesses. Overall very successful programme
		6	- Yes, change in perspective and learnt self-development - Confidence grew and learnt that I am a business owner not just a manager of my own business
		7	- Yes, mentoring taught not to overlook basic fundamentals and taught how to improve compliance and not operate non-compliant business
		8	- Yes, it was a good educational experience
		9	- Yes, knowledge, networks and personal growth - Business connections with other entrepreneurs - Still using knowledge that I learnt then, today
		10	- Yes, built relationships and extended personal landscape - Learnt to believe in personal and business brand more
		11	- It made a huge positive impact on my business and my growth plans. Timing could not have been more perfect
		12	- Good personal development programme - Broadened my horizons and made me look at my business differently
		13	- Excellent programme. Very good personal development experience - Definitely learnt a lot, especially with the small management course
		14	- Look forward to in-person engaging and networking with other businesses and entrepreneurs

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
		15	- Interaction throughout the year of the programme
		16	- Wonderful, long and interesting journey
		17	- Yes, boosted personal confidence and public speaking ability
		18	- Yes, knowledge and skills learnt - Motivation from the mentors on the WhatsApp groups and online sessions helped
		19	- Great, life coach helped me with leaving my permanent job which motivated me to completely focus on business
		20	- Yes and no, being linked to a community and able to network with them was beneficial to understand common challenges but unable to make a break in the market
	In your opinion, what could the hotel group do differently?	1	- Coaches and mentors could be more interactive and check in more regularly
		2	- Invite us back for a reunion. - Not much, the programme was very professional and very detailed.
		3	- They are doing the best that they can. Maybe they could give more business education and practical education.
		4	- More detailed intervention with coach which is specific to business needs not just generalised
		5	- Help entrepreneurs work together more and promote businesses more - Create a database to help with growth and connections with other entrepreneurs - Invite more investors to events to boost sales
		6	- More networking and in-person sessions - Assist with practical training on how to apply and prepare for a tender process
		7	- Reduce false hope that the programme creates opportunity after the two years and reduce false sense of expectations from entrepreneurs
		8	- Hoping the programme continues - Meet more often and have more in-person interactions - Include more expertise and line managers to facilitate discussions
		9	- No, doing more than enough
		10	- Share more within the hotel group to entrepreneurs because brand is seen as credible as an up and coming entrepreneur
		11	- Create more education between the essence of the EDP down to management at unit levels so various management of the various properties have a clear understanding of the EDP and how they can individually build their new supplier relationship
		12	- There is a huge gap between supplier and entrepreneur. No direct supplier relationship with those that the hotel group is trying to empower
		13	- Good personal contact from the hotel group in the beginning but hotel group became less involved over time - Thoughts is that they help too many people that monitoring the success of those they already helped - Good exposure especially with Legacy Series but Legacy Series has not been fruitful in additional business growth
		14	- Better supplier relationship with hotel group and entrepreneurs can be created

7.13. Appendix L_2: Thematic Analysis from focus groups with link to questions			
Theme	**Link to question**	**Interviewee Number**	**Main Points**
		15	- Line management can support the entrepreneurs and use entrepreneurs as their suppliers
		16	- Can give the EDP candidates more exposure through advertising
		17	- Open forum to having a supplier relationship with entrepreneurs
		18	- Leverage more on entrepreneurs' businesses and use the entrepreneurs as suppliers which would be beneficial to the supply chain
		19	- Entrepreneurs must also put in the work and not expect from the hotel group - Reduce the number of entrepreneurs per year to have a more focussed approach
		20	- Very broad programme and need to improve content to support entrepreneurs more - Find avenues to assist with business funding for growth opportunities

7.14. Appendix M: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Lobetti

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	PROTOCOL NUMBER: H21/09/17
PROJECT TITLE	A case study investigating the effects of an Entrepreneurial Development Programme in South Africa pre and post Covid-19
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Miss F Lobetti
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	School of Business Sciences/
DATE CONSIDERED	17 September 2021
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	21 October 2024

DATE 22 October 2021 CHAIRPERSON J Knight (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr R Venter

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.**

F Lobetti
Signature

26. / 10. / 2021
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES