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The perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching in the decision making of entrepreneurs within South African SMMEs

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The perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching in the decision making of entrepreneurs within South African SMMEs

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

Wits Business School

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ABSTRACT

This research study was undertaken to investigate the effectiveness and perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs in the small, medium, and micro enterprise sector in South Africa.

A sequential mixed method study was undertaken. The starting point was the distribution of self-administered quantitative survey questionnaires to 148 participants selected according to probability sampling first, and then purposive sampling in the qualitative section. The data collected was analysed using Correlational Analysis, Regression Analysis and Exploratory Factor Analysis.

The second and qualitative phase of the study consisted of two parts: The first, was an action research intervention. It took the form of coaching sessions that were conducted with seven participants from the first larger study. Thereafter, interviews were conducted with coaching participants.

The findings of the quantitative phase showed that decision-making positively impacts business growth. In the second phase of the study, the qualitative phase, it was evident that an entrepreneurial coaching intervention enhanced the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

The recommendation to those who support SMMEs is to increase the utilisation of entrepreneurial coaching to aid in the arrest of the failure rate of SMMEs; and for the entrepreneur entrepreneurial coaching can deliver numerous benefits, like improved self-efficacy and improved decision-making, which leads to business growth and sustainability.

Key words: Action research, entrepreneurial coaching, business coaching, business growth, coaching intervention, decision-making, self-efficacy, SMMEs, small business, SMEs, entrepreneurs

DECLARATION

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

Name: Sebastian Bloem Signature: 

Signed at Bapsfontein

On the 11 day of August 2022.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all the entrepreneurs in South Africa who are making a difference and contributing to job creation. Keep on doing what you are doing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In reflection on the process that unfolded during this research I would like to acknowledge:

- First my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the strength without which I would not have completed this project.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **ii**

DECLARATION ..... **iii**

DEDICATION ..... **iv**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **v**

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **vi**

LIST OF TABLES ..... **x**

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **xii**

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **xiii**

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH **1**

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Purpose of the Study 1

1.3 Context of the Study 1

1.4 Motivation of the study 8

1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions 10

1.5.1 Research question 1 10

1.5.2 Research question 2 10

1.5.3 Research question 3 10

1.6 Significance of the Study 11

1.7 Delimitation of the Study 12

1.8 Definitions of Terms 12

1.9 Assumptions 14

1.10 Report Structure 14

1.11 Conclusion 15

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **16**

2.1 Introduction 16

2.2 Background Discussion 16

2.3 Theoretical Foundation 20

2.3.1 Experiential learning theory 21
2.3.2 Adult learning theory 22
2.4 Entrepreneurial Coaching 23
2.5 Decision-making 25
2.6 Small Medium and Micro Enterprise Growth 27
2.7 Entrepreneurs' Decision-Making and Coaching 28
2.8 Conceptual Framework and Formulated Hypotheses 30
2.9 Conclusion 30

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 32

3.1 Introduction 32
3.2 Research Approach 32
3.3 Research Design 33
3.4 Population and Sample 34
3.4.1 Sample and sampling method 35
3.5 The Research Instrument 35
3.6 Procedure for Data Collection 37
3.6.1 Quantitative data collection method 38
3.6.2 Qualitative data collection method 38
3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation 39
3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis 40
3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis 41
3.8 Limitations of the Study 42
3.9 Validity and Reliability 42
3.9.1 Reliability 43
3.9.2 Validity 43
3.9.3 External validity 44
3.9.4 Internal validity 44
3.9.5 Construct validity 44
3.9.6 Exploratory factor analysis 44
3.10 Trustworthiness and Research Rigour 45
3.10.1 Transferability 45
3.10.2 Credibility 45
3.10.3 Dependability 46
3.10.4 Objectivity and confirmability 46
3.10.5 Research rigour 46
3.11 Ethical Considerations 46
3.12 Conclusion 47

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS .. 48

4.1 Introduction 48
4.2 Data Screening 48
4.2.1 The questionnaire design 49
4.3 Sample Characteristics 50
4.3.1 Consent 51

4.3.2 Position 52
4.3.3 Age distribution 53
4.3.4 Year business was established 53
4.3.5 Gender of respondents 55
4.3.6 Highest academic qualification 55
4.3.7 Industry of operation 56
4.3.8 Number of people employed 57
4.3.9.a Gross revenue over the past three years (2017) 58
4.3.9.b Gross revenue over the past three years (2019) 58
4.3.10 Customers serviced 59
4.4 Validity of Constructs – Exploratory Factor Analysis 61
4.5 Reliability of Scales 66
4.6 Correlational Analysis 67
4.7 Regression Assumptions 68
4.7.1 Addressing of outliers 69
4.7.2 Normality of data distribution 70
4.7.3 Independence 74
4.7.4 Multicollinearity 74
4.8 Results from the Quantitative Phase 76
4.8.1 Hypothesis 1: Decision-making and SMME growth 76
4.8.2 Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial coaching and decision-making 78
4.9 Findings from Qualitative Phase 79
4.9.1 Proposition 1: Decision-making before and after coaching 79
4.9.2 Thematic analysis 82
4.9.2.1 Theme 1: Goal-focused 82
4.9.2.2 Theme 2: Adapting to change 84
4.9.2.3 Theme 3: Learning and awareness 86
4.9.2.4 Theme 4: Improved decision-making 89
4.9.2.5 Theme 5: Improved efficiency 92
4.9.2.6 Theme 6: Business growth 93
4.9.3 Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial coaching and decision-making 95
4.10 Integration of Findings and Results 97
4.11 Conclusion 98

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS 99

5.1 Introduction 99
5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents 99
5.3 Entrepreneurs' Decision-Making and SMME Growth 99
5.4 Entrepreneurial Coaching and Entrepreneurs' Decision-making 102
5.5 Decision-making Improves after Coaching Intervention 104
5.6 Conclusion 105

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS 106

6.1 Introduction 106
6.2 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 1 106
6.3 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 2 107

6.4 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING RESEARCH QUESTION 3 108
6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS 109
6.5.1 GOVERNMENT 109
6.5.2 ENTREPRENEURS 109
6.5.3 COACHES 110
6.5.4 COACHING BODIES 110
6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 111
6.7 CONCLUSION 111

REFERENCES 112

APPENDIX A (Consent Form) 126

APPENDIX B (Research Instrument) 127

APPENDIX C (Consistency Matrix) 154

APPENDIX D (Ethics Clearance Certificate) 156

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Consent Provided 51

Table 4.2: Position 52

Table 4.3: Age 53

Table 4.4: Year Enterprise was established 55

Table 4.5: Gender 55

Table 4.6: The Highest Qualification of the CEO 55

Table 4.7: Industry of Operation 56

Table 4.8: People Employed 57

Table 4.9a: Gross Revenue 2017 58

Table 4.9b: Gross Revenue 2019 58

Table 4.10a: Number of Customers Serviced 2017 59

Table 4.10b: Number of Customers Serviced 2018 60

Table 4.10c: Number of Customers Serviced 2019 60

Table 4.11: KMO and Bartlett's Test 62

Table 4.12: Total Variance Explained 62

Table 4.13: Screen Plot 63

Table 4.14: Pattern Matrix 64

Table 4.15: Reliability Statistics 67

Table 4.16: Correlation Matrix 68

Table 4.17: Box Plot 70

Table 4.18: Histogram 71

Table 4.19: P-P Plot 72

Table 4.20: Scatter Plot 73

Table 4.21: Statistics (Distribution of Data) 73
Table 4.22: Correlations 75
Table 4.23: Model Summary 76
Table 4.24: ANOVA 77
Table 4.25: Coefficient Matrix 77
Table 4.26: Participant Identification 81
Table 4.27: Themes 82

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework 30

Figure 3.1: Research Process 37

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBBEE:	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment
CPD:	Continuing Professional Development
DSBD:	Department of Small Business Development
DV:	Dependent variable
EC:	Entrepreneurial Coaching
EFA:	Exploratory Factor Analysis
IDV:	Independent variable
NDP:	National Development Plan
NPC:	National Planning Committee
SAICA:	South African Institute of Chartered Accountants
SAIT:	South African Institute of Taxation
SDG:	Strategic Development Goals
SEDA:	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA:	Small Enterprise Finance Agency Soc. Ltd.
SME:	Small and medium enterprises
SMME:	Small, medium, and micro enterprises
TIPS:	Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies
UN:	United Nations
VUCA:	Volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

This chapter details the purpose of the study and the context within which the research was undertaken. The motivation for the study which culminates in the research questions is also presented. The significance, delimitations, definition terms, assumptions and the overall structure of the research are presented later in this chapter.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Small Businesses in South Africa operate in a challenging environment with a failure rate of 70-80% (Bushe, 2019).

This mixed-method action research study aimed to determine the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs and how it impacts business growth of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa. In this context, entrepreneurial coaching refers to the facilitation of learning and engaging the entrepreneur's natural ability to learn in order to grow the SMME (MacLennan, 2017).

Decision-making is a cognitive process in which information is considered together with options. A specific direction is chosen to achieve an expected outcome (Okyireh, 2020;Urban, 2010; Vermeulen & Curseuurseu, 2010).

1.3 Context of the Study

Businesses operate in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environments globally (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Santoso, Soh, Larso, & Chen, 2020). The SMME sector in the South African economy is not exempt from the effects of the VUCA environment.

The South African government has undertaken various interventions in support of the SMME sectors (Lose, 2019; Shrivastava, 2018; Van Rensburg, 2014). These include the establishment of the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) with entities like the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency Soc. Ltd. reporting to it, as well as various business incubators, private and public (Lose, 2019; Van Rensburg, 2014). The main purpose of these entities is to support and develop small businesses within the South African economy (Lose, 2019; Van Rensburg, 2014). The South African government recognises the importance of small businesses and the potential of this sector to reduce unemployment (Lose, 2019). Further, the South African government, through SEDA, has established business incubation hubs to support and ensure the success of SMMEs (Lose, 2019; Van Rensburg, 2014). As part of incubation, the entrepreneurs are exposed to or have access to coaches (Lose, 2019; Van Rensburg, 2014). Lose (2019) takes the view that challenges are experienced at incubator level in that the incubators have limited resources, which limits the role of interventions such as coaching. This means that coaching is not freely available and accessible to all participants within an incubator (Lose, 2019; Van Rensburg, 2014).

In the first quarter report of 2018, the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) indicated that because of the negative local business environment, there had been a decline in the employment rate within the SMME sector in South Africa.

In addition, the SEDA (2018) report indicated that major world economic events, such as Brexit, add to the volatility of the market in which the South Africa SMME sector operates. The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union resulted in uncertainty in the global business market, including the South African business market (SEDA, 2018).

The most recent global event that impacted the business environment was the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21, where 660,000 formal jobs were lost in the South African economy (Stats SA, 2021). In 2020, the GDP of South Africa dropped by 7.8% year on year, placing the country in a recession due to Covid-

19 (South African Treasury, 2021). Local market conditions and global events contributed to the volatility in the SMME sector.

According to the quarterly report, published by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2021), unemployment increased by 0.5%, when considering the broader definition of unemployment. This brought the total unemployment rate to 34.9% from the second to the third quarter of 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). This broader definition of unemployment entails all people who are able to work but are not seeking work. The World Bank Report, published in July 2021, indicated that the South African economy had only recovered 40% of the jobs that were lost during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, if the broader definition of employment is considered, it was possible that the unemployment rate could reach levels of more than 74% for the age group comprising 15- to 24-year-olds (World Bank, 2021).

According to Kohnert (2020), the British economy was negatively affected by Brexit. The European Union, at the time of Brexit, was Britain's largest trade partner. Both Brexit and Covid-19 resulted in a 20.4% reduction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Britain (Kohnert, 2020). Kohnert (2020) stated that Brexit and Covid-19 would reduce South African exports to Britain by half. This would affect SMMEs in South Africa.

According to Lose and Kapondoro (2020), the cost of doing business has increased due to illness and lockdowns. South Africans are now forced to find innovative ways of doing business. (Lose & Kapondoro, 2020). The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the drive for automation, which includes the greater use of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics to reduce human labour and increase profits, has also contributed to the volatility in the modern business environment (Lose & Kapondoro, 2020). The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) refers to the greater involvement of technology and innovation within the business environment, which affects supply chains, manufacturing, labour requirements, customer interaction, and the distribution of goods and services (Schwab, 2017). This technological revolution means that businesses are now forced to look at ways to digitise in order to remain relevant and competitive (Lose & Kapondoro, 2020). This requires retraining, as previous

skills will be rendered obsolete, prompting the need to develop new skills (Lose & Kapondoro, 2020). These dynamics in the South African context present glaring challenges. The level of education and skills within the South African economy lags behind that of the developed economies (Lose & Kapondoro, 2020).

In considering the Covid-19 pandemic, Jackson, Wiess, Schwarzenberg, and Nelson (2020) suggested that it had the potential to reduce the global economy to levels below that which was experienced in the Great Depression of the 1930s. Support measures implemented by governments across the world required reprioritisation of government budget spending. Spending on infrastructure expansion projects had to be reduced to allow for the support of the health sectors and welfare support for individuals (Jackson et al., 2020).

Focusing on the South African context and specifically the SMME sector, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with business restrictions, has resulted in job losses, business closures and increased operating expenses (Jackson et al., 2020; Lose, Yakobi, & Kwahene, 2020). In an effort to reduce the spread of Covid-19, the South Africa government introduced different levels of lockdowns (SA-Gov, 2021). The lockdowns resulted in reduced operating hours and impacted the amount of personnel that could be at work at any given time (SA-Gov, 2020). According to Stats SA (2021), in quarter 2 of 2021 the South African economy recovered by 1.2%. However, in considering the economic levels pre Covid-19, there has been a decline of 1.4%, meaning that the South African economy as at quarter 2 of 2021 was at the same level as 2017 (Stats SA, 2021).

Within the South African business environment, between 70% and 80% of SMMEs fail (Bruwer, Smith, & Le Roux, 2019; Bushe, 2019; Ligthelm & Cant, 2002; Smit & Watkins, 2012). This failure could be largely avoided through education. Regarding contributing factors to the failure rate of small businesses in South Africa, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) said the following: in relation to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), government bureaucracy, broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE), the South African labour laws, access to growth funding and the

South African tax laws made it more difficult to do business in South Africa (Bushe, 2019; SAICA, 2015). According to the SAICA report, government bureaucracy leads to difficulty in opening a business. BBBEE added an administrative burden and another layer of reports and compliance and extra cost (SAICA, 2015). The SAICA report also indicated that the South African labour laws were worker-centred, which restricted employers. Finally, the report indicated that to raise growth funding for small business was very difficult (SAICA, 2015).

The concerns raised by SAICA (2015) and Bushe (2019) were not new; in 2010, a study was commissioned by the South African president at the time, President Jacob Zuma, for the National Planning Commission (NPC) to develop a vision for the country (NPC, 2011) . The initial findings of the commission were that South Africa faced the following challenges (NPC, 2011):

1. Low employment levels.
2. Education for the black population was substandard.
3. Infrastructure was inadequate and poorly maintained.
4. The economy was highly dependent on resources presenting a sustainability problem.
5. The public services were not equitably distributed, and the whole population was not serviced.
6. South African society was divided along racial lines.
7. The levels of corruption were high.
8. There were challenges presented by the historic spatial development of infrastructure.

The National Development Plan (NDP) is the South African government's plan to address the poverty and imbalance in South Africa. The government envisaged that by 2030 the inequalities experienced by South Africa could be reduced through strategic planning. This would include the reduction of poverty levels (NPC, 2011). A key focus of the NPC (2011) was to increase the growth of the SMMEs and the SME sectors, as all indications were that these would be the driving force for employment within the South African economy. The SEDA

(2019) report also acknowledged that the SMME and SME sectors could, if supported properly, reduce poverty, and increase employment levels in the country.

The NDP 2030 encompassed guidelines and strategies regarding food security, water security and energy security amongst other needs to be achieved (NPC, 2015). It was acknowledged that the mandate was limited and would need the cooperation of all government departments, the business community and South African civil society (NPC, 2015).

The NPC members are appointed to the committee for a period of five years. In December 2021, President Ramaphosa appointed the third NPC. As part of the implementation of the NDP 2030, the NPC communicated the vision to the United Nations (UN) in September 2021. The NPC indicated that since 1994, the South African government had made significant progress in addressing the imbalances of the past. Part of this process had resulted in the development of the NDP 2030 (NPC, 2021). The presentation to the UN mapped the NDP 2030. The plan has 13 chapters. They are monitored by a Medium-Term Strategic Framework in which it aims to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (NPC, 2021).

As detailed above, entrepreneurs in the South African SMME environment faces various challenges and their decision-making has a direct impact on the success of businesses (Bushe, 2019; Ligthelm & Cant, 2003; Prinsloo, 2015). Hunt, Fielden and Woolnough (2019) are of the view that entrepreneurial coaching is a tool that can be used to aid entrepreneurs in their decision-making. The results delivered through entrepreneurial coaching could translate into improved decision-making and thereby aid the entrepreneur (Crompton, 2012; Hunt et al., 2019).

In the past, there were challenges pertaining to coaching within the South African business environment (Rostron, 2006). Because of segregation and discrimination during apartheid (1948 to 1994), the coaching fraternity found themselves isolated from the rest of the world. Sanctions were imposed on South Africa (Rostron, 2006). Coaching was almost only available to white

senior executives in the apartheid South Africa (Rostron, 2006). Coaching was viewed as an exclusive activity. The business market perception therefore was that coaching is expensive, exclusive, and only accessible to large corporate organisations (Rostron, 2006). Many of these challenges still exist (Roche & Passmore, 2021).

Another challenge faced by the coaching fraternity in South Africa is diversity of cultures and languages, having implications for coaches, then and now (Rostron, 2006; Stout-Rostron, 2018). The diversity of cultures and languages influences behaviour. It also impacts the interpretation of situations; therefore, the coaching approach needs to be tailored to suit the situation.

Since the observations of Rostron (2006), Attlee (2013) has indicated that there had been positive changes regarding the rollout and access to coaching within the South African business environment. Attlee (2013) indicated that larger organisations in South Africa had started incorporating coaching as part of their talent management strategy. Talent management entails the identification of individuals with potential, the development of that potential, and the retention of those individuals (Crane & Hartwell, 2019). Tarique and Schuler (2010, p. 124) cited by Crane & Hartwell (2019, p. 82) describe talent management as the process "that attracts, develops and retains individuals with high levels of human capital." These organisations have internal coaches who coach individuals within their talent management programmes, and external coaches for their executive management (Attlee, 2013). According to Attlee (2013), internal coaches are individuals employed by the organisation who are tasked with the responsibility of coaching employees, whereas external coaches are not employed by the organisation and are contracted for a specific intervention.

However, Hudson (2016) and Mvelase (2019) claim that coaching as an intervention has not yet been fully incorporated into corporate training programmes. This means that coaching is not available to all, only to selected individuals. The conclusion that can be drawn from the views of Hudson (2016) and Mvelase (2019) is that coaching as an intervention in South Africa is often reserved for a select few and that within an organisation most employees do not enjoy the benefits of coaching.

In addressing the claims that coaching is not accessible to all, various training programmes for coaches are on offer in South Africa. Credible institutions like the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Cape Town (UCT), the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) and the University of Stellenbosch, to name a few, offer accredited qualifications in coaching. Coaching bodies like Coaches and Mentors Association of South Africa (COMENSA) and the International Coaching Federation (ICF) also offer accredited coaching training. These training courses will in time increase the availability and accessibility of coaches. Coaching training programmes are also on offer from Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and from SEDA.

The coaching environment in South Africa is growing and developing. Due to the complex and dynamic nature of the South African business environment, coaches need to be prepared to coach in different situations (Bachkirova, 2017).

The above scenario presents the context and environment within which entrepreneurs and coaches find themselves, which is characterised as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Santoso et al., 2020). In navigating this environment, it is important that the entrepreneurs' decisions are sound to ensure the sustainability and survival of their businesses. These decisions will involve adapting to new ways of doing business in order to survive the VUCA world. For coaches, this indicates the need to be aware of the way people learn (Kolb, 2015). Learning theories and how people learn are discussed in Chapter 2.

1.4 Motivation of the study

The failure rate of businesses within the SMME sector in South Africa is alarmingly high (Bushe, 2019). Poor decision-making is a major contributor to this failure rate (Zhao & Thompson, 2019).

There are various factors that influence the decision of an entrepreneur. Factors such as the environment, the economy and government support impact

businesses (Jackson et al., 2020). This study aimed to contribute to the conversation around the entrepreneurs' decision-making in South Africa. Poor decisions, low levels of risk management, and low levels of management education and inadequate business skills may contribute to the high failure rate of SMMEs in South Africa (Cant & Wiid, 2013; Ligthelm & Cant, 2003; Urban, 2010; Zhao & Thompson, 2019).

There is a lack of adequate business management skills in the South African SMME environment (Bushe, 2019; Rabie et al., 2016; Zhao & Thompson, 2019). This contributes to the high number of SMME failures within South Africa (Bushe, 2019). To make effective decisions that will ensure the sustainability of a business, the entrepreneur needs to be adequately trained and have adequate support and resources (Zhao & Thompson, 2019).

Through education and training awareness can be created, regarding the risks to avoid, that could cause business failure. Inexperienced and experienced entrepreneurs approach decisions differently. An experienced entrepreneur approaches decisions by using the resources at their disposal to further develop and advance the business (Dew, Read, Sarasvathy, & Wiltbank, 2009). Business education can take the form of formal exposure to knowledge or experiential learning, as discussed in the literature chapter (Pletcher, Hudson & Watson, 2019).

As indicated by Wiginton III and Cartwright (2020), the outcome of coaching is learning, and in this way learning skills are developed. If the coaching engagement is not properly contracted and the outcomes or goals not clearly defined, the engagement will result in a negative experience for the entrepreneur (Kahn, 2011; Matlay, Rae, Audet, & Couteret, 2012; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). If there is no trust in the coach's abilities and experience, the level of engagement and information shared by the entrepreneur will be significantly hampered, resulting in an unsuccessful coaching engagement (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck, 2010; Matlay et al. 2010; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). Coaching can serve as a valuable tool or intervention in furthering training and education (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). As indicated in the literature, coaching involves the co-construction of knowledge and contributes to

increased performance and behaviour change. Successful coaching will ensure that decision-making of the entrepreneur improves and thus contributes to the increased survival rate of SMMEs in South Africa (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018; Zhao & Thompson, 2019).

Therefore, this research aimed to determine how an entrepreneur makes a decision and what impact that decision has on a business before and after the application of an entrepreneurial coaching intervention.

1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of the study was to determine the perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of SMMEs and how entrepreneurial coaching impacts this decision-making.

The study aimed to answer the first two research questions using quantitative methods and the third one through qualitative methods.

1.5.1 Research question 1

What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of SMMEs?

1.5.2 Research question 2

What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs?

1.5.3 Research question 3

How do entrepreneurs make decisions before and after entrepreneurial coaching?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study aimed to contribute to the literature regarding the way entrepreneurs make decisions, the impact of these decisions, and how entrepreneurial coaching will influence the efficacy and the relevance of these decisions.

Coaching and decision-making are two separate subjects from a business perspective (Urban, 2010; Zhao & Thompson, 2019). This study linked the two and explored how entrepreneurial coaching impacts decision-making. This connection has to date not been widely considered within the South African business context. In linking the two, this study found a gap in existing knowledge around the impact that entrepreneurial coaching had on decision-making. Coaching, as an intervention, creates awareness, this awareness translates into increased self-efficacy (Wiginton III & Cartwright, 2020). This increased self-efficacy contributes to improved decision making by the entrepreneur.

Decision-making is a cognitive process in which information is considered together with options. A specific direction is chosen to achieve an expected outcome (Okyireh, 2020; Urban, 2010; Vermeulen & Curseuurseu, 2010). Urban (2010) further indicates that the ability to make a decision requires a certain level of competence to be achieved through mastery of information presented. This alludes to a level of learning that has to have taken place. In addition, decision-making involves cognitive ability or processes (Ma, Kor, & Seidl, 2020; Okyireh, 2020). Similarly, as stated by Bono et al. (2009), Sonesh et al. (2015); Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018), coaching includes elements of learning and development, hence the relevance of learning theories in adult learning.

Various groups would benefit from this study. The first and most logical would-be entrepreneurs and the SMME business community in South Africa regarding the value of coaching and the impact of their decisions on their businesses. The study would also benefit policymakers. This knowledge would add value in drafting and implementing of policies to ensure an improvement in SMME survival in South Africa.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The research focused on the SMME sector in South Africa and on entrepreneurs who have either started their businesses or have bought businesses. The focus of the research was on entrepreneurs at various stages of the business.

The constructs that were measured during this research was the decision-making of an entrepreneur and the business growth. These constructs were measured before and after entrepreneurial coaching. The aim was to determine how entrepreneurial coaching impacted these constructs. The research in this regard was centred around the entrepreneur and his/her decision-making process.

The initial quantitative survey was conducted nationally in South Africa. Due to the limited availability of resources and time constraints, the qualitative entrepreneurial coaching intervention was confined to the Gauteng region.

As indicated by Peltier (2011), de Haan et al. (2016) and Palmer and Whybrow (2018), a coaching engagement and its agenda are driven by the needs of the coachee. In this study, the agenda was also driven by the coachee. After the coaching sessions and the semi-structured interviews were concluded, only data pertaining to the decision-making, business growth, and the perceived impact of the entrepreneurial coaching on decision-making were considered. This approach ensured that the objective of the research was achieved.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

The definitions detailed below are relevant to and used throughout this study.

- **Action research**

  Action research is a systematic approach to finding practical and immediately implementable solutions to problematic events. The process focuses on the problem or issue being experienced. The intended outcome is a successful solution (Stringer, 2013).

- **Business coaching**

  This term refers specifically to the environment and the context within which coaching takes place. According to Khan (2011), business coaching occurs in a business context with the aim of promoting the business goals.

- **Business growth**

  According to Chimucheka (2013), business growth refers to profitability of an organisation, the increase in product distribution in the organisation's current market, and the entry into new markets.

- **Coaching**

  According to MacLennan (2017), coaching is the process of facilitating learning and unlocking the coachee's natural ability to learn. The coach does not have to be expert in the area in which they are coaching. According to Palmer and Whybrow (2018), coaching is the process whereby the coach and the coachee contract to achieve a goal or a set of goals. In the process, knowledge is co-constructed and the coach acts as a facilitator (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

- **Decision-making**

  This is the process of utilising existing knowledge and experience, making sense of a situation in deciding on a course of action or a path to follow (Gattas, Soffer & Peleg, 2014).

- **An entrepreneur**

  An entrepreneur is an individual who establishes a business for the pursuit of profit and very often leaves formal employment in search of independence and autonomy (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998; Szaban & Skrzek-Lubasińska, 2018).

- **Entrepreneurial coaching**

  Entrepreneurial coaching refers to the support which a coach provides to an entrepreneur during the various stages of their business to aid them in establishing their business (Kotte, Diermann, Rosing, & Möller, 2021).

- **SMME**

  According to the South African Government SA-Gov (2019), a small enterprise is an enterprise that has a turnover equal to or less than R17 million to R80 million and employs 11 to 50 people. A micro enterprise has a turnover equal to or less than R5 million to R15 million and employs 0 to 10 people, and a medium enterprise has a turnover equal to or less than R35 million to R220 million and employs 51 to 250 people. This definition was adopted for this study.

1.9 Assumptions

- The assumption made in this study was that the respondents would answer all questions honestly and truthfully thus ensuring that the information provided was accurate. Inaccurate information would negatively impact the study and result in inaccurate findings.

- The assumption was that the entrepreneurs being coached would participate honestly and be open in sharing details around experiences and their businesses.

1.10 Report Structure

Chapter 1 describes the context of the research, the research problem, and the motivation for the research. This mixed methods research investigated entrepreneurial coaching and decision-making and the dynamics of small business failure in South Africa, particularly SMMEs. Various concepts are explored. The chapter served as a guideline for the conceptual framework of the research.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertaining to the research question – impact of business and entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs with the South African SMME sector. This chapter also presents the conceptual framework of the study. Furthermore, it illustrates through literature how decisions are made. At the end of the process three hypotheses were formulated.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology followed in this mixed method study. The chapter describes the design of the research, the instruments to be used, and how data were collected and analysed. It describes how validity and reliability were ensured across both the qualitative and quantitative facets of the research project.

Chapter 4 presents the qualitative and quantitative results obtained from the research project. It describes the correlation between independent and dependent variables from a quantitative perspective and the themes derived from thematic content analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 presents the findings and compares these to existing literature. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are presented.

Chapter 6 provides concluding remarks and the contribution that this research has made in addition to recommendations for future studies.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the reasons why the study was undertaken. The context within which the research was conducted, the motivation for the research, and the research question that was addressed during the research. Furthermore, delimitation and assumptions were presented. The chapter also provided an overview of the other chapters contained in the research report.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the research questions which dealt with the impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs in the SMME sector in South Africa. Learning theories, the hypotheses and a conceptual framework are presented.

2.2 Background Discussion

For the coaching engagement to be successful certain factors need to be present (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). These include the trust of the entrepreneur in the coach, the personal relationship between the entrepreneur and the coach, the respect of the entrepreneur for the coach, and the coach's skill and experience (Audet & Couteret, 2012; Brinkley & Le Roux, 2018, Passmore, 2007; Roger, 2012). In the absence of these, the coaching will not be successful as the entrepreneur will not actively and honestly participate in the engagement (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Brinkley & Le Roux, 2018; Matlay et al., 2012).

The role of coaching is distinguished from mentoring and consulting (Passmore, 2007). Coaching according to O'Neil (2011) is the process of co-constructing knowledge with the coach and entrepreneur (coachee) as equals.

Matlay et al. (2012) define consulting as the intervention where the client is presented with a solution to their problem. Consulting is an intervention where an expert is contracted to aid an organisation or an individual to achieve set goals through information sharing or physical task performance (Biech, 2019).

Mentoring is like coaching in various ways (Bozer & Jones, 2018). However, there are differences (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Jones, 2016; Passmore, 2007). Mentoring is longer term than coaching. Mentoring is more career than performance focused (Passmore, 2020).

Coaching, according to Palmer and Whybrow (2018) is facilitative - the coach as a facilitator facilitates knowledge construction. It is short term and knowledge is co-constructed.

Bozer and Jones (2018), Hill (2010) and Matlay et al. (2012) further claim that when all the ingredients for a favourable coaching engagement are in place, the education of the entrepreneur (coachee) will be enhanced, ensuring that they will be better equipped to successfully navigate the VUCA environment. The coaching engagement is more effective than traditional training programmes because the learning presented through the coaching is tailor-made to the entrepreneur's requirements (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Brinkley & Le Roux, 2018; Kutzhanova, Lyons & Lichtenstein, 2019; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

During the process of coaching, learning flows in both directions; the coach and the coachee both learn in the process (Bachkirova, 2017; Brinkley & Le Roux, 2018). The coach learns more about the coachee, who shares information and details about his or her business and often in areas where they are struggling. Very often the coachee shares sensitive information (Bachkirova, 2017). For the coachee to feel comfortable to share this sensitive information, the coach needs to create and maintain a rapport with them. The coachee often shares information about their shortcomings in the business; this helps to identify areas that need development (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). This relationship of trust creates an environment for the sharing of information, which is often personal, as indicated previously (Kotte, Diermann, Rossing, & Moller, 2020).

Coaching as an intervention is highly focussed. In the process there are specific outcomes that need to be achieved. Coaches sometimes follow the GROW methodology, where G stands for goal setting, R stands for the realistic nature of the set goals, O stands for options available to achieve set goals and W stands for the way forward in terms of the next action to achieve goals (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). With goal setting and achievement at the centre of coaching, it is important to the success of the coaching relationship that there is trust and rapport between coach and coachee. These elements will ensure buy-in and co-operation from the coachee and therefore, goal achievement (Kotte et al., 2021, Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

The training of the coach also plays an important role as the coach needs to be knowledgeable in various ways, including in identifying the boundaries or the limits of coaching (Passmore, 2020). A coachee may disclose information that is beyond the limits of coaching and the coach needs to be aware when a coachee need counselling or another intervention (Passmore, 2020). Advantages of the coach's training include his or her knowledge regarding the professional and ethical behaviour that is required from an executive and business coach (Passmore, 2020).

Coaching as an intervention involves the whole coach as part of the process The coach cannot divorce themselves from the process (Passmore, 2020), therefore, it is important that the coach guards against burnout (Bachkirova, 2016). According to Norden (2019), the coach is invested emotionally in the process. This investment may be taxing and can cause fatigue or burnout. As part of the continuous development of executive coaches and to guard against burnout, coaching supervision is advised (Norden, 2019; Passmore, 2020). "These three aspects (knowledge, skills and experience) have to be regularly reviewed and improved with the use of coaching supervision and through the process of continuing professional development (CPD)." (Passmore, 2020, p. 41).

When the coach ensures that all the elements are in place, coaching will deliver successful business performance (Wiginton III & Cartwright, 2020). In addition, the locus of control and self-efficacy of the entrepreneur will also be improved (Wiginton III & Cartwright, 2020). Through the learning that takes place in this relationship, the entrepreneur is empowered to make the business more competitive and profitable, thereby ensuring growth in a VUCA world (Dobrea & Maiorescu, 2015).

The business area in which this study was conducted involved SMMEs, and coaching was undertaken amongst entrepreneurs. This necessitates a mention of entrepreneurial coaching and what it entails**.** According to Kotte et al. (2021) the concept of entrepreneurial coaching (EC) is not clearly defined in literature. The definitions vary in their focus from individual support to entrepreneurial education to self-improvement (Kotte, et al., 2021). The need for differentiation

of entrepreneurial coaching is driven mainly by the nature and dynamics of entrepreneurship (Kotte, et al., 2021). According to Kotte et al., (2021) the entrepreneur is linked to his/her organisation both financially and emotionally. Often the entrepreneur needs to take on various roles and responsibilities within his/her business.

The differing roles and responsibilities of an entrepreneur in the business places demands on the coach that differ from regular coaching (Kotte, et al., 2021). The entrepreneurial environment, the dynamics presented in this environment and the complexity that the entrepreneur has to deal with adds further demands to the coaching process (Kotte, et al., 2021). The dynamics faced by an entrepreneur in his/her business also differ depending on the stage of growth of the business (Kotte, et al., 2021; Kroeze, 2022). These dynamics directly affect the coaching needs of the coachee as well as the coaching approach (Kroeze, 2022). The coach needs to facilitate development in various areas from education in business processes, to business skills development, to individual skills development of the entrepreneur, to mention a few (Kroeze, 2022).

It is evident that the dynamics faced by the entrepreneurs are different from those faced by managers and executive within organisations (Kotte, et al., 2021). This supports the differentiation and special mention of entrepreneurial coaching within this study as it would affect the engagements during coaching.

Filion (2021, p. 80) defines an entrepreneur as “an imaginative actor who recognises entrepreneurial opportunities, makes moderately risky decisions with a view to innovating, and takes action by using resources to implement a differentiated vision that contributes an added value.” An entrepreneur is an individual who is in search of freedom and establishes a business for profit towards this goal (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998; Szaban & Skrzek-Lubasińska, 2018). Internationally, governments have encouraged entrepreneurship as they have realised that the entrepreneur is instrumental in delivering employment and economic growth. Additionally, various support mechanisms have been employed to ensure the development and success of entrepreneurs and their small businesses (Lose, 2019). In the SMME sector in South Africa, SEDA has developed incubation hubs where entrepreneurs receive support and

development to ensure that the SMME sector is developed and furthered (Lose, 2019).

In the incubation hubs, the entrepreneur is given access to coaching as a support mechanism (Lose, 2019; Van Rensburg, 2014). The SEDA has set up incubation hubs throughout South Africa, such as Seda Essential Oils Business Incubator (SEOBI) in KwaZulu Natal, the Seda Limpopo Jewellery Incubator (SLJI), the Seda Platinum Incubator (SPI) in Rustenburg and the SoftstartBTI (SBTI) in Gauteng, to name a few. These incubation offerings are still active in 2022. It has been determined that these coaching interventions not only act as training and development tools for the entrepreneur, but they also increase the entrepreneurs' self-efficacy and improve decision-making capabilities, thereby ensuring that these businesses can grow (Crompton, Smyrnios, & Bi, 2011; St-Jean & Audet, 2013; Wiginton III & Cartwright, 2020).

The following sections discuss the theoretical foundation of the study, relating to learning theories. The research objectives are then investigated, related to the entrepreneur, entrepreneurial coaching and the decision-making undertaken by the entrepreneur after coaching.

2.3 Theoretical Foundation

As mentioned above if all aspects are in place for a successful entrepreneurial coaching, learning will be facilitated (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). The aspects referred to are the rapport of the coach with the entrepreneur, the skills and experience of the coach and the trust between the coach and the entrepreneur (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

The theories considered and that underpin the entrepreneurial coaching in this research are Experimental Learning, Adult Learning and Transformative Learning. As mentioned earlier in this chapter the entrepreneurial coaching engagement acts as a facilitative process to aid the entrepreneur in learning (Wigington III & Cartwright, 2020).

According to Kolb (2015) during the learning process adults draw from their experience to make sense of the learning process. The benefits of this approach are that learning throughout the process outlined by Kolb (2015) below becomes implementable and necessary. During this study this theory is facilitated through the delivery of the entrepreneurial coaching.

Adult learning theories were developed by Malcolm Knowles (1977). They are relevant to entrepreneurial coaching and include experiential learning theories and transformative learning theories (Bachkirova, 2017; Brinkley & Le Roux, 2018; Knowles, 1977; Kolb, 2015; Mezirow, 1990). The literature states that during decision-making and entrepreneurial coaching, learning takes place from the entrepreneur's perspective and the coach acts as a facilitator during this process (Bachkirova, Cox, & Clutterbuck, 2010; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

2.3.1 Experiential learning theory

The Founder of Experiential Learning, David Kolb, based his ideas on the works of Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget (Kolb, 1979,1984). The influence of the work of these authors culminated in the birth of Experiential Learning Theory.

According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning is the process in which adults learn through their experiences. The process of experiential learning is not a linear or static process (Leal-Rodriguez & Albort-Morant, 2019). The adult goes through a continuous process of learning and unlearning (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) indicates that experiential learning theory comprises four subgroups: the first facet is concrete experience and ability (CE); the second facet is reflective observation ability (RO); and this is followed by abstract conceptualisation ability (AC) and finally, active experimentation (AE).

Kolb (1984) explained the four subgroups of experiential learning as follows.

1. Concrete Experience ability (CE): The process in which the learners familiarise themselves with the new knowledge and personalise the new knowledge.

2. Reflective Observation ability (RO): This is the process in which the learner reflects from many perspectives on the new information presented and learning takes place through reflection or observation.
3. Abstract Conceptualisation ability (AC): This is the ability to assimilate new information and develop concrete theories.
4. Active Experimentation ability (AE): This is the process in which the new knowledge is applied in a situation to solve a problem. Should the same situation present itself in future, the learning through experimentation serves as a guideline to solve the problem.

Therefore, this study, through a coaching intervention, aimed to create an experiential learning interaction with the entrepreneurs around the impact of their decisions on the growth of their businesses.

2.3.2 Adult learning theory

Malcolm Knowles accepted Kapp's (1833) theory of andragogy (Merriam, 2008). "Adult learning is a complex phenomenon that can never be reduced to a single simple explanation. Rather I think what we have is an ever-changing mosaic where old pieces are rearranged, and new pieces are added." (Merriam, 2008, p. 94). Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson (2011) indicate that adult learning takes place in an independent and autonomous manner**.** The learner is self-directed (Pletcher et al., 2019). Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck (2014) and Pletcher et al. (2019) indicate that in the learning process, adults employ their vast experience to make sense of new knowledge. Cox et al. (2014) further claim that for adults to learn, there must be a clear need for the learning and the new knowledge must be immediately implementable. If not, many adults will not be interested in the learning (Pletcher et al., 2019). According to Bushe (2019), there are various aspects that require the attention of the entrepreneur. One of these is the planning of labour to be compliant with the Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995) and the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998). Also, the entrepreneur has to maintain a balance between work and home.

Knowles (1977) promoted the idea that adult learning was driven by immediate use of the new knowledge gained. However, as a result of the nature of adult

learning it is difficult to retain adults in the learning environment. Adults have responsibilities regarding work and families, for example. Therefore, the teacher would have to be innovative in the delivery of the new knowledge. Unlike children, who are compelled by law to be in the learning environment (Covid-19 was an exception), adults are not obliged to be in the learning environment. Knowles (1977) indicates that for the adult learning process to be successful, an environment that is favourable for learning needs to be created. In this environment there needs to be trust between teacher and learner, respect, and warmth and caring (Knowles, 1977). In addition, the learning material or knowledge presented needs to address the learner's needs (Knowles, 1977). As stated, for an adult to learn, there needs to be a purpose for the learning and the new knowledge needs to be implementable in a short space of time (Merriam, 2008).

These characteristics apply to entrepreneurs, as well as adults, during the coaching intervention. The co-construction of knowledge will be an outcome Coaching will result in learning not only for the entrepreneur, but also for the coach.

2.4 Entrepreneurial Coaching

Crompton et al. (2011) define entrepreneurial coaching as an intervention that impacts on the self-efficacy of an entrepreneur and ensures the growth of an organisation. Whitmore (2009) states that for the coaching intervention to reach its objective and to be effective, the process must be authentic and truthful. Du Toit (2007) describes coaching as the process of aiding the coachee in making sense, meaning that a realisation is arrived at, that learning has taken place in the form of increased awareness, specifically, transformative learning (Bachkirova, 2017).

Ben-Hur et al. (2012) and Bearth (2016) describe coaching as the process of creating a learning environment and facilitating learning in the process of transformation. In this learning and transformation, the coachee's self-efficacy, self-awareness and self-confidence increase positively, influencing their

decision-making on an executive or managerial level (de Haro-García, 2012; Wiginton III & Cartwright 2020).

Coaching as an industry has over recent times experienced significant growth, not only internationally, but also in South Africa (Gray, Ekinci, & Goregaokar, 2011; Stout-Rostron, 2018). As a relatively new profession, coaching has a set of challenges to overcome. These include limited theoretical or academic literature supporting the profession and the low barriers to entry into the profession (Maritz, 2013; Schutte & Steyn, 2015; Schutte, 2019). According to Maritz (2013), due to the low barriers to entry into the coaching industry, the training requirements are not clearly defined.

Since then, the Sectors for Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA), in addition to the International Coaching Federation (ICF) have started offering accredited training for coaches. Furthermore, the South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has also accredited coaching standards under SAQA US ID 113901, for example. Some coaches do not have formal training. Some institutions offering training are not properly registered within the South African market (Schutte, 2019). A solution to this would be to encourage greater participation of coaches in accredited training programmes (Maritz, 2013). This could raise the standard of coaching and further the professionalisation of the industry (Schutte, 2019).

Further challenges faced by coaching in South Africa are the inertia or resistance to change experienced as a result of the South African history of apartheid and the isolation that was experienced during this period (Stout-Rostron, 2018). Due to a lack of understanding, and resistance to change, entrepreneurs are often reluctant to participate in coaching (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Before 1994, coaching was almost exclusively available to white executives, a phenomenon that to this day, is still being reversed (Stout-Rostron, 2018).

Furthermore, the modern coach in South Africa is faced with diversity in terms of culture, race, and language (Rostron, 2006; Stout-Rostron, 2018). In

successfully navigating these dynamics as well as the business environmental dynamics, the coach will be able to deliver on the mandate set by the coaching clients.

Kotte et al. (2021) claim that if the coaching engagement is authentic, and if there is a match between the coach and the entrepreneur through adequate selection, these dynamics will be overcome, ensuring that coaching delivers growth to the organisation through increased self-efficacy and improved decision-making. In this process learning is facilitated through coaching, specifically entrepreneurial coaching, for this study. This once again emphasises the delivery of learning theories facilitated by entrepreneurial coaching (Kotte et al., 2021).

2.5 Decision-making

Decision-making in business is the process of taking a certain course of action as opposed to another, based on consideration of the information available at the time (Cyert, Simon, & Trow, 1956; Huang et al., 2012; Lieshout, 2018). According to Dew, Read, Sarasvathy and Wiltbank (2008, p. 293), "An effectual logic prescribes beginning with a given set of means and focusing on generating new ends. This may be contrasted with the causal logic of selecting a goal first and then choosing between given means or seeking to acquire the means necessary to achieve the selected end. A simple example of this is the chef who cooks from a recipe (causal) versus one who imagines possible meals from ingredients available at hand (effectual)."

A perspective is a point of view and Vassilakopoulou and Grisot, (2020, p.9) explain effectual perspective as, "Effectuation typifies a logic of influencing the future (instead of predicting it). From an effectual perspective, future-oriented trajectories are built together with stakeholders through commitments."

To apply effectual logic to decision making, the entrepreneur or business owner needs a certain level of experience and expertise to be able to determine the outcome that a decision will have on the business (Camuffo et al., 2020; Dew et al., 2009; Du Toit, 2007). According to Cyert et al. (1956) and Axmith (2004),

the effectiveness of a decision from an economic perspective can be judged in terms of the profitability that the decision delivers to the business. This view is further supported by Urban (2010) and Gray et al. (2011), who state that decision-making is a cognitive process based on mastery of a certain concept or set of presented information. The term mastery indicates that learning is taking place (Azarian, 2019: Leal-Rodriguez & Albort-Morant, 2019).

The decision can also be approached from a predictive perspective, meaning that the entrepreneur would rely on a set of theoretical guidelines or a framework to guide their decision making (Dew et al., 2009; Shepard et al., 2015; Camuffo et al., 2020).

There is a linkage between executive coaching and decision-making. However, as stated by Rostron (2006) and Stout-Rostron (2018), the executives being referred to are those in large organisations not those in the SMMEs. In the sports arena, the coaching is directed to provide sportsmen with information, thereby increasing education to empower them to avoid certain risks within sporting competitions (Camuffo et al., 2020; Collins & Collins, 2013). Coaching is a process that facilitates learning through the presentation of information (Palmer & Whybrow 2018). This information is processed and used to make a decision (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018; Kotte et al., 2021). Learning is transformative, involving adults, and experience (the actual business).

To further the concept of experiential learning and developing decision-making capability, entrepreneurial (and other) coaching can act as a catalyst (Du Toit, 2007; Bachkirova, Cox, & Clutterbuck, 2010). The coach, through engagement with the entrepreneur, creates an environment of openness and trust in which the entrepreneur can share often intimate details of their business experiences. Through this engagement, the coach can provide feedback that creates awareness, which triggers the learning process and enhances decision-making capabilities through increasing confidence (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2013; Passmore, 2020).

2.6 Small Medium and Micro Enterprise Growth

Congruent with the literature, there is a growing realisation within the South African government regarding the potential of the SMME sector as a vehicle to create employment and reduce poverty in South Africa (Bushe, 2019). Furthermore, to ensure sustainability and to increase employment, the growth of this sector needs to be secured by addressing the training needs of the entrepreneur and giving the entrepreneur access to funding (Jere et al., 2015; Bushe, 2019).

Certain common aspects need to be in place to create an environment conducive to growth and expansion of the SMME sector in South Africa (Kwahene, Lose & Yakobi, 2020). These include adequate infrastructure, such as areas of trade or business premises, adequate communication and information technology infrastructure, and a reliable supply of raw material to ensure the delivery and production of goods and services (Chimucheka, 2013; Jere et al., 2015; Lose, 2019). The requirements for business success and growth refer to the requirements for growth from a hardware perspective. In addition, the regulatory environment needs to be conducive to conduct business. This refers to labour and tax laws as an example (Chimucheka, 2013; Bushe, 2019). Laws that impact businesses are, for example, the Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998) and the Labour Relations Act (No 66 of 1995). These Acts and regulations have led to the slow rate of growth in the SMME sector in South Africa.

Some of the areas that would require attention to ensure business growth are:

1. The education of entrepreneurs; education in the areas of finance as well as business management would ensure greater effectiveness of the entrepreneur (Bushe, 2019).

2. A favourable regulatory environment that promotes access to finance can also ensure success of SMMEs. It would help the entrepreneur to pay the required salaries and attract the required skills to drive growth.

3. Access to a skilled labour force. A skilled labour force would aid in the delivery of goods and services for the entrepreneur (Jere et al., 2015). Another advantage of skilled labour in an increase in productivity and a reduction in management time.

According to Brijlal et al. (2013) and Jere et al. (2015), growth of an SMME can be measured in various ways; it can either be measured by the increase in sales, the increase in people employed, or the increase in profitability of the organisation. All these factors will yield positive results, according to Jere et al. (2015), if the challenges related to growth are addressed and are conducive for the SMME to do business.

Regarding business training and upskilling of the entrepreneur and business managers involved in the SMME sector, Brijlal et al. (2013), Chimucheka (2013) and Jere et al. (2015) agree that the skills and levels of training of entrepreneurs and business managers present a major challenge in ensuring the growth of the South African SMME sector. Jere et al. (2015) specifically indicates that deficiencies in training and skills levels have been identified in the areas of business management, strategic management, and marketing management. These skills deficiencies negatively affect the decision-making of the entrepreneur (Prinsloo, 2015; Bushe, 2019), thus the need for entrepreneurial coaching as an intervention to upskill entrepreneurs.

2.7 Entrepreneurs' Decision-Making and Coaching

The decision-making of an entrepreneur determines the success or failure of a business venture. Furthermore, the decisions of an entrepreneur are very often dependent on the situation in which the business finds itself. Therefore, decisions are often made to ensure growth or even the survival of a business (Scaringella & Radziwon, 2018). For an entrepreneur to make a decision that will add value to the business and ensure growth, they need to have adequate knowledge, experience, and expertise (Scaringella & Radziwon, 2018). In the South African environment, the failure rate of entrepreneurial businesses is high. As discussed, there are various reasons for this, such as inadequate risk

management and low levels of management education (Smit & Watkins, 2012; Msimango-Galawe & Urban, 2019). Considering the failure rate of SMMEs, decision-making is critical and has led to the formulation of Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1

H1: Decision-making positively impacts the growth of SMMEs.

Scaringella and Radziwon (2018) claim that learning takes place during the decision-making process. For an entrepreneur to make an effective decision, knowledge gained has to be fused with experience and skill. Coaching is a process of co-creation of knowledge (Cox, 2015). Learning is facilitated through coaching and the self-efficacy of the coachee. The entrepreneur is thus empowered to improve decision-making (Crompton et al., 2012; Wiginton III & Cartwright, 2020). Learning takes place during coaching. As a result of this learning, the coachee achieves their goals. These goals entail decision-making and the learning facilitated through coaching aids in this regard. This led to the formulation of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

In the coaching process, the coach and coachee co-construct knowledge, awareness is enhanced, and biases are uncovered, thereby facilitating learning (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). This learning can result in transformation and increased performance (Bachkirova et al., 2010).

Proposition 1

P1: The way in which entrepreneurs make decisions improves after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention.

Entrepreneurial coaching improves the decision-making and self-efficacy of an entrepreneur (Crompton, 2012; Wiginton III & Cartwright, 2020; Kotte et al., 2021). This translates to growth of the business. The proposition is that

decision-making strategy/processes improve after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention, leading to improved business growth.

2.8 Conceptual Framework and Formulated Hypotheses

The conceptual framework illustrated in the figure below indicates that the goal of business is growth. In the pursuit of this business growth, decisions are of paramount importance. Decision-making can make the difference between achieving growth or failure. The model indicates that as an intervention, entrepreneurial coaching has a positive impact on business decisions. As indicated by the hypotheses, these decisions will impact business growth positively.

Conceptual Framework
The perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching in the decision -making of entrepreneurs within South African SMMEs

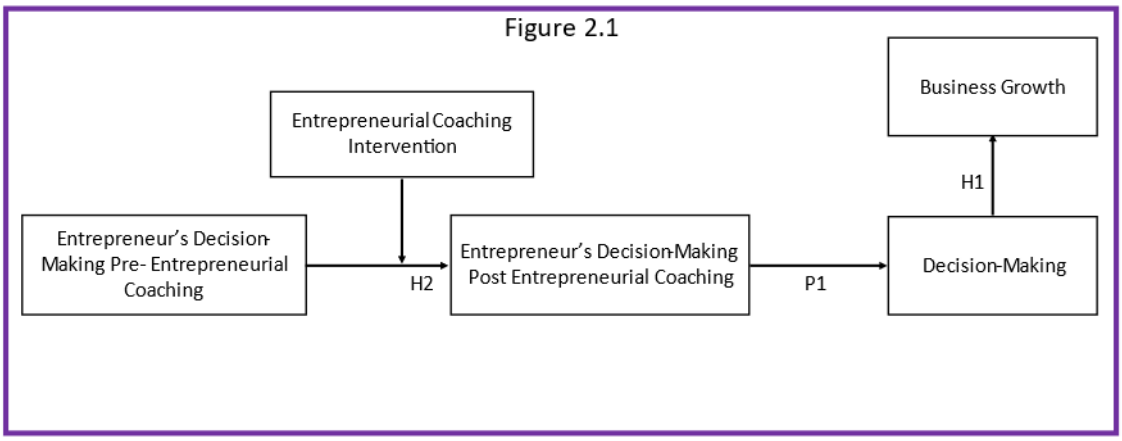


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own construction based on Crompton (2012)

2.9 Conclusion

The chapter presents various elements that are needed for a coaching engagement to be successful and the learning theories that supports coaching. The definitions relevant to this study were tabled, as well as background to entrepreneurial coaching in South Africa. The chapter culminated in the

formulation of the hypotheses and a proposition. At the end of the chapter, the conceptual framework was established, which provides direction for the research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the approach, design, and methodology of the research. A mixed method action research study was undertaken. The sections below describe the approach to the research, the paradigm, and the research design. The sample, data collection methods, and data analysis are presented. The chapter concludes with the validity and reliability of the study and a description of the trustworthiness of the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Research Approach

The research utilised quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a sequential mixed method approach. These approaches helped to address the research objective effectively.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), an approach to research involves philosophical assumptions and the methodologies to be followed. The mixed method approach combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research approach from a quantitative perspective was deductive. The collected data from the questionnaire was analysed and conclusions were deduced through the employment of statistical methods (Creamer, 2018).

The research approach from a qualitative perspective involved an explanatory approach (Creamer, 2018). During this phase of the research the coachee's decision-making before and after the entrepreneurial coaching was assessed and explained. From a qualitative perspective inferences were drawn (Creamer, 2018).

During the mixed method the deduction and inferences were combined to provide a holistic picture of the data collected in each phase of the research (Creamer, 2018). This picture allowed for the conclusions and recommendations to be derived (Creamer, 2018).

Creswell & Creswell (2017) define paradigms as beliefs that inform the way we view the world. Paradigms, according to Creswell and Creswell (2017) and Msimango-Galawe and Urban (2019), are a set of beliefs or world views that guide the researcher's decision-making and actions. During this research a pragmatist approach was adopted. The pragmatist position, according to Cameron (2009), is a practical, middle ground approach that is most suitable for a mixed method research. This approach allowed for the best gains from both quantitative and qualitative data in the active research engagement (Cameron, 2009; Goldkuhl, 2012).

The researcher also adopted a post-positivist paradigm in which existing knowledge was tested by more than one method, and which aimed to be independent and objective (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In that way, the validity and credibility of the research were furthered.

Participative action research was employed during the qualitative section through a coaching intervention in which the researcher and the participant were both involved in the research. The solution to the problem is co-constructed and the implementation is immediate once the benefit has been identified (Stringer, 2013). The process is rapidly concluded because the participant is active in the co-construction of learning (Stringer, 2013).

3.3 Research Design

To analyse the perceived impact that entrepreneurial coaching has on the decision-making of entrepreneurs, the research followed an explanatory mixed method design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This design entailed the collection of quantitative data which was followed by the collection of qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The qualitative phase of the data was collected through an action research intervention where entrepreneurial coaching was

undertaken, and through an interview conducted after the coaching. The data collected assessed the entrepreneur's decision-making before and after the entrepreneurial coaching.

The design and approach to the research project was, to a great extent, more aligned to this longitudinal research in that the population were engaged at various points in time, especially regarding the sample to be coached. According to Creswell (2018), in a longitudinal study, as this research was, data is collected over time, with various engagements with the selected sample. In contrast, a cross-sectional study is a snapshot of a single engagement with the selected sample (Field, 2013).

The quantitative data were collected initially by utilising a survey questionnaire that was administered in South Africa. The outcome of the survey questionnaire served as the starting point for qualitative research. The qualitative research was conducted by using a participatory action research intervention in which the sample was selected from the output of the preceding quantitative survey. This sample of participants was then coached, and results analysed. Semi-structured interviews followed the coaching sessions. The results of the survey questionnaire (quantitative research), the coaching intervention and the interviews (qualitative research) were compared and analysed to answer the research questions. The data collected during the quantitative survey was analysed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The coaching session and the semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, with the consent of the participants, and the transcripts were analysed by thematic analysis.

3.4 Population and Sample

The research only focused on the Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) which form part of the business community in South Africa. The SMMEs that participated in this research had a turnover of between R200,000 and R12 million. They employed a minimum of one to five people and a maximum of 200 people. The businesses had to be registered in South Africa.

The entrepreneurs who participated had to be able to speak, read and write in English. The entrepreneurs had to have access to a telephone or cell phone and email.

3.4.1 Sample and sampling method

Probability sampling was used to select participants for the quantitative survey which followed the criteria set out in the population and sample above (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Fowler Jr, 2013). From a qualitative perspective, purposive sampling was applied (Rudestam & Newton, 2014). According to purposive sampling, the selection was based on predetermined characteristics. The participants for the qualitative study needed to indicate that they had not been coached before. They confirmed that they were willing to participate in coaching.

There is no consensus in the literature regarding what constitutes an adequate research sample (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Fowler Jr, 2013). According to Carmichael and Cunningham (2017) sample sizes could vary from between 6 and 7. The guiding principle to sample sizes in a qualitative study should be the deriving of meaning full data (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). According to Kuzel (1992) adequate sample size would be between 20 to 35, differing with Carmichael and Cunningham (2017). Marshall, Cardon and Poddar (2013) presents the view that sample size is not important and the saturation during a qualitative study should be the guideline for sample size. For the quantitative phase, a sample of 148 participants responded and for the qualitative phase, a sample of seven participants indicated willingness to participate in the next phase which was qualitative, and they were then invited to participate. During the qualitative phase of the research saturation was reached at participant number 4. The sample was confined to the Gauteng region to save cost and time.

3.5 The Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a combination of a survey questionnaire for the quantitative phase, and a participatory action research intervention

through coaching and semi-structured interviews for the qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The questionnaire was distributed via Qualtrics, after which all responses were collected. The questionnaire was designed to determine how entrepreneurs make decisions. This aimed mainly to address the hypotheses H1 and H2 that had been developed, and the research questions 1, 2 and 3. A nominal and ordinal Likert scale was used in which a statement was made, and the participants indicated their levels of agreement or disagreement. The main aim was to determine how entrepreneurs make decisions and the impact of those decisions on the success of the business. The outcome of the questionnaire was used as the input to the action research engagement. The questionnaire used was based on an instrument used in previous research, using a Likert scale to measure statements about the research questions (Crompton & Smyrnios, 2012). The Likert scale was set from 1 to 7, where 1 meant that the respondent least agreed with the statement made and 7 meant that the respondent strongly agreed (Van Zyl, 2014). The Likert scale was selected because it is less time-consuming, and it is simple to follow (Van Zyl, 2014).

The questionnaire was adapted to assess how the entrepreneurs' made decisions and what impact those decisions had on their business. In line with the literature, the questionnaire also investigated whether the experience and education of the entrepreneurs had any bearing on their decision-making (Dew et al., 2009; Msimango-Galawe & Urban, 2019).

The qualitative phase was delivered through participatory action research, and a coaching intervention using the guideline of the GROW method (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). In this method, the G represents the goal setting phase. The R stands for reality. In this phase, the realistic nature of set goals was tested and refined. The O stands for options that were considered in order to achieve the goals. Finally, the W stands for the way forward, be it a date, time and/or venue for the next session or the milestones to be measured regarding goal achievement, or the close-out of the coaching process (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

It was difficult to predict how the coaching sessions would unfold, so a degree of flexibility was required during the coaching process (Peltier, 2011; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). An interview was conducted with the participants at the end of the coaching intervention and results were transcribed and analysed (Tracy, 2019).The complete transcripts of the coaching interviews were reviewed and compared to the recordings that were made of the coaching intervention. This ensured the accuracy of the information captured during the action research and qualitative phase (Springer, 2013).

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

Initially, data for quantitative research was collected through the distribution of the survey questionnaire. These questionnaires were distributed by email via Qualtrics, which ensured that the result of distribution was maximised. This saved time and cost (Fowler Jr, 2013).

In the second phase, in the qualitative section, data were collected during the coaching interventions and the interviews, at the end. All information collected in the data collection phase was securely stored and archived after the completion of the research. All participants consented to the process, and they were assured that the information was for educational purposes only (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Figure 3.1 below indicates how data were collected and the different phases of the research:

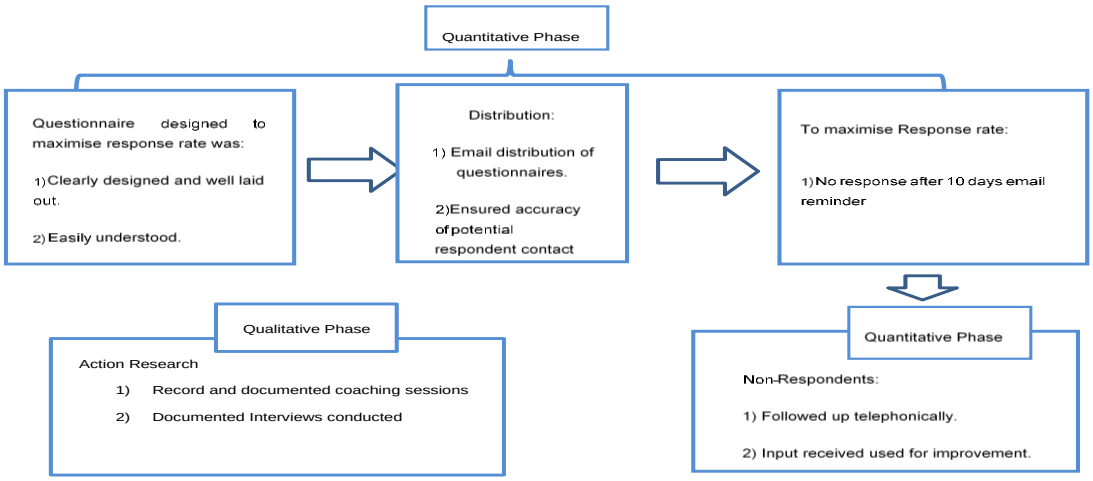


Figure 3.1 Research Process

Source: Creswell & Creswell (2017)

3.6.1 Quantitative data collection method

During the quantitative phase, primary data were collected by utilising a quantitative survey questionnaire. The data were analysed through grouping and descriptive means, with inferential statistics to deduct conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Van Zyl, 2014). The survey questionnaire was distributed to numerous potential participants across South Africa and 148 responses were received. The survey was launched on 1 March 2021 and was closed on 21 July 2021. In line with best practise, a follow-up reminder was sent to all potential participants on a bi-monthly basis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The selection of the potential respondents was strictly guided by the criteria established in the population selection, the SMMEs mentioned above. Challenges were experienced as the survey period coincided with the various stages of lockdown that occurred due to Covid-19 in South Africa. The consequences of lockdown meant that business could not be conducted as usual. This had a devastating effect, particularly in the SMME sector, and some had to close down (Jackson, 2020). The survey was conducted before the qualitative intervention (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.6.2 Qualitative data collection method

In the action research intervention, the Look, Think and Act (LTA) approach, originated by Stringer (2013), was used. This method was followed as it is aligned to the GROW model that that was implemented in the coaching (Stringer, 2013; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). This approach also governed how the data were collected and processed. During the Look phase, data related to addressing the research question was collected and documented. The data aided in describing and defining the research question at hand (Springer, 2013). This stage was closely linked and similar to the Goal identification and the Reality testing of the goal in the GROW model (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018; Stringer, 2013).

The next phase of data collection and processing used the Think phase, where data were explored, analysed, interpreted, and explained (Springer, 2013). This

phase links to the Option and the Way forward in the GROW model and is also relevant to the overall analysis of the data (Stringer, 2013; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018).

The next phase of the data collection and processing was the Act phase, where the implementation and future action to be taken was defined. This depended on the data collected and analysed.

Data collected during the coaching intervention was recorded. The coaching session was transcribed from the recordings, which ensured accuracy (Tracy, 2019). Consent was obtained before recording coaching sessions and all ethical protocols were followed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews followed the coaching process. The interviews were designed to determine whether there was a change in the decision-making before and after the coaching intervention. As indicated in the literature, coaching is the process of co-constructing knowledge (Kilburg, 2007; Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). The approach to the interview was like the coaching intervention, with a high degree of flexibility. The main reason for this approach was to allow for the collection of rich insightful data (Creswell, 2018). As a result of Covid-19 restrictions, all coaching interventions, the interviews, and the concluding procedures were conducted via WhatsApp, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. As mentioned, face to face engagement was not possible as a result of Covid-19 regulations (Jackson, 2020). The interviews and the transcribed coaching session notes ensured the trustworthiness of the qualitative intervention and ensured the reduction of the researcher's influence on the outcomes (Tracy, 2010; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Tracy, 2019).

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

To aid and simplify the interpretation process, all data collected from the quantitative and the qualitative research was first coded. This process was clearly defined (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Van Zyl, 2014).

3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data, as mentioned previously, was distributed, and collected via Qualtrics. The collected data were then exported into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in which the analysis was performed. The data were then coded within this package.

The first step in the analysis was to employ descriptive statistics which, together with the coding, enabled the identification of characteristic scoring of all the data collected. In line with the survey questionnaire, multiple data were collected from the entrepreneurs surveyed. These are referred to as data points (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Van Zyl, 2014).

The demographic data were first analysed and presented to provide insights regarding the educational level of individuals and their background. In line with the original plan the respondents were from across South Africa. The first part of the questionnaire received a good response rate and the data collected displayed adequate numbers to draw a meaningful conclusion (Field, 2013). The second part of the questionnaire, on the other hand, attracted a low level of responses, which did not allow for a meaningful conclusion. Possible reasons for this are presented in the Findings section of this research.

Descriptive Statistics: After coding, the data points were plotted on a graph known as a histogram to obtain a picture and to determine the distribution scoring of the data collected, which also indicated the characteristics of the collected data (Van Zyl, 2014). Once the characteristic scoring was determined, the data were organised to allow for closer analysis to determine which characteristics were closely linked or related (Van Zyl, 2014). According to Field (2013), a graph gives the reader the opportunity to think about the information being presented and presents a picture of it. This picture aided in the understanding of the research findings and data presentation (Field, 2013).

Correlational Analysis: To assess how these characteristics are linked or related to the stated hypotheses of the study, inferential statistics were employed (Van Zyl, 2014). To this end, the relationship of the dependent variables to the

independent variables was tested and presented when hypotheses were addressed. This provided clarity regarding the research questions (Field, 2013). Correlational analysis provided a natural view of the variables as these were not adjusted. The process ensured that a true picture of the collected data was presented (Field, 2013). This analysis also contributed to the credibility and validity of the research.

3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis

The data were collected in the action research, as well as the interview, by recording and transcribing all sessions. The transcripts were analysed and interpreted through a thematic analysis process. Each transcript and recording were reviewed and analysed individually. This process is referred to by Stringer (2013) as the analysis and distillation process, or the Look phase. This was to avoid confusion and to identify the main codes in the transcripts (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). Before coding was applied, the researcher identified key experiences and transformational events for coding (Stringer, 2013). The selected experiences and transformational events were then analysed and categorised through a process of consultation with all stakeholders. Codes were then allocated (Stringer, 2013).

These codes were further refined through questioning what they meant and what their impact was (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). The codes were then categorised and grouped to form themes. The themes were subjected to the same questioning method mentioned above. This is referred to be as the Think and Act phase (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017; Stringer, 2013).

It was acknowledged that by participating in the action research, the researcher formed part of the process. It is important to be aware of this to avoid bias during analysis and interpretation (Avison et al., 1999; Hughes & Albertyn, 2017).

As in the action research process, data were collected from the interview, which followed the coaching intervention. The interviews and the coaching sessions were recorded, and transcripts were produced from the recordings. These were

also analysed using thematic content analysis, and themes were also identified and presented.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

1. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions and the turbulent business environment, there was a limited or reduced response rate to the quantitative questionnaire. Various businesses surveyed indicated that some businesses had closed down. This also affected participation in the action research negatively.

2. Because of limited resources and to reduce costs, the qualitative and action research portions of the research were confined to the Gauteng region. The result is a small sample that participated in this portion of the study. The coaching interventions were not conducted face to face due to restrictions imposed by government as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. The process and results of coaching are relatively unpredictable as they are driven by the needs of the coachee, and the process was coachee centred.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

According to Fowler Jr (2013), the extent to which the outcome of a study conforms to the expectations of the researcher is a measure of the study's validity. Simply explained, it depends on whether the research achieves its intended purpose. According to Reid (2012), validity is the ability of the design of the research to achieve the objective of the research question, while reliability refers to the consistency of the research. To ensure the internal validity, the researcher needs to ensure that the design of the research and the intended purpose are aligned (Golafshani, 2003; Reid, 2012). According to Van Zyl (2014), reliability is closely linked and similar to repeatability. The concept of reliability is also closely linked to generalisability, meaning that under the same

conditions, when repeating the study, results should be the same, and therefore repeatable (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010; Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

A survey questionnaire was used in the quantitative section of the research to address the objectives of the study. The validity refers to the accuracy of the research. The instruments and the design aim to achieve the objective of the research. Furthermore, the reliability of the research is also important as it ensures that the research is repeatable and generalisable. The paramount objective of ensuring validity and reliability was to eliminate and reduce errors during measurement (Msimango-Galawe & Urban, 2019).

3.9.1 Reliability

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017) and Msimango-Galawe and Urban (2019), reliability refers to the ability of the researcher to produce the same result if repeated under the same conditions. To ensure reliability, the questionnaire was based on an instrument used previously (Crompton, 2012; Field, 2013). According to Field (2013), reliability means that if the research is repeated under similar conditions, then the same results should be produced.

To minimise threats to reliability, the participants could familiarise themselves with the research between follow-ups and complete the questionnaire in their own time and at the own pace (Galawe, 2017). They were informed about the time they would need to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also kept concise and to the point.

Further threats to reliability identified by Galawe (2017) were in the area of data processing. To minimise these threats, data were collected in Qualtrics and exported directly to SPSS. The codes were kept close to the questions which the participants responded to.

3.9.2 Validity

In addressing the validity of the research through its design and nature, focus was on aspects of external and internal validity.

3.9.3 External validity

External validity means that the research can be generalised to the defined population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Msimango-Galawe & Urban, 2019). When applied elsewhere, and following the criteria laid down, the results should be similar (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this research, external validity was ensured through reliability, ensuring the accuracy of the design and instrument used, and the diversity of the sample.

3.9.4 Internal validity

Internal validity refers to the accuracy of the research instrument, whether the quantitative survey delivers what it was designed for, and if it achieves the objectives of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The quantitative survey was designed to address the research questions. This instrument was refined and honed during the pilot testing phase to ensure aspects like reliability and external validity. The random selection of participants, as well as a sample that was as large as possible also ensured that internal validity was improved (Msimango-Galawe & Urban, 2019).

3.9.5 Construct validity

In ensuring construct validity, careful attention was paid to the formulation and design of the questionnaire that was used and the elements that it sought to address. The questionnaire was designed to gain clarity around decision-making.

3.9.6 Exploratory factor analysis

To ensure further validity and reliability, Exploratory Factor Analysis was also employed. In Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), similar factors of the data were grouped together and an eigen value was calculated via SPSS. An eigen value is a statistical calculated value which is used in factor analysis. It indicates whether a factor is considered or not. Factors with a value greater than 1.0 were considered. An interpretation was then made according to the data analysed

regarding the hypotheses, in addressing the research questions (Watkins, 2018).

3.10 Trustworthiness and Research Rigour

In qualitative research, validity and reliability refer to issues of transferability, dependability, credibility, and confirmability. Bloomberg and Volpe (2018) refer to the concept of transferability as the extent to which a study can be applied to another context. Morse (2015) relates three concepts in her definition, namely, transferability, dependability, and credibility. Tracy (2019) indicates that transferability is the qualitative equivalent of generalisability (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

3.10.1 Transferability

To ensure external validity and to ensure that the results were transferable, attention was paid to defining and clearly articulating the criteria for participation in the research (Curran & Wirth, 2004; Andrade, 2018). Furthermore, the questionnaire was rigorously tested, re-tested and improved during the pilot study phase (Fowler Jr, 2013). Finally, the study was conducted across industry sectors to minimise selection biases (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010; Fowler JR, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.10.2 Credibility

To ensure internal validity of the study, careful attention was paid to the objectives of the study and instruments were aligned accordingly. This ensured internal validity and credibility (Andrade, 2018; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Furthermore, all biases were identified and reduced to a minimum. Examples of these biases could be selection biases, channelling biases, interviewers' biases, chronological biases, recall biases and transfer biases (Olteanu, Castillo, Diaz, & Kiciman, 2019). From an action research perspective, the researcher acted in the role of facilitator and not expert (Stringer, 2007). In acting in this manner, the researcher allowed the collection of credible data and the minimising of biases (Stringer, 2007).

3.10.3 Dependability

Reliability and dependability of the study were ensured through the accurate definition and selection of the participating population as well as the rigorous refinement of the instruments used (Rudestam & Newton, 2014; Tracy, 2019). See definitions above in paragraph 3.9. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2018), reliability in quantitative research is the same as dependability in qualitative research.

3.10.4 Objectivity and confirmability

The objectivity or confirmability of the study was increased through the deliberate reduction of biases and by ensuring that the data collected was accurately recorded. Aspects such as observer biases were reduced (Fowler Jr, 2013; Msimango & Urban, 2019).

3.10.5 Research rigour

In furthering research rigour, the approach and delivery of the research project was designed and executed to ensure a pragmatic approach, which positioned the research favourably (Porter, 2007). Furthermore, research rigour was promoted in that the data presentation was delivered as simply as possible. In addition, validity and reliability were ensured (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Data collection was started after approval from the University of the Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee. During the research process, the researcher ensured transparency of communication around the process to be followed (Tracy, 2019). The participants were reassured that they were free to participate or to decline without penalty. They were informed that there was no payment or cost to them for participation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). The participants were informed that all collected data would be securely stored and would remain confidential. No harm or adverse consequences would result from their participation. The information collected would be used in the strictest of confidentiality for educational purposes only (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). During

the coaching and the interviews, permission was obtained verbally in the first session to record sessions. Subsequently this was confirmed at each session.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter described the approach, design, paradigms, and methodology that were followed during the data collection and analysis. Sample selection and the instruments used to collect data were described. The research design was presented and the process that was followed described to ensure that the outcome of the research was trustworthy, valid, and reliable.

This chapter described how the qualitative and the quantitative elements of the study were handled. The quantitative aspect used a survey questionnaire. That was followed by the qualitative aspects, coaching, action research and semi-structured interviews. Methods to maintain validity and research rigour were maintained and assured.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The study undertaken was a mixed method sequential research. The results pertaining to the quantitative survey were presented first, followed by the findings of the action research and the qualitative interviews. This chapter presents the raw results and findings only. They were discussed and interpreted in Chapter 5 (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

4.2 Data Screening

This section focuses on how data were analysed, screened, and handled. The questionnaire used to collect data were compiled in Qualtrics and all quantitative data were collected using this platform. After the quantitative data were collected, they were exported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This package was used to analyse data collected from the questionnaire; version 27 (V27/0) was used. The package was selected for its ease of use and did not require a high degree of skill (Field, 2013).

The qualitative data were collected during the coaching engagements and the semi-structured interviews that followed. In this phase, due to the manner in which it was conducted, there were no missing data. The data in this phase were handled manually. Transcriptions of the coaching session and the semi-structured interviews were analysed and presented.

The instrument used to gather data was an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in a manner that discouraged the omission of responses. During completion, however, some participants opted to complete only certain sections of the questionnaire, hence the missing responses. Online self-completed questionnaires present various challenges, which can contribute to incomplete questionnaires (Field, 2013). Questions may be misinterpreted,

too long or too sensitive (Field, 2013). Another consideration was the period in which the research was conducted, which was during the Covid-19 pandemic when entrepreneurs went through a difficult time due to lockdown and business pressures (Lose & Kapondoro, 2020). This could have been a contributory factor regarding the missing responses.

As indicated above, there are various reasons for missing data pertaining to questionnaires administered online. The missing data refers mainly to the incomplete questionnaires. The initial approach was to delete incomplete responses and, in some instances, replace missing values (Galawe, 2017; Rubin, 1976). Missing values were replaced through the statistical mean in SPSS (Cleff, 2019). This step was performed whilst ensuring that an adequate sample size of more than 30 responses was retained (Field, 2013).

4.2.1 The questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to collect data for three categories. The first category collected was demographic and business data, the second category collected data around the entrepreneurs' decision-making approach, and the third category collected data pertaining to the respondents' exposure to coaching. The questionnaire was part of the quantitative phase of the research. The respondents who were not exposed to coaching previously were afforded the opportunity to participate in the coaching intervention, which formed the qualitative phase of the research project.

After a sufficient number of responses had been received, the raw data were exported into SPSS, where the initial screening of data was performed. To ensure anonymity, all data containing details of respondents were omitted from the analysis. The data were then screened for errors, coding was performed, and completeness of the data were assessed.

In reviewing data after collection, it became apparent that there were areas of non-response. In the screening process, all questions to which there were no responses were excluded from the analysis process (Avison, Lau & Myers, 1999). This approach, according to Avison et al. (1999), impacts the analysis in

that it reduces the statistical power and the sample size to be used. To ensure the that statistical power of the analysed data was adequate, care was taken that the sample size did not fall below 30 respondents, as mentioned in the introduction (Field, 2013).

1) Regarding the responses, missing data were deleted, following a pairwise deletion. This approach was followed to allow for the consideration of all responses, with the strategy of maintaining a minimum response rate of 30 responses. If a participant responded to phase one and two, but not three, the responses for phases one and two were considered, and the non-responses for phase three were disregarded or deleted. The advantage of this approach was that it allowed for the consideration of a comprehensive response rate, it minimised the reduction of statistical power, and it was the best approach, considering the design of the questionnaire, where data were collected in phases.

2) Missing data were handled in two phases. During the first phase, certain incomplete questions were deleted. During the second phase, data were deleted using the pairwise method within SPSS. At the end of these phases, 10% of missing data still remained and these were addressed through the statistical mean process in SPSS (Rubin, 1976).

3) After deletion of the unanswered questions, the sample that remained amounted to 98. There were still missing responses in the remaining sample. These missing values were replaced, using the expectation maximisation function within SPSS. This method uses statistical means to predict and insert the most likely response for all the remaining missing responses (Moon, 1996).

4.3 Sample Characteristics

The information presented below pertains to the sample characteristics. The first column relates to the question that was responded to. The second column

relates to the number of respondents broken down into the questions that received responses. The third column relates to the percentage that the response per question accounts for. The fourth column relates to the valid response expressed in a percentage. The final column relates to the cumulative percentage that the response accounts for.

4.3.1 Consent

Of the 148 respondents to the questionnaire, 98% provided consent in favour of the completion of the questionnaire and 2% did not.

Table 4.1 Consent provided

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, I do consent	145	98.0	98.0	98.0
	No, I do not consent	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	148	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in table 4.1 above, a total of 148 company representatives participated in the research. Questionnaires were distributed within the borders of South Africa and a list of participants were sourced through the researcher's contacts and various social media platforms.

The first area of interest that was reviewed was the position which the respondents held within the organisation. Table 4.2 below indicates the respondent's position.

4.3.2 Position

Table 4.2: Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	CEO	39	26.4	40.2	40.2
	Shareholder	8	5.4	8.2	48.5
	Director	41	27.7	42.3	90.7
	General Manager	2	1.4	2.1	92.8
	Manager	7	4.7	7.2	100.0
	Total	97	65.5	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

As indicated in table 4.2 of the overall respondents 27.7% were Directors, 26.4% were CEOs followed by 5.4%, representing Shareholders in the business, 4.7% were Managers and 1.4% were General Managers. The total percentage that responded to this question was 65.5%, while 34.5% did not indicate the position that they held within the organisation. The questionnaires were distributed via email. It is possible that the response to the questionnaire could have been delegated to a subordinate in the organisation due to time constraints therefore the researcher had no influence over the respondents' position in the organisation. It is therefore accepted that each of the respondents to the research was in a decision-making capacity.

The next area of interest was the ages of the respondents and the number of years that the enterprises had been in business. Table numbers 4.3 and 4.4 refer.

4.3.3 Age distribution

Table 4.3: Age distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 25	3	2.0	3.1	3.1
	26 - 45	35	23.6	36.5	39.6
	46 - 65	54	36.5	56.3	95.8
	older than 65	4	2.7	4.2	100.0
	Total	96	64.9	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

Table 4.3 indicated that most respondents were between the ages of 46 and 65 years old. This age group accounted for 36.5% of the total responses. This group was followed by groups aged between 26 and 45 years (23.6% of all responses), followed by 2.7%: those older than 65, and finally, 18- to 25-year-olds, who accounted for 2.0% of total responses.

4.3.4 Year business was established

Table 4.4: Year enterprise was established

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1990 - 1995	12	8.1	12.6	12.6
	1996 - 2001	12	8.1	12.6	25.3
	2002 - 2007	19	12.8	20.0	45.3
	2008 - 2013	21	14.2	22.1	67.4
	2014 - 2019	27	18.2	28.4	95.8

	2020	4	2.7	4.2	100.0
	Total	95	64.2	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

In considering how long the organisations had been established, 64.2% of respondents answered this question, and 35.8% declined to answer it.

1. The responses varied. Most companies were formed between the years 2014 and 2019, which accounted for 18.2% of valid responses, followed by 2008 to 2013, which accounted for 14.2%.

2. This was followed by 2002 to 2007, which accounted for 12.8%, and 1990 to 1995 and 1996 to 2001 both accounted for 8.1%. Finally, 2020 accounted for 2.7% of valid responses.

3. Most of the companies which responded to this question were established between 2002 and 2019. These responses accounted for 45.2% of the overall valid responses.

In addition to the number of years in business, other areas of interest were the gender of the people running these business, their academic qualifications, the industry in which the business operated, the number of people employed, the revenue they generated, the customers they serviced, and the reasons their businesses grew.

4.3.5 Gender of respondents

Table 4.5: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	60	40.5	61.9	61.9
	Female	37	25.0	38.1	100.0
	Total	97	65.5	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

Of the respondents, 40.5% were male and 25.0% were female.

4.3.6 Highest academic qualification

Table 4.6: The highest academic qualification of the CEO

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than Matric	1	.7	1.0	1.0
	Matric	25	16.9	25.8	26.8
	Undergrad Degree	25	16.9	25.8	52.6
	MBA/ Masters	22	14.9	22.7	75.3
	PHD or Doctorate	2	1.4	2.1	77.3
	Other	22	14.9	22.7	100.0
	Total	97	65.5	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

Most of the respondents indicated that they had a matric qualification, undergraduate or master's degrees. These respondents accounted for 48.7%. The rest represented 14.9% had other qualification, 1.4% had a doctorate and 0.7% had less than matric.

4.3.7 Industry of operation

Table 4.7: Industry of operation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3	2.0	3.2	3.2
	Mining	5	3.4	5.3	8.4
	Manufacturing	13	8.8	13.7	22.1
	Engineering and Construction	13	8.8	13.7	35.8
	Wholesale Trade	2	1.4	2.1	37.9
	Retail Trade	10	6.8	10.5	48.4
	Bed and Breakfast, Cafe, Restaurant	6	4.1	6.3	54.7
	Information Technology	4	2.7	4.2	58.9
	Communications, Public Relations, Media	5	3.4	5.3	64.2
	Finance and Insurance	9	6.1	9.5	73.7
	Real estate, Property and Business Services	7	4.7	7.4	81.1
	Education	6	4.1	6.3	87.4
	Cultural and Recreational	3	2.0	3.2	90.5
	Personal and Other Services	9	6.1	9.5	100.0

	Total	95	64.2	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

The largest number of respondents were in the Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction industries where each accounted for 8.8% of responses. These were followed by the Retail sector, which accounted for 6.8% of responses. This sector was followed by Finance and Insurance and the Personal and Other Services, which accounted for 6.1% each. The other significant responses involved respondents from Real Estate, Property and Business Services at 4.7% and the Education Sector at 4.1%. The remaining sectors amounted to response rates below 4.0%.

4.3.8 Number of people employed

Table 4.8: People employed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-20	72	48.6	74.2	74.2
	21-40	16	10.8	16.5	90.7
	41-60	4	2.7	4.1	94.8
	61-80	2	1.4	2.1	96.9
	81-100	2	1.4	2.1	99.0
	above 120	1	.7	1.0	100.0
	Total	97	65.5	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

Of the respondents, 48.6% employed one to 20 people, 10.8% employed 21 to 40 people, 2.7% employed 41 to 60 people, 1.4% employed 61 to 80 people;

1.4% also employed 81 to 100 people and 0.7% employed more than 120 people.

4.3.9.a Gross revenue over the past three years (2017)

Table 4.9a: Gross revenue 2018

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	R1000.00 - R200 000.00	33	22.3	33.0	33.0
	R 201 000.00 - R 5 million	40	27.0	40.0	73.0
	R 5 million - R 12 million	27	18.2	27.0	100.0
	Total	100	67.6	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

In 2017, 22.3% of respondents indicated revenue of between R100,000 and R200,000.00; 27.0% of respondents indicated revenue of between R201,000.00 and R5 million, and 18.2% of respondents indicated a revenue of between R5 million and R12 million.

4.3.9.b Gross revenue over the past three years (2019)

Table 4.9b: Gross revenue

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	R100,000 - R200,000	24	16.2	24.0	24.0
	R201,000 - R5 million	48	32.4	48.0	72.0
	R5 million - R12 million	28	18.9	28.0	100.0
	Total	100	67.6	100.0	

Total		148	100.0		

A total of 16.2% of the respondents indicated that they had a revenue of R100,000 to R200,000; 32.4% indicated that they had a revenue between R201,000 and R5 million, and 18.9% indicated that they had a revenue between R5 million and R12 million.

4.3.10 Customers serviced

Table 4.10a: Number of customers serviced 2017

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-20	38	25.7	40.9	40.9
	21 - 40	12	8.1	12.9	53.8
	41 - 60	7	4.7	7.5	61.3
	61-80	3	2.0	3.2	64.5
	81-100	2	1.4	2.2	66.7
	101-120	1	.7	1.1	67.7
	above 120	30	20.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	93	62.8	100.0	
Total		148	100.0		

The majority serviced 0 to 20 customers, followed by 21 to 40 customers serviced by 8.1% of respondents, 4.7% servicing 41 to 60 customers, 2.0% servicing 61 to 80 customers, 1.4% servicing 81 to 100 customers, 0.7% servicing 101 to 120 customers and 20.3% servicing more than 120 customers.

Table 4.10b: Number of customers service 2018

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-20	32	21.6	35.2	35.2
	21 - 40	14	9.5	15.4	50.5
	41 - 60	6	4.1	6.6	57.1
	61-80	4	2.7	4.4	61.5
	81-100	4	2.7	4.4	65.9
	101-120	1	.7	1.1	67.0
	above 120	30	20.3	33.0	100.0
	Total	91	61.5	100.0	

Table 4.10b shows a total of 21.6% of respondents serviced 0 to 20 customers, 9.5% who serviced 21 to 40 customers, 4.1% who serviced 41 to 60 customers, 2.7% which serviced 61 to 80 customers, also 2.7% which serviced 81 to 100 customers, 0.7% serviced 101 to 120 customers and lastly 20.3% of respondents serviced more than 120 customers.

Table 4.10c: Number of customers serviced 2019

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-20	31	20.9	32.6	32.6
	21 - 40	14	9.5	14.7	47.4
	41 - 60	8	5.4	8.4	55.8
	61-80	3	2.0	3.2	58.9
	81-100	3	2.0	3.2	62.1

	101-120	2	1.4	2.1	64.2
	above 120	34	23.0	35.8	100.0
	Total	95	64.2	100.0	

The majority serviced 0 to 20 customers, followed 21 to 40 customers serviced by 9.5% of respondents, 5.4% servicing 41 to 60 customers, 2.0% servicing 61 to 80 customers, 2.0% servicing 81 to 100 customers, 1.4% servicing 101 to 120 customers and 23.0% servicing more than 120 customers.

4.4 Validity of Constructs – Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the SPSS platform. During the process, the reliability of the scales utilised was tested as well to determine factors and their loading. The relationship between factors and their variables was also determined. Principle axis factoring was chosen because it is robust (Grieder & Steiner, 2021). Promax was the rotation method employed for the study being conducted (Field, 2013). The variances were extracted together with a screen plot. The pattern matrix, with Kaiser normalising, was selected over the structured matrix as it best explained factors that were identified (Field, 2013).

This chapter has presented the KMO scoring, and the total variances of constructs being measured, which clearly indicates the factors that were identified. Further, to provide clarity, a screen plot was presented, followed by the pattern matrix, which is indicative of the sample adequacy (Field, 2013). In addition, the chapter contains three subsections within which the identified factors are explained. These are:

1) Factor 1: Business Growth
2) Factor 2: Business Decision–Product Offering
3) Factor 3: Business Decision–Market Expansion

Table 4.11: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.675
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	621.723
	df	91
	Sig.	.000

Considering overall sampling adequacy, a KMO test was applied. The results indicated a KMO score of 0.675. According to Field (2013), the cut off for adequacy is set at 0.5. Considering the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, a score of .000 was obtained for the significance, which is acceptable as p< 0.005 (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Table 4.12: Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	4.370	31.215	31.215	3.925	28.039	28.039	3.782
2	2.752	19.656	50.871	2.313	16.522	44.561	2.335
3	1.602	11.440	62.310	1.239	8.851	53.412	2.108
4	1.078	7.697	70.008				
5	.992	7.084	77.091				
6	.720	5.143	82.234				
7	.590	4.217	86.451				

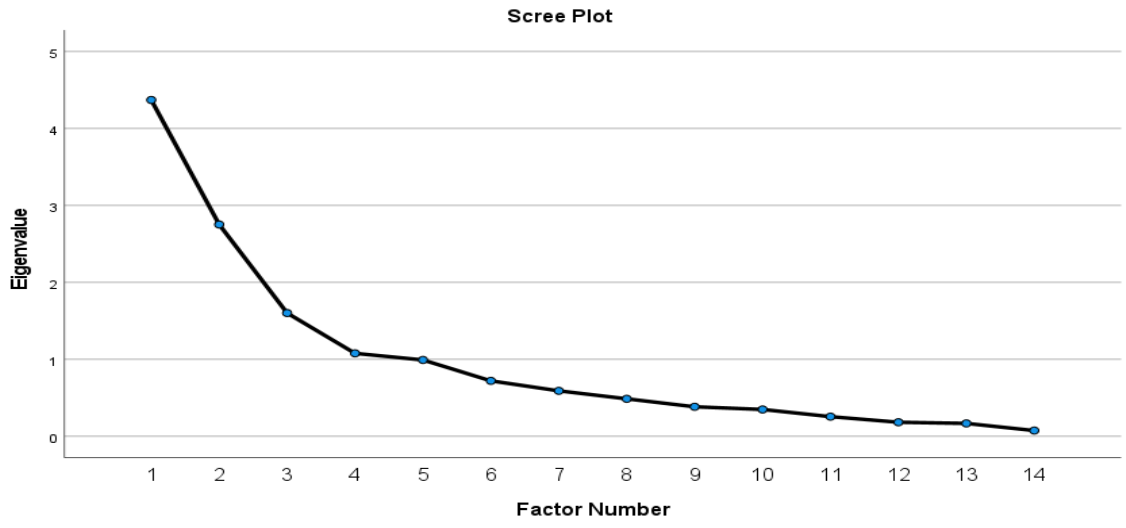
8	.487	3.476	89.927				
9	.383	2.737	92.664				
10	.348	2.487	95.152				
11	.255	1.822	96.973				
12	.182	1.302	98.275				
13	.167	1.194	99.469				
14	.074	.531	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

In order to determine commonalities between variables, factor analysis was employed (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Table number 4.12 above indicates commonalities between variables 1, 2 and 3, which accounts for the extraction of three factors. There are three variables explained: one dependent variable and two independent variables.

Table 4.13: Screen Plot



The interpretation of the screen plot also supports the extraction of three factors. The fourth factor is borderline when an Eigen value of 1 is applied as the cut off. As the commonality of factor 4 was not strong, it was not considered going forward (Yong & Pearce, 2013).

Having extracted the three factors as indicated above, and considering the factorability of the three factors, the cut off was set at 0.4 and all items above this cut off were considered. The Pattern Matrix table 4.14 below indicates how the extracted factor loaded with the identified variables.

Factor 1, which was named Business Growth, is the dependent variable. It was measured together with all fourteen variables. The outcome after the measurement was that three factors were retained. The uses were as identified in the screen plot together with total variances measure. These resulted in an Eigen value greater than one and a factorability greater than 0.4.

Table 4.14: Pattern Matrix[a]

Factor Loading

Factor	Variable	Scoring
Business Growth Factor 1	BDMK	.537
	BDMR	.654
	DRCBMR	.704
	DRCBMK	.850
	DEXPMBEXP	.794
	PPBK	.568
	PPEXP	.708
Business Decision-Product Offering Factor 2	BDNTG	.475
	DEXPMBGF	.741
	PPBGF	.955
	PPPBMR_1R	.465
Business Decision-Market Expansion Factor 2	FSRCM	.587
	DRCMBMK	.880
	DRCBEM	.719

In consideration of the criteria tabled in 4.14 above, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed initially to obtain an output where the criteria were not applied. In the second phase, the criteria were applied, which resulted in the identification or the emergence of three factors. These three factors are Factor 1: Business Growth, Factor 2 Business Decision–Product Offering and Factor 3: Business Decision–Market Expansion.

When considering Business Growth in isolation, the case population of 98 participants and applying principle axis factoring with a Promax rotation, the factor loading produced seven items which supported Business Growth. These items were BDMR (Business Decision Based on Market Knowledge), BDMR (Business Decision Based on Market Research), DRCBMR (Decision to Remain in Current Market Based on Market Research), DRCBMK (Decision to Remain in Current Market Based on Market Knowledge), DEXPMBEXP (Decision to Expand Current Market Based on Experience in that market), PPBK (Product Price Base on Knowledge), and PPBEXP (Product Price Based on Experience).

These items produced a factor loading that ranged from .534 to .850 which was higher that the threshold of .4 set out in the evaluation criteria. Business Growth accounted for 31.215% of the total variance. It was concluded that the factor loading was significant at a value of p=<.001 (Field, 2013).

Factor 2 was identified as Business Decision-Product Offering and is one of the independent variables. The same measurement criteria used in factor 1 were applied to Business Decision-Product Offering and factoring obtained in the analysis was a scoring of .475 to .955. The results obtained during the analysis indicated that the factor loading was significant, as was the case with Business Growth. The items that contributed to the identification of Business Decision–Product Offering were BDNTG (Business Decision Informed by No Thought Given), DEXPMBGF (Decision to Expand Current Market Bases on Gut Feeling), PPBGF (Product Price Based on Gut Feeling) and PPBMR (Product Price Based on Market Research). This factor accounted for 19.656% of the

variances and cumulatively factor 1 and 2 accounted for 50.871% of the variances.

Factor 3 was identified as an independent variable and named Business Decision-Market Expansion. This factor also emerged through the loading of three items that obtained the required scoring that aligned with the set criteria of an Eigen value of 1 and a cut off factoring of .4. This factor, as with Factor 1 and 2 was also significant, with a scoring of p = <.001. The extraction method was also PAF and the rotation also Promax. The factoring of the items ranged from .587 to .880. The items were FSRCM (Future Sales Remain in Current Market), DRCMBMK (Decision to Remain in Current Market Based on Market Knowledge) and DRCBEM (Decision to Remain in Current Market Based on Experience. This factor accounts for 11.440% of variance and cumulatively with Factors 1, 2 and 3 accounted for 62.310% of variances.

4.5 Reliability of Scales

During the exploratory factor analysis, three factors were identified. In keeping with the principle of ensuring reliability of the research, the reliability of the scales used to measure these factors was tested through the measurement of the Cronbach Alpha scoring of each of the scales. Initially, the EFA was started with 21 factors or constructs. Seven were discarded in order to obtain the highest Cronbach Alpha value. Cronbach Alpha is a measure that indicates the reliability of the scales of a research instrument. The higher the Cronbach Alpha value, the higher the level of reliability of the scales of the research instrument. This translates to a higher reliability of the research (Cronbach, 1954). The reliability measurement per factor as indicated in table 4.32 below are Factor 1 Business Growth at .812, Factor 2 Business Decision-Product Offering at .761 and Factor 3 Business Decision-Market Expansion at .743.

Table 4.15: Reliability Statistics

Factor	Factor Label	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of items
Factor 1	Business Growth	.812	.820	6
Factor 2	Business Decision-Product Offering	.761	.761	4
Factor 3	Business Decision-Market Expansion	.743	.768	3

4.6 Correlational Analysis

As indicated in the table 4.16 below, there is a correlation between Business Growth and Business Decision-Market Expansion at a measure of 0.32. The threshold for a correlation is 0.3 (Nusair et al., 2010). The relationship between these is statistically insignificant at a value of ,377. For this relationship to be significant, a value of .001 and lower needs to be achieved (Field, 2013). There is a negative correlation between Business Growth and Business Decision-Product Offering at -0.415. This relationship is statistically significant at value lower that, 001, therefore meeting the criteria (Field, 2013).

According to the threshold criteria of 0.3, the correlation between Business Decision–Product Offering and Business Decision–Market Expansion is not acceptable, as it is below the threshold at 0.196 (Field, 2013). This means that both Business Decision–Product offering and Business Decision–Market Expansion correlated with Business Growth. As indicated, the dependent variable is Business Growth. The two independent variables are Business Decision-Product Offering and Business Decision–Market Expansion. The statement pertaining to the correlation between the dependent and independent

variables indicates that the independent variables support the dependent variable.

Table 4.16: Correlation Matrix

		BUSINESS GROWTH	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION
Pearson Correlation	BUSINESS GROWTH	1.000	-.415	.032
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	-.415	1.000	.196
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	.032	.196	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	BUSINESS GROWTH	.	.000	.377
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	.000	.	.026
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	.377	.026	.
N	BUSINESS GROWTH	98	98	98
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	98	98	98
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	98	98	98

4.7 Regression Assumptions

To ensure the credibility and validity of the research data collected, it was of utmost importance to screen and address the area where the data violated certain statistical assumptions. This impacted various facets or outcomes of the research in addition to the generalisability of the research (Berry, 1993). In the

process of ensuring credibility and validity of the data, the following was considered during the regression model as assumptions are not to be violated in the absence of outliers. The data were normally distributed, possessed linearity, were independent of error terms, and multicollinearity did not exist (Galawe, 2017).

4.7.1 Addressing of outliers

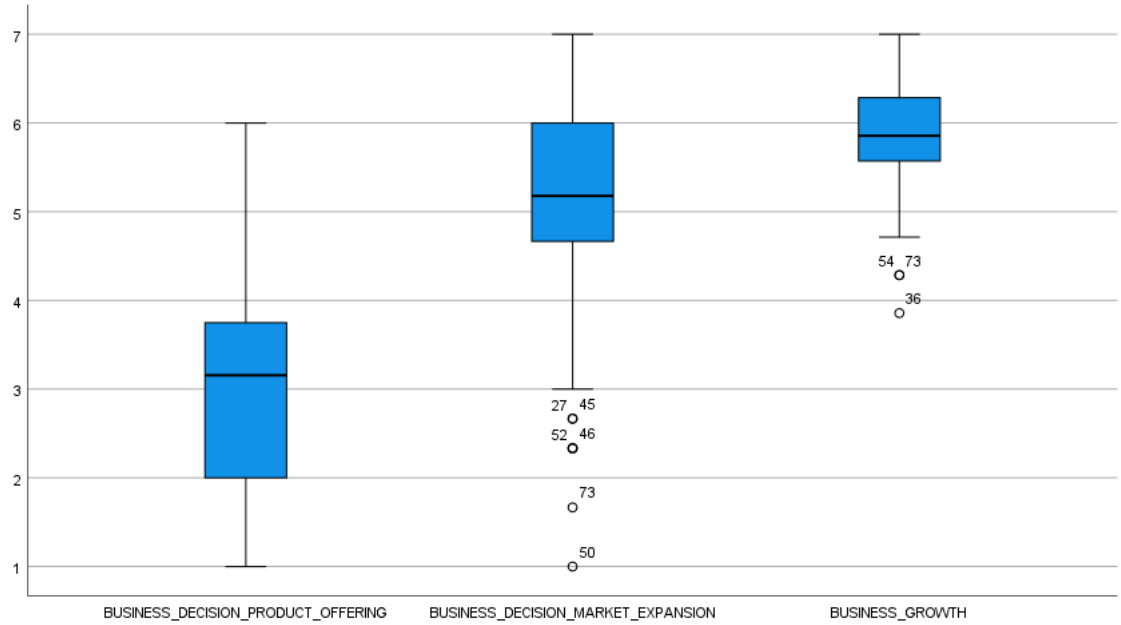
According to Creamer, (2018), outliers are data points that occur outside the realm of the majority. They can distort the result if not addressed. They may affect research in a way that could render the outcome invalid if they affect the accuracy of the results. Ramaswamy, Rastogi and Shim (2000) further explain outliers as anomalies in data. Ghosh and Vogt (2012) explain that an outlier is an observation when points are plotted on a graph and do not appear close to the majority of observations but are far away from them.

In assuring that data comply with this assumption, the factors identified during this research project were screened for outliers using a box and whisker plot graph. This method was chosen for the ease of identification and interpretation. The box and whisker plot analysis were initially run within SPSS and the outliers were identified. In addressing outliers, a method called Winsorizing was used. According to Field, (2013), Winsorizing is the process whereby the outlier is considered and replaced with the next highest score that is not an outlier. Field (2013) presents that view that Winsorizing improves the accuracy of the data presentation and that not addressing outliers will impact accuracy. On the other hand, Ghosh, and Vogt (2012) argue that the possibility exists that in the process of Winsorizing, the observation can either be overvalued or undervalued.

An alternative method to Winsorizing presented by both Ghosh and Vogt, (2012) is to eliminate the outlier by deletion. This method was, however, not followed. In the analysis of the outliers, the view stated by Field (2013) was the one considered. Winsorizing was employed to address outliers as it improved the accuracy of the data presentation, and it addressed the assumption violation that the outlier presents. The box and whisker plot graph below, Table 4.17,

presents the data where all outliers have been addressed, thus not violating the assumption stated above.

Table 4.17: Box Plot



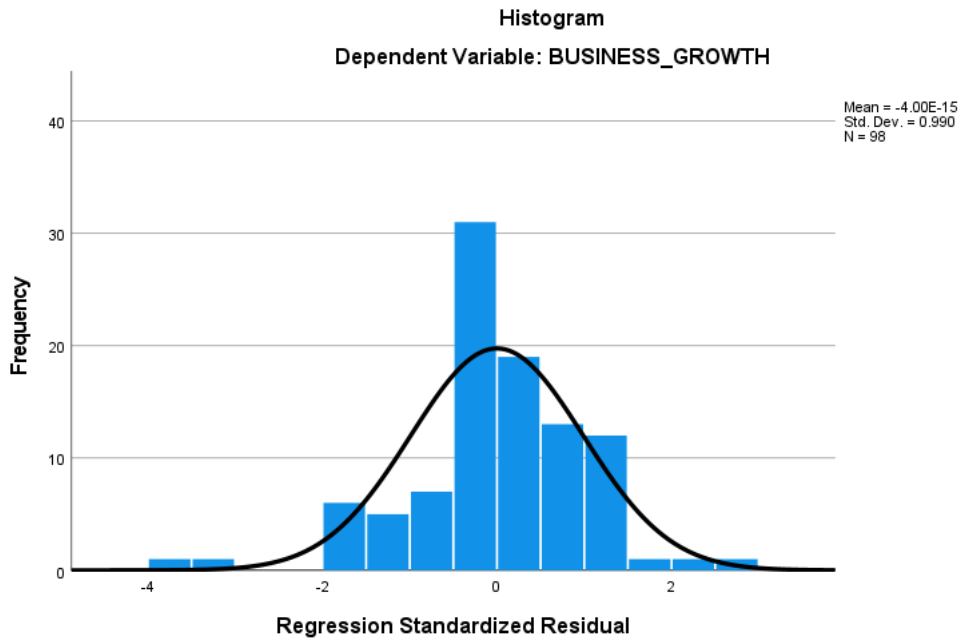
4.7.2 Normality of data distribution

To ensure that the outcome of a research study is generalisable beyond the study, it is imperative that data be normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The data also needs to be normally distributed to ensure that the regression model is accurate. This is one of the statistical parameters or assumptions that cannot be violated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

To assess the distribution of data, the visual aid of a graph called a histogram, also referred to as a visual indication, was employed. A normal histogram would follow the shape of a bell curve. Descriptive statistics in SPPSS were employed and normality can be observed if the bell curve peaks in the middle of the graph. Should the bell curve peak to the right, it is concluded the data is positively skewed; and if the curve peaks to the left, it is concluded that the data is negatively skewed (Field, 2013).

In the assessment of data distribution indicated in table 4.18, it was concluded that the data were normally distributed because the curve peaked in the middle, thereby conforming to the definition of normally distributed data. The normally distributed data conformed to the statistical assumption, which meant that from this perspective, regression could proceed.

Table 4.18: Histogram



According to Tabachnick & Fidell (2007), this method presents shortcomings in that it does not accurately represent a Likert Scale graphically due to the challenges presented in representing variable type examples. It is continuous, as opposed to ordinal variables (Galawe, 2017). Sample size also presents challenges in the accuracy of the graphical representation above (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2003).

To address the challenges above, and to ensure accuracy of the data, further statistical tests were also performed. A Q-Q plot was performed in SPSS in addition to a scatter plot. In order to confirm the distribution of the data presented above, the Q-Q plot should present the data that plots in a straight line. In addition, the majority of points on the scatter plot should be closely

grouped or clustered. Table 4.18 indicates that the data is normally distributed, which is confirmed by tables 4.19 and 4.20. Therefore, the data conformed to the parameter indicated above of data plotting in a straight line, with most points clustered closely on the scatter plot.

Table 4.19: P-P Plot

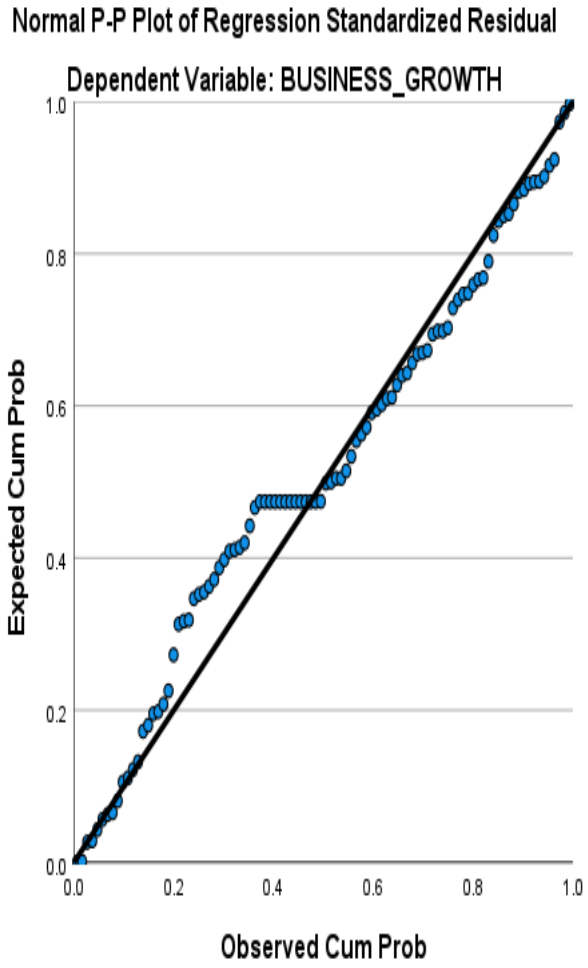
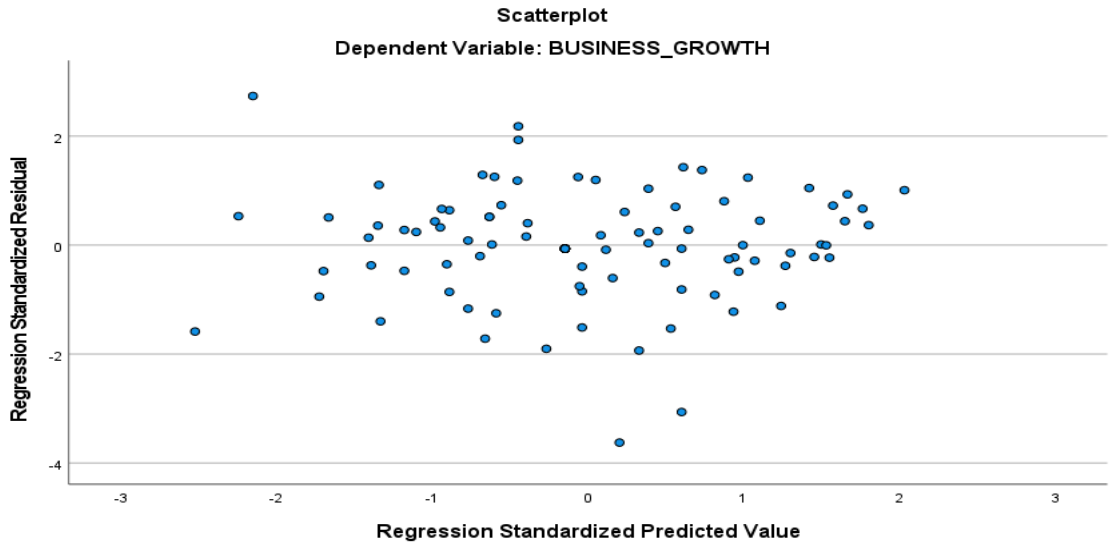


Table 4.20: Scatterplot



Finally, in assessing the distribution of data, Skewness and Kurtosis of the data were considered. According to Field (2013), Kurtosis measures the gradient of the data whilst Skewness represents of the uniformity of data presented or interpreted. According to West and Aiken (2013) and Curran, West and Finch (1996), the parameters or cut off for skewness need to be 2, and for kurtosis it needs to be 7 for the data to be useful in decision-making. During consideration of the cut off criteria above and applying it to the data as indicated in figure 4.18, no violation was observed. The result was that the distribution of the data was normal and regression analysis could proceed.

Table 4.21: Statistics (Distribution of Data)

		BUSINESS GROWTH	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION
N	Valid	98	98	98
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		5.7969	2.9839	5.1783
Median		5.8124	3.1575	5.1783

Mode	5.80	3.16	6.00
Skewness	-1.439	.130	-1.140
Std. Error of Skewness	.244	.244	.244
Kurtosis	4.307	-.429	1.672
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.483	.483	.483
Minimum	2.43	1.00	1.00
Maximum	7.00	6.00	7.00
Sum	568.10	292.43	507.47

4.7.3 Independence

In order not to violate the statistical assumptions, independence of response must be ensured (Galawe, 2017). This not only ensures reliability of data collected, but it also ensures credibility and authenticity of the data collection. The design of the research project questionnaire and the distribution ensured independence of responses. The questionnaire was compiled and distributed in Qualtrics. Only one questionnaire was sent to each respondent. They were required to respond by logging onto the Qualtrics platform. The questionnaires were completed and submitted within Qualtrics. This ensured that there was only one respondent per emailed questionnaire, facilitating independence of responses.

4.7.4 Multicollinearity

According to Field (2013), the assumption for regression is that a linear relationship exists between the independent variable and the dependent variable, and not amongst the independent variables. Should a relationship exist between the independent variables, indicating that they correlated with a correlation coefficient ($r>0.8$) then multicollinearity exists, and this should be resolved before the regression can proceed.

Considering the correlation coefficient between the independent variables, Business Decision–Product Offering and Business Decision–Market expansion r=0.196, meet the criteria as it was below 0.8.

This indicates that multicollinearity did not exist as indicated in the correlation table 4.22 attached below.

Table 4.22: Correlations

		BUSINESS GROWTH	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION
Pearson Correlation	BUSINESS_DECISION_GROWTH	1.000	-.415	.032
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	-.415	1.000	.196
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	.032	.196	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	BUSINESS_DECISION_GRWOTH	.	.000	.377
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	.000	.	.026
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	.377	.026	.
N	BUSINESS_DECISION_GROWTH	98	98	98
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	98	98	98
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	98	98	98

After the analysis of the data collected and ensuring that there were no violations of statistical assumptions, the next phase was to test the hypothesis. In this process, the normality of errors was also assessed. This was done simultaneously with the regression analysis.

4.8 Results from the Quantitative Phase

The linear regression model looked into how the two independent variables, namely, Business Decision–Product Offering and Business Decision–Market Expansion impacted the dependent variable, Business Growth, and whether this impact was significant. The main aim around testing this significance was to confirm of reject the null hypothesis.

4.8.1 Hypothesis 1: Decision-making and SMME growth

H1: Decision-making positively impacts the growth of SMMEs. H0: Decision-making does not positively impact the growth of SMMEs.

In the analysis of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, it was determined that the independent variable accounted for 11,5% of the variance in the dependent variable Business Growth, which is depicted by table 4.23. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that this variance is statistically significant at a significant p-value of 0.003, which is less than a p-value of .05, as depicted in table 4.25 (Field, 2013).

Table 4.23: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.339[a]	.115	.096	.69694	1.705

a. Predictors: (Constant), BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION, BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING

b. Dependent Variable: BUSINESS_GROWTH

Table 4.24: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.001	2	3.001	6.178	.003[b]
	Residual	46.144	95	.486		
	Total	52.145	97			

a. Dependent Variable: BUSINESS_GROWTH

b. Predictors: (Constant), BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION, BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING

Information extracted for the regression model was that there was no multicollinearity amongst the independent variables. According to Field (2013), for the model to conform to the statistical assumptions and not violate it, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) must be below 10 and greater than 1, and the Tolerance (T) must be greater than 0.2. If these parameters are met, then no multicollinearity exists. In line with the analysis performed VIF=1,040, the tolerance is T=0.961, both above the set criteria, which means that no multicollinearity exists, as depicted in table 4.25 below.

Table 4.25: Coefficient Matrix

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5.438	.336		16.165	<,001	4.770	6.106		
	BUSINESS_DECISION_PRODUCT_OFFERING	-.164	.060	-.268	-2.720	.008	-.284	-.044	.961	1.040
	BUSINESS_DECISION_MARKET_EXPANSION	.164	.060	.267	2.717	.008	.044	.284	.961	1.040

a. Dependent Variable: BUSINESS_GROWTH

In analysing the independent variables individually to determine their impact on Business Growth and their significance, the following was observed:

- Business Decision–Product Offering was indicated by a negative score, which indicates that it did not support the hypothesis. However, this was a significant impact at a significance value of 0.008 which met the

threshold indicated by (Field, 2013). Considering the Beta value, 26.8% negatively impacts the Business Growth when considering product offering and this relationship is significant.

- Business Decision–Market Expansion: product offering did not support the hypothesis, but Business Decision–Market Expansion supported the hypothesis. The impact was significant at a score of 0.008, which met the threshold of less than 0.05. Considering the Beta value 26.7% positively impacted Business Growth when considering market expansion and this relationship is significant.

The conclusion here is that product offering decisions did not support business growth, although they were significant. However, Business Decision–Market Expansion decisions did support business growth and this influence was significant.

4.8.2 Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial coaching and decision-making

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

The results presented pertain to Hypothesis 2 and were guided by the research question as well as the developed hypotheses. The research instrument was designed and questions 34 to 50 were purposed to collect data in addressing H2.

Research Question 2: What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs?

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

H0.2: Entrepreneurial coaching does not enhance the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

In addressing H2 in the questionnaire, the objective was to determine if the respondent had had exposure to coaching, the nature of the coaching, the background of the coach and the outcome of the coaching.

The response rate to this section of the research questionnaire was not adequate hence it could not be processed statistically. The low response rate was not able to produce reliable output statistically (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The response rate was below 30 recommended by Field, (2013) and below 50 recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007).

The next phase of research reviewed and presented the data collected during the qualitative action research portion of the research. The transcripts compiled during the coaching sessions, as well as the interviews conducted, were used in the thematic analysis process. The results were reviewed with research question 3 and proposition 1 in mind.

4.9 Findings from Qualitative Phase

4.9.1 Proposition 1: Decision-making before and after coaching

Research Question 3: How do entrepreneurs make decisions before and after entrepreneurial coaching?

P1: The way in which entrepreneurs make decisions improves after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention.

The collection of data in the qualitative phase of the research had to be adapted because it was conducted during various stages of the Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa. The lockdowns presented challenges of availability and access to entrepreneurs. The qualitative phase of the data collection was conducted by first identifying individuals who had responded to the quantitative survey questionnaire, and who had not experienced coaching before. The main criteria for selection were availability and willingness to participate in entrepreneurial coaching conducted by the researcher. This indicates that the qualitative phase of the research had an element of action research. This phase of the research

project was concluded after the coaching and the interviews, both conducted by the researcher.

In this phase, a total of seven participants were selected, following the criteria mentioned above. There were more participants who indicated their willingness; however, availability and practicality dictated the limited numbers. The initial aim was to conduct face-to-face coaching sessions and interviews; however, this had to be altered to accommodate the Covid-19 protocols. Coaching sessions and interviews were conducted via WhatsApp, telephone, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. The total interaction with each participant was one coaching session and one interview, which lasted for one hour each. Three sessions had to be conducted, one hour each for two of the participants. The entrepreneurial activity and involvement of the participants covered various levels of experience and involvement. There were two senior managers responsible for business units and the rest were business owners. Of the business owners, two companies were start-ups and three were businesses that had existed between three and 21 years.

The qualitative data collected through the coaching intervention, and later through the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The recordings were used as input and reference to the transcription to ensure accuracy. The analysis of the data were conducted via a method of descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2021). The coding process was performed manually. From the initial to final coding, four reviews or passes were performed, refining the codes in each phase (Saldaña, 2021). The first review was done in Microsoft Word, where codes were identified and notes were made (Saldaña, 2021). Transcripts were compiled from the recordings. The second review was done in Microsoft Excel, where sentences and phrases were extracted from the Word document. The final two reviews were done by means of printing out the identified codes in Microsoft Excel codes and refining them by hand.

The first two phases of coding yielded a total of 126 codes , which were refined during the manual phase to eight core codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The centre of consideration during the coding process was the research question (Saldaña, 2021).

In the coding process, the participants were allocated participant identification numbers, which are detailed in table 4.26 below (Reid, 2012).

Table 4.26: Participant Identification

Participant	Participant Identification
Coachee 1	PID-001
Coachee 2	PID-002
Coachee 3	PID-003
Coachee 4	PID-004
Coachee 5	PID-005
Coachee 6	PID-006
Coachee 7	PID-007

The first phase of the qualitative research process was an action research intervention in which the participants were coached. The second phase of the qualitative research consisted of interviews conducted with the coachees. The interview schedules were designed to gather information and gain insight into the perceived impact that coaching had on the decision-making of the participants. In the coding process, in order to gain holistic insight, both the coaching and the interview transcripts were used. Six core themes were derived from the coding process: Goal-focused; Adapting to change; Learning and awareness; Improved decision-making; Improved efficiency and Business growth.

4.9.2 Thematic analysis

Table 4.27: Themes

Theme	Participant who responded
Goal-focused	PID-001, PID-002, PID-003, PID-004 & PID-008
Adapting to change	PID-001, PID-002, PID-003, PID-004, PID-005 & PID-007
Learning and awareness	All
Improved decision-making	All
Improved efficiency	PID-002, PID-003, PID-004 & PID-005
Business growth	PID-003, PID-004, PID-005 & PID-007

4.9.2.1 Theme 1: Goal-focused

During the coding process, five of the seven participants indicated that as a result of the coaching, they were more goal-focused. Their goals guided their decision-making. The responses are depicted in the table below.

PID-001: “To be honest with you, our goal is to get at least another four clients within the next six months, definitely on board, four clients. I think everybody is more determined to reach the goal, everybody is more on board to say, okay, we can't just be happy and satisfied with what we've got; we have to go out there and we have to get more people on board, more clients on board…”
PID-002: “I want to turn this organisation around, to be honest, it’s not where

it is supposed to be, from the picture that I had when I formed it, especially when it comes to revenue. So, it's not about the total amount, but for me, the revenue draft needed to be like this. So, from year one, it has always been like this, until after year three. Year four it dropped a bit but year five, we haven't consolidated the books. But at the back of my head, I know it's not as good as it should have been. The influence, it came as a guide to help the element of efficiency in the business, because I believe as businesses, we operate but the question is, how efficient is your operation? So, you can be at work but if you are not efficient, your productivity will show at the end. So, if now our efficiency is driven by the goals that we have set, which includes the targets and the milestones, which is now those eight that we discussed the previous time, so it brought that element of saying, guys, we need to be efficient."
PID-003: "This is the first time in basically my life that I've actually written down a plan and I'm not deviating from it."
PID-004: "You know, number one, it has made me become very serious about my business. A lot has changed but that change, I cannot just say after the sessions that we've had, yes, it's instant change, it cannot be instant change, but I'm saying that as it has made me to re-evaluate my decisions, I'm now starting to think of the bigger picture, of where I can take my business…"
PID-005: "I realised I needed to introduce more processes which allowed people to function without my continuous intervention. The business had gone through exceptional growth phase and attending to everything was impossible. I also had to become firm and empower some people to filter and address issues in their areas. I also needed to stop looking at my Inbox as a measure of my productivity: i.e. my previous goal was to ensure I had responded or addressed all emails and have either zero or the minimum Unread emails. This was impossible. I decided to stop attending to all emails but rather prioritise with importance."

The outcome of the coaching clearly illustrated a greater drive toward the set goals. The coaching also contributed to the determination to achieving the goals. Through facilitation, the coaching process created an environment in which the entrepreneurs could reflect on their goals and on what was needed in order to achieve them. This was evident in the comments from all the participants, as listed above. The comments were, however, specific to their own businesses. This illustrates the effectiveness of the GROW model used during the coaching process (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). In addition, reflective observation (transformative learning) as illustrated in learning theories are at play. The entrepreneur, as indicated in the comments, was forced to pause, and reflect on the goals they had set, and the action needed to achieve these goals. During the coaching, the entrepreneurs could clearly articulate their goal. For example, PD-003 indicated that he had written down his goals for the first time. In addition, PD-005 indicated the need for processes, just to name a few of the responses gathered during the goal setting phase of the coaching. These responses clearly illustrated the reflective observation phase of Kolb's model in play (Kolb, 1984).

4.9.2.2 Theme 2: Adapting to change

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the participants had to adapt to the conditions. Many businesses were impacted by this dynamic (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Jackson et al., 2020). Referring to Covid-19, respondents said the following:

PID-001: "Our timeframe for this year was [that] within the first six months we needed ten more clients, and then the lockdown and pandemic came, so all that has now been pushed back. However, since we started doing essential work during this lockdown, we have obtained two new clients without even going out, just by word of mouth. So, without even going out to canvass for more clients, by word of mouth we got two more clients, although they are from Rustenburg, but they are two new clients ."
PID-002: "So some of the things actually fall off because reality says, you know what, this is something that is not going to happen. The experience

shows that, and then there are others that actually come on board, which is not a lot, which is just a redirection, but the core. What I like about that model, the core still remains."
PID-003: "So the decision was made two months ago at the height of Covid, and before the what-if's, and I decided that this is the opportune time for me to actually make the break away from Company A, Because my thinking is that if you make it through Covid or a pandemic of this nature, your presence will pretty much survive anything, because times are extremely tough at the moment. Looking for alternatives. Change is good, but there are certain things which remain the same, laws of nature. There are a lot of things, when you look at the laws of nature, that's why aeroplanes fly, they follow the same principles of, let's say, air, yet they fly because they actually counter what's happening, they counter gravity and that's what gives them flight. So, looking for alternatives and manipulating a situation to a degree where it remains consistent in what you want to achieve and in where you want to go, but adapting the situation for where you want to go."
PID-004: "Yes, things have changed but I think I've learned to look deeper into things and not just rely on instinct. So, since this lockdown, right now, since there is lockdown, yes, my business … and they have opened up some restriction, yes, my business is fairly doing very well. I'm just getting by; I don't want to say very bad, that it's bad, bad, bad, but I was doing far better than I was doing at this current time of the year. So, I've now taken my focus, I thought, okay, let me just focus on trying to pay off my debts."
PID-005: "I realised I needed to introduce more processes which allowed people to function without my continuous intervention. The business had gone through exceptional growth phase and attending to everything was impossible. I also had to become firm and empower some people to filter and address issues in their areas. I also needed to stop looking at my Inbox as a measure of my productivity: i.e. my previous goal was to ensure I had responded or addresses all emails and have either zero or the minimum Unread emails this was impossible. I decided to stop attending to all emails

but rather prioritize with importance.”
… ‘’I've suggested immediately, let’s do a 50 percent, 50 percent, and then they also tried to wiggle out of it and say, can't we just do 30 days…?”

The business environment was not favourable during the research. The South African business society had to contend with lockdowns. The result of the lockdowns was that businesses had to close and adapt to the reduction in income as a result of these closures. The entrepreneur did not only have to face reduced income but also had to adjust aspects of the goals they had set. Also, in the current business environment, ways of conducting business had to change. The emphasis was on adapting to change in order to survive as a business. These were evident in the words of PD-002, in which a realistic approach was undertaken, and PD-004, who said that deeper focus was required to navigate the changing environment. In addition, the business environment presented financial challenges, that the entrepreneurs had to overcome, in the form of client payment and issues of delegation and empowerment of staff.

4.9.2.3 Theme 3: Learning and awareness

In various ways, learning and awareness had occurred during the coaching. Whether it was awareness around the process to be followed or around operations, in the process of becoming aware, learning took place (Kolb, 2015). The quotes below present evidence of such learning and awareness.

PID-001: “This whole discussion has actually put my mind on a run. It has opened up my mind to think a little bit further, because this question, how to achieve it, cast the net wider, I haven't given this a thought in many years, and all of a sudden that just came up. When you speak to somebody, just one word or sentence can just get your mindset in the right direction, and you know how to run with that again .”
PID-002: “Quite a lot, to be honest. Quite a lot. Because if you were not here … You afforded me the opportunity to actually air out how I run the

business, to air out how I impart certain skills to my assistants and my associate partners, because it's difficult to take a step back and reflect on a lot of things, because day in, day out, there's always something that comes on the table. So, for me, this session is more of a therapy, if I may put it that way, because as much as you might be doing things, whether they're yielding positive results or negative results, if you don't talk at this level, it sits in you. You don't have somebody to share some of these things with. So, this is a structured way in which you actually make me think as well, why I'm doing this, how I achieve this. So, your questions are engaging and enticing, and they also make me have to come out and now say, fine, if you are as good as you say, have all the systems in place, but the question is, are you getting efficiency out of them, and so forth?"
PID-003: "What it proved to me is that nothing is hidden knowledge; there's no secret to success. You determine your own secret to success. People are very eager to share their knowledge with regard to business, doing business. That is what it has proven to me, [is] that no information is hidden knowledge. Well, it has been valuable because it's actually made me rethink or review my business plan, to add and subtract, I can switch which were part of the plan, but it wouldn't have such a big input going forward. You would go back to the business plan, take away a couple of things, add a few things to certain areas, because that forms part of your decision-making, and that's one of the points on the plan, is your decision making, so definitely that's been added. So what I've got on my desk here is now a couple of papers and that type of thing, but it's not untidy, so I've got here a thing which I actually write down and actually tick off, okay, this is what I've got to do, this is what I'm looking at doing, and then with that looking at doing, I can add my points from coaching that I can add into that."
PID-004: "What factors? Okay, since I've never had business coaching before and this is my first time, the topics that we've touched on are topics that I had not really … what we spoke about right now, we spoke about how many bags of ice I need to sell to be comfortable, I had never really honestly taken that ever since the last number of years that I've been in business, sat

down and calculated it to the T, that I need to sell at least 7,000. Okay, how do I get to the 7,000? And breaking it down. It has made me now to really sit down and think deeply on how and strategically I want to grow my business and how I can manage to grow it. A lot has changed but that change, I cannot just say after the sessions that we've had, yes, it's instant change. It cannot be instant change, but I'm saying that as it has made me to re-evaluate my decisions, I'm now starting to think of the bigger picture of where I can take my business, but some changes, I'm not going to lie, that's why I'm saying to you right now, that six months from now I will be not where I am with the coaching that I've had right now. Some of the change will be transitional."
PID-005: "In addition to the above, I realised many of the decision-making was the result of problems and this highlighted the need for better reporting which could identify issues at an early stage when it was still recoverable. Made me realise a few changes were needed: 1. Clearer structure (organisational structure) 2. Processes & systems to assist with the volume 3. Empowering low level decision-making and accountability
PID-006: "I have noticed that I hesitate less to make a decision and the team is more engaged."
PID-007: Okay, so you absorb more with the coaching, take more in and then to have a better, say, for example, understanding for the future of that current situation or the project, and then it makes it easier to plan and to put everything into perspective and to, like you say, be focused. And after that, to reflect back on what we went wrong or how we can do it better next time or save more costs to the project or be more efficient."

According to Passmore, (2020), during coaching new knowledge is constructed through the facilitation of the coach. As indicated by the comments of PD-001,

the coaching, through directed questions, afforded the entrepreneur the opportunity to reflect and gain clarity of direction on the path going forward. For PD-002, the coaching was an opportunity to reflect on the purpose of doing business, which once again focuses on the goals and their achievement. In the case of PD-003, the coaching allowed a greater focus on adopting a plan, which indicates greater awareness, which contributed to an improvement in the decision-making. In the case of PD-004, a greater awareness was created around the strategy of the business. PD-005 made a decision around changes needed as a result of the awareness gained. For PD-006 the awareness ensured clarity in decision-making, and for PD-007, increased efficiency was an outcome. The evidence presented above indicated that coaching had a positive impact on the entrepreneurs. All participants indicated that it certainly enhanced their learning and awareness. This enhancement ensured an improvement in decision-making.

4.9.2.4 Theme 4: Improved decision-making

Considering the question of whether or not decision-making improved after the coaching intervention, four of the seven participants indicated that their decision-making had improved.

PID-001: “It just comes down [to] the pros and the cons about making a decision. Before we make a decision, we also have to consider the availability of transport and things like that, so we really discuss in a broader spectrum now.”
PID-003: “Yes, it does, because, for example, if I had to open up a branch in Rustenburg, I don't know anybody there, I just know it’s ‘damn hot’ there in the summer, and I know it’s temperate in the winter, but from a business point of view, I don't know anything about that, so I would speak to somebody and they’ll say, listen, there’s a lot of opportunity there, you need to speak to so and so, and this is what you need to get in on their books.”
PID-004: “Yes, there have been some changes that have occurred that I'm … they will take a while for me to implement or maybe to get them going or see

the benefits of those decisions, but so far I think the decisions that I've made, I'm starting to see the light in a lot of things, but I think in six months' time from now, should we talk again or have a coaching session again, I think I'll tell you a different story."
PID-007: "I would definitely say faster because all of that helps you to see the picture clearer and to make more informed [decisions]. I don't want to say instant, but better executive decisions. Sometimes you can't think about it, you need to make a decision now, and then all of that coaching starts paying off and it helps you to do better."

Decision-making was impacted by awareness and consultation. Evidence in this regard is clear, according to the verbatim quotations above. The participants indicated that their consultation was "… broader now …". In terms of awareness, comments like "I'm starting to see the light …". These comments indicate the nature of improvement of coaching. Participants also indicated that after coaching they "make more informed decisions."

Another area in which improvements which improve decision making were realised was consultation before a decision is made. All entrepreneurs indicated that the level of consultation improved, which resulted in an improvement in decision making.

All participants indicated that after coaching, they consulted widely with their advisors, customers, and industry leaders. These inputs were considered before decision-making. Some of the participants followed the process before the coaching. However, they indicated that after coaching they were more focused.

PID-001: "I think there is because now, it's not just we would discuss the matter, we would discuss the case first and then make a decision instead of just saying, 'let's try it' and then maybe we're lucky, maybe we're not. Now, we will discuss it and we will discuss how we are going to go about how we couldn't do it."

PID-002: “Mostly, it was based on past experience; it’s more of an instinct but in most instances, yes, it’s backed by experience and data available at that point. So that’s how most decision making will have been made. Mostly on the services that we offer as an organisation, I don't do a lot of consultation, but I do have people I look up to as mentors. But I also have business associates on the other elements. Mostly on the services that we offer as Buletu, I also have business associates on the other elements.”
PID-003: " Well, definitely chatting [up] with some of my customers who have been established in the industry in my specific field but they’re in the industry, which is pumps. I would have a chat and get their take on the idea. I'd run it past them because they would say, it’s a good idea to open up another branch but far from your goods close to disaster. So, try keep things local for as long as you can and as small as you can, and then you can develop from there. So that’s for the customer, to answer the question, definitely to consult your customer or your mentors for that information.”
PID-004: “Yes, I do. I've got several friends who are in business, who’ve got their own businesses that they’re running, so I would drop them maybe a WhatsApp or we’ll talk when it’s over the weekend, when we see each other. Or sometimes, we would talk and maybe I'll bounce ideas off them and hear what it is, because I am feeling [sic] that some decisions are not supposed to be you sticking to them and doing them. Yes, they do help, but I think getting an input from someone that’s been business, some of my friends have had businesses that are running for over ten years. So, I think I can get better advice from them, not precisely from them but from a person that has been in business for so long.”
PID-005: “Yes, I do consult. Previously, I would just make the decisions, get my own supporting information. Now, I expect others to scrutinise & filter the information before it gets to me. It’s expensive to be wasting time at a higher level when it could have been resolved easily at the lower levels. I also realised that the calibre of people were … lacking, hence, senior involvement in basic issues.”

PID-006: “Yes, I consult more after the coaching session. Team engagement and consultation improved.”
PID-007: “I would say definitely you become more professional in what you do, ask the right questions, see better and clearer, it’s like having a new vision to see clearer and sometimes right through things, where, if you didn’t have the coaching, you would have struggled, and it would have taken you much longer to make a decision. Or you're like (‘tussen die bas en die boom’,) you’re like 50-50. So now it becomes better and …”

The quotations above indicate the impact that coaching had on the process that the entrepreneurs followed during decision-making. After coaching the entrepreneurs consulted widely before making decisions, especially in areas where they felt their experience was limited. This ensured an improvement in their decision-making, in addition to the positive contribution that coaching in improving decision-making.

4.9.2.5 Theme 5: Improved efficiency

Four of the seven participants indicated that they experienced improved efficiency after coaching. PID-002 refers to their motivation and determination to achieve their goal. However, PID-004 said that it was too early to make the determination.

PID-002: “I think everybody is more determined to reach the goal, everybody is more on board to say, okay, we can't just be happy and satisfied with what we've got, we have to go out there and we have to get more people on board, more clients on board, and things like that, and also try not to stick with one line of work, see if there’s something else that we also can do without changing our people’s skills completely. But still, because we work with mainly not skilled people, they just learn as they go along, so we also have to look into areas where we can just do another service, that we’re not going to make an intense skill change.”
PID-003: “I'm just being open, it gives you the confidence in your thoughts,

that my questions to the person that you are approaching for information or for assistance.”
PID-005: “There was a lack of accountability as many people wore many different hats. With structure, came processes. Introducing of simple systems with internal checks which eliminated errors. Getting team members to assess and review information before they send it out and making them accountable. Above did free up a lot of my time. It allows the senior people to focus on long term strategic issues and not be bogged down with the mundane day to day issues. This inadvertently allows for us to ensure there aren’t any costly mistakes, wasted executive time and to rather work on issues that grow the business.”

All the themes presented as an outcome of coaching contributed to the improved efficiency. The improvement in the decision-making and the improved efficiency all contributed to the growth of the businesses of entrepreneurs.

4.9.2.6 Theme 6: Business growth

Considering the question of business growth, four of the seven participants responded positively to the question, while the rest indicated that it was too soon to make the determination.

PID-003: “Well, I can see it for the positive; it’s just a matter of implementing what we've actually discussed and following through with the notes that I've made, adding the plan, because decision-making is also part of the business plan and that was one of the points that I actually mentioned in there, in developing a market or developing a product or marketing plans, and that type of thing.”
PID-004: “Yes, that’s accurate. Right now, so far what I've done, as I mentioned, that, yes, I had to take down loans so that I can start my business. so far, I'm making progress in terms of me paying them off. Every month and every week with the amount of money that I make on my weekly

deliveries or whatever, there's a portion that I'm paying over to pay those debts off and I'm starting to see that, you know, if I'm able to pay off my debts, and reach zero and not have debts, okay, I know that I'm going to only incur the debt of the property that I have. I'll manage that because that will be covered by my employment instead of my business, meaning that I could save money. I could make good savings, because I even looked at my projections of last year, had I not had the loans that I had, I think I could have been far because I looked at … within the space of six months, with the amount of money that I've made, I've made over 100K and most of it went towards paying off the debt that I've incurred during the years I've been in business. So, with this plan that I have now that we spoke about, that we've broken down, that, okay, once I've paid off my loans, now I'll be having some finances, I won't be in a tight spot as I am now, I'll be able to save. As we also spoke about funding, yes, I don't rule out not going to look for funding. Yes, I'll go look for funding, but then I can even fund myself better once I've worked that out."
PID-005: "It allows the senior people to focus on long term strategic issues and not be bogged down with the mundane day to day issues. This inadvertently allows for us to ensure there aren't any costly mistakes, wasted executive time and to rather work on issues that grow the business."
PID-007: "So once you've got all those things in place with your goals in mind, align your plans and your goals and people, staff, or decisions, to have the main goal in mind, your entire way of doing things changes and adapts accordingly. So, business coaching is essential, and it helps you grow your business in the way you make the decisions, much better, and that's good for the business. Sometimes you start with a small project, then you hit a big project, then you go back to a small project, then another. So, business coaching in that sense is, you're more focused, your planning starts to get better, everything is more in line, so you look organised as well and at the end of the day, it's just customer service. So, if you don't focus and if you lose focus your customers will pull at the short end. So, you need to stay focused and plan accordingly to execute that project or that mission or

whatever you're busy with, or you need to execute properly."

Through the improvement in efficiency and decision-making, the entrepreneurs indicated that the elements have been put in place to achieve business growth. The entrepreneurs indicated that business coaching will help in growing their businesses. This indicated that they found the coaching valuable.

4.9.3 Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial coaching and decision-making

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs

Research Question 2: What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs?

During the coaching sessions and the interviews, H2 and Research Question 2 were also answered. This was possible because the coach could establish a rapport with the coachees and the entrepreneur, and in so doing, gain trust (Kotte et al., 2021).

Pertaining to H2 and Research Question 2, before and after the coaching sessions, the coachees were asked whether coaching had made a difference in their decision-making. Four of the seven participants indicated that coaching had made an impact. They indicated that before coaching, their decision-making had been based on day-to-day operations. However, after coaching, decisions were driven by focus on the goals and vision of the organisation.

PID-001: "It just comes down the pros and the cons about making a decision. Before we make a decision, we also have to consider the availability of transport and things like that, so we really discuss in a broader spectrum now."

PID-003: "Yes, it does, because, for example, if I had to open up a branch in Rustenburg, I don't know anybody there. I just know it's 'damn hot' there in the summer, and I know it's temperate in the winter, but from a business point of view, I don't know anything about that, so I would speak to somebody, and they'll say, listen, there's a lot of opportunity there, you need to speak to so and so, and this is what you need to get in on their books."

PID-004: “Yes, there have been some changes that have occurred that I'm … they will take a while for me to implement or maybe to get them going or see the benefits of those decisions. But so far, I think the decisions that I've made, I'm starting to see the light in a lot of things, but I think in six months’ time from now, should we talk again, or have a coaching session again, I think I'll tell you a different story.”

PID-007: “I would definitely say faster because all of that helps you to see the picture clearer and to make more informed, I don't want to say instant, but better, executive decisions. Sometimes you can't think about it; you need to make a decision now, and then all of that coaching starts paying off and it helps you to do better.”

The responses listed above indicate that business coaching, and specifically entrepreneurial coaching, enhanced the decision-making of the entrepreneurs. There was a greater focus on the goals of the organisation. The answer to the research question through the qualitative intervention is that the perceived impact of business coaching was increased goal focus, which enhanced decision-making and increased self-efficacy of the entrepreneur (Crompton & Smyrnios, 2011; Hunt et al., 2019).

Similarly, the results from the coaching intervention, which sought to address Research Questions 3 and P1, succeeded. The outcome of the coaching process was that after coaching, the entrepreneurs indicated that there was a greater focus on the goals of the organisation. Coaching enhanced the focus. Coaching delivered in that now, during the decision-making the goals were the centre of consideration. This indicated an improvement in self-efficacy (Crompton & Smyrnios, 2011; Hunt et al., 2019). Crompton and Smyrnios (2011) and Hunt et al. (2019) posit that coaching delivers an improvement in self-efficacy. However, they do not indicate what drives this improvement. This research found that a major driver improving self-efficacy was the enhanced focus on the goal during decision-making.

PID-001: “To be honest with you, our goal is to get at least another four clients within the next six months, definitely on board, four clients. I think everybody is

more determined to reach the goal. Everybody is more on board to say, okay, we can't just be happy and satisfied with what we've got; we have to go out there and we have to get more people on board, more clients on board…"

PID-001: "…try not to stick with one line of work, see if there's something else that we also can do without changing our people's skills completely. But still, because we work with mainly not skilled people, they just learn as they go along, so we also have to look into areas where we can just do another service, that we're not going to make an intense skill change."

PID-003: "This is the first time in basically my life that I've actually written down a plan and I'm not deviating from it." This statement indicates that as an outcome of the coaching process, the coachee documented his plan or goal. The coachee also displayed determination to follow the plan.

Themes like Adapting to change, Learning and awareness, Improved decision-making, Improved efficiency, and business growth which were presented in the Thematic analysis all contributed to the answering of the research question 2. Further by answering research question2 in this section H2 was supported.

4.10 Integration of Findings and Results

H1: Business Decision-making positively impacts the growth of SMMEs. Decision making diverged into two dimensions which were Business Decision-Product Offering and Business Decision-Market expansion. H1a: Decision-making (product offering) positively impacts the growth of SMMEs was not supported though there was a significant relationship but Business Decision-Product offering did not significantly influence SMME growth.

H1b: Business Decision-making-Market expansion positively impacts the growth of SMMEs. This hypothesis was supported as decision making (market expansion positively impacted SMME growth and the impact was significant.

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs. This hypothesis was not tested because of the low response level. This presented a challenge in that the responses were not adequate to perform the

statistical test required to produce reliable and valid results. Reasons presented in literature for this low response rate relate to the sensitive nature of the coaching relationship and the reluctance of the individuals to respond.

This section of the research was supported during the execution of the qualitative segment of the research. The nature and design of the qualitative research helped to address both H2 and P1. The findings presented in this segment indicated that entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of the entrepreneur. These findings were made possible because of the nature and sensitivity of the coaching engagement and the trust that formed between the coach and coachee. In this case the researcher and the entrepreneur.

4.11 Conclusion

The research undertaken was a mixed method study. In this chapter, the results of the quantitative and the qualitative research were presented individually. The hypotheses and the proposition were stated. The results of data collected were also recorded. In the chapter that follows, the findings are discussed and triangulated. The qualitative element of the research and data collected from the interviews were analysed and the themes presented. Furthermore, quantitative data collected were processed, missing responses were addressed, the statistical assumptions were verified. The correlation between the Independent Variables (IV) and the Dependent Variable (DV) was tested, which culminated in the regression model. This facilitated the testing of the hypotheses identified.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in accordance with the results presented in the previous chapter. The guiding beacon for the discussion of the results was the research questions, identified through the literature reviewed, which then influenced the hypotheses and the proposition. The discussion encompasses both the quantitative and the qualitative research outcomes. The data analysis and the coding were a means of streamlining the collected data, resulting in the themes that emerged.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The first phase of data collection was driven by a quantitative questionnaire which attracted 148 respondents. The questionnaire was distributed nationally within the borders of South Africa. It was distributed to all organisations that met the criteria of an SMME. During the qualitative phase of the research project, seven participants were selected from the sample of 148 who had responded to the quantitative phase. The main selection criteria at this stage were that the participants had not been coached previously and were available and willing to participate in the coaching intervention, which concluded with interviews. The participants in the qualitative phase of the research were involved in the telecommunications, insurance, construction, and mining sectors.

5.3 Entrepreneurs' Decision-Making and SMME Growth

Research Question 1: What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of SMMEs?

H1: Decision-making positively impacts the growth of SMMEs.

According to Urban (2010), decision-making is a cognitive process based on the mastery of information or a situation. Lieshout (2018) claims that decision-making is a course of action which looks at the outcome that is reached after the cognitive process. Furthermore, decision-making is an effectual process in which information is considered in reaching an outcome (Camuffo et al., 2020). The consideration of information alluded to by Camuffo et al. (2020) and the cognitive process described by Urban (2010) refer to the situations that the entrepreneur is faced with. These situations require decision-making. Sarasvathy (1998) looked into entrepreneurial decision-making and indicated that decisions are made causally and effectually. “Causation assumes an effect as given and selects from possible causes to achieve the desired effect.

Effectuation does the reverse and provides an alternative to the current market paradigm” (Sarasvathy, 1998, p. iv). In 2001 Sarasvathy further explained the concept of effectuation and causation. Causation is where the outcome of a decision can be predicted, and the entrepreneur controls his actions to obtain this predicted outcome (Sarasvathy, 2001). Effectuation is defined by Sarasvathy (2001) as the process whereby the variables or components of a decision are controlled, thus arriving at a controlled outcome. The concept of effectuation was referred to as a deliberate action to influence the future outcome (Read & Sarasvathy, 2019).

There needs to be a degree of mastery of the information before a decision is made (Camuffo et al., 2020). For mastery to take place, the learning process needs to be actioned and reflected on, as in experiential learning discussed in Chapter 2. Regarding the decision-making process, according to Crompton (2012a) and Wiginton & Cartwright (2020), coaching creates a higher degree of self-efficacy amongst participants. This increased self-efficacy indicates the presence of more effective decision-making or an effectual process, as described above.

The investigation of H1 and Research Question 1 was addressed in questions 16 to question 33 in the quantitative questionnaire and during the coaching intervention. After the quantitative data analysis, two factors emerged in support of H1, namely, H1a: Business Decision-Product Offering and H1b: Business

Decision-Market Expansion. After analysis of the data collected, the findings confirmed that product offerings need to be considered when deciding which markets to enter. However, product offerings are not fundamental to market entry. The findings indicate that decisions made around market expansion are key. During the research, the growth of the entrepreneurial business was researched in terms of decision-making and how it impacts growth. The decision around market expansion became apparent in the research. This decision contributes to the growth of the SMME. In the expansion of the market, there are various other factors that need to be considered. Examples could include the current business environment, the customer needs, the resources at the disposal of the entrepreneur and the capacity of the entrepreneur's business, to name a few.

Furthermore, the research indicates that this decision-making is based on business knowledge and experience, This confirms the view expressed by Urban (2010); Gray et al. (2011) and Kolb (2015) that a degree of mastery has already taken place as part of the cognitive process. This puts the entrepreneur in a good position to make a decision to expand current markets.

In the questionnaire, the respondents indicated that their entry into a new market was based on market research, which illustrates the presence of a cognitive process, which is needed in order to understand the market first before entry. This indicates the presence of adult learning where the learning takes place as a necessity and can be applied immediately (Leal-Rodriguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Pletcher et al., 2019). The respondents' market knowledge illustrated that at the end of their information collection and interpretation, there was a level of mastery (Azarian, 2019; Okyireh, 2020).

The outcome of the questionnaire and the discussion presented above indicate that most entrepreneurs consider a multitude of factors when making decisions around market entry, product offering to market and product pricing. Most respondents had growth plans for their business and these plans were based on market size, market potential, market intelligence and market research. Making decisions whether to remain in the current market or to expand markets is based on experience in markets and knowledge of market. The experience

refers to the entrepreneur's past experience in the market. Decisions around product pricing are based on market research, knowledge of market and experience within the market. The minority of entrepreneurs based their decisions on 'gut feelings' (intuition); this means that the minority approached the decision-making on a 'no-thought given' basis.

The approach to decision-making of most entrepreneurs who responded supported H1, in that decision-making positively impacts the growth of the SMME. Referring to Research Question 1: What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of SMMEs? The results answered the question: if a detailed and structured process of decision-making is followed by the entrepreneur, the impact on the SMMEs growth will be positive. This finding is relevant to H1b Business Decision- Market expansion as H1a Business Decision- Product Offering was not supported during the analysis.

5.4 Entrepreneurial Coaching and Entrepreneurs' Decision-making

Research Question 2: What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs?

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

The data collection instrument was designed to gather information on the experience of the entrepreneur during coaching. The data relevant to H2 were collected in questions 34 to 50. Aspects that were investigated considered whether the entrepreneurs were coached previously, the number of business coaches engaged during the lifetime of the entrepreneur, the objectives of the coaching, the cost of the coaching, the entrepreneur's experience during the coaching and the demographic information on the coach/es engaged. Furthermore, the referrals by the coach were looked at, for example, whether the coachee was referred for legal advice, financial advice, or counselling.

The low response rate resulted in this hypothesis being excluded from further analysis. As indicated by Field (2013), a response rate below 30 respondents is inadequate to derive any meaningful results. There were, however, three questions which received responses that are noteworthy. Firstly, 136 respondents indicated that the coach that they had engaged had a degree. However, the nature of the degree was not directly related to the research.

Furthermore, 139 respondents indicated that their coach was a part of a business, which indicated that the coach had business experience at the time of the coaching. The coach's business experience meant an appreciation and understanding of the issues faced by the entrepreneur in business. In addition, 143 respondents indicated that the coach referred them to a financial service. The reason for this financial referral was not investigated as it was not the focus of the study. The focus was mainly on the outcome of the coaching. However, in the context of the questionnaire, this could indicate that the entrepreneur would need to access finances or the needed financial training to prevent business failure (Prinsloo, 2015; Bruwer et al., 2019). The access to finance specifically refers to finance as capital funding for the business, as well as finance to ensure adequate cash flow within the business.

According to Ungerer et al. (2019), the duration of data collection and the initial design play an important role regarding the response rate. Furthermore, the timing and duration of data collection had an impact on the response rate as data were collected during the Covid-19 lockdown period and businesses worldwide were impacted during this period (Jackson et al., 2020; Lose et al., 2020). A plausible explanation of the low response rate could be that entrepreneurs had more pressing concerns than to respond to the questionnaire, such as businesses closing at the time (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Jackson et al., 2020; Lose et al., 2020).

Another view, as expressed by Schutte (2019), is that entrepreneurial coaching as a research field is still in its infancy. As a result, various aspects of research may not achieve the desired outcome. Specifically, looking into the area of coach and coachee relationships, Baron and Morin (2009) refer to the interpersonal relationship between the coach and the coachee. During

coaching, personal details are shared (Baron & Morin, 2009). The data for H2 were collected via the questionnaire with no face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the respondent. This could have contributed to the low response rate due to the sensitivity around the coaching engagement. St-Jean and Audet (2012) and Kotte et al. (2021) indicates that unless there is a level of trust or buy-in, and unless the entrepreneur sees value in the research, the desired response rate will not be achieved. This is further supported by Palmer and Whybrow (2018), who indicate the there is a trust relationship established between coach and coachee. In this case the researcher was not the coach.

The outcome of the data collected during this phase of the research did not support the H2 because the response rate was not adequate to make a determination; hence, the research question could not be answered.

5.5 Decision-making Improves after Coaching Intervention

Research Question 3: How do entrepreneurs make decisions before and after business coaching?

P1: The way in which entrepreneurs make decisions improved after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention.

The themes identified supported Proposition 1, which states that decision-making improves after coaching. Coaching delivered goal focus, improved decision-making, improved efficiency, which lead to business growth. An element that is important to business growth is also the knowledge and experience of the entrepreneur.

The respondents indicated that coaching created an awareness and a focus on their goal. This increased goal focus translated to better decision-making and an improvement in other areas of the business. These improvements resulted in business growth.

5.6 Conclusion

The conclusion pertaining to the data presented above supports H1 in that the decision-making of an entrepreneur positively impacts the growth of an SMME. This was demonstrated when the entrepreneurs considered a multitude of factors in an effort to increase market share and profitability. In addressing H1, Research Question 1 was also answered. The perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making is positive for the growth of the SMMEs.

The questionnaire, however, did not deliver the desired outcome pertaining to H2 and Research Question 2 as a result of the low response rate. That was mainly due to the inadequate coaching relationship between the researcher and the sample (Kotte et al., 2021). H2 and Research Question 2 were, however, addressed during the coaching intervention.

The coaching intervention, which formed part of the qualitative section of the research, addressed and answered H2 and Research Question 2. The evidence from the coaching intervention above indicated that entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of an entrepreneur. The perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of an entrepreneur is positive. Therefore, H2 and Research Question 2 were addressed.

Finally, the evidence presented above also addressed P1 in that entrepreneurial coaching improved the decision-making of the entrepreneurs. In addition, self-efficacy improved after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention, thereby answering Research Question 3.

These findings contribute to the literature on coaching in relation to the improvement in entrepreneurs' self-efficacy. The organisational goals dealt with in the coaching intervention played a central role in decision-making, which positively impacted business growth.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research project. Research questions are included and the contribution to the body of knowledge is summarised. Recommendations are made for government, coaches, coaching bodies, and entrepreneurs, as well as for future research.

The main objective of the research project was achieved: to determine the perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of SMMEs, and how coaching impacts this decision-making within South Africa. This objective led to the formulation of three research questions, namely:

Research Question 1:

What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of SMMEs?

Research Question 2:

What was the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of entrepreneurs?

Research Question 3:

How do entrepreneurs make decisions before and after entrepreneurial coaching?

6.2 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 1

As a means of addressing research question 1, Hypothesis 1 was formulated:

H1: Decision-making positively impacts the growth of SMMEs.

The findings of the research confirmed that market expansion decisions facilitate growth of the SMMEs, thereby confirming and supporting H1. Specific examples, such as market expansion and product offerings were considered but were not the prime consideration. Decision-making was also based on knowledge and research, which denotes mastery. The knowledge referred to was not only market and product knowledge but also the environment in which the business operated and the dynamics around competitors within the market. This was reinforced by the literature, which posits that at the end of a cognitive learning process there is a decision, which displays mastery of the information or situation presented (Gray et al., 2011; Urban, 2010; Vidal, 2018).

Decisions can impact business growth either in a negative or a positive manner. If decision-making is approached in a structured and considered manner the outcome will be business growth. The opposite will be the outcome if a structured and considered approach is not followed. The research found that coaching played a pivotal role in helping the entrepreneur to structure their approach to decision-making. Hence, the confirmation of H1

6.3 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was the input driver to the formulation of Hypothesis 2.

H2: Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of entrepreneurs.

A section of the questionnaire was dedicated to addressing H2, which would provide an answer to research question 2. The response rate to this section of the research was not adequate to generalise the findings. The average response rate was 14%, translating to 21 respondents if the three confirmation questions were removed. This response rate was not adequate, as indicated by Field (2013). The nature of the questions, which sought to gain insights into the coaching engagement, ventured into a sensitive area and the respondents were not willing to share their coaching experience (Schutte, 2019).

The questions that were answered showed that 56.1% (83 respondents) had received coaching. Most coaches were part of a business and most coachees

were referred for financial services. The referral could be for training or for financial aid. The background of the coach and the referral alone were not the aim of this section. The aim was to answer research question 2 and to confirm or repudiate H2. Responses to the three questions did not indicate the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on an entrepreneur's decision-making. The low response to the questionnaire was insufficient to answer research question 2 or to confirm or repudiate H2.

As a result of the coaching, insight was gained through the action research portion of the research project (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018; Schutte, 2019).

6.4 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 3

Research question 3 was the input driver to the formulation of proposition 1:

P1: The way in which entrepreneurs make decisions improved after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention.

In addressing P1 and to answer research question 3, action research was undertaken in the form of coaching. A sample of n=7 participants had indicated their willingness to take part in the quantitative questionnaire. The coaching process answered research question 3 and addressed P1; it also answered research question 2, and H2, and gave insight into research question 1 and H1.

The outcome of the coaching, which ended with interviews, was that coaching improved the self-efficacy of entrepreneurs. This was in line with the literature (Bushe, 2019; Crompton & Smyrnios, 2011). This improvement in self-efficacy translated into enhanced decision-making, which addressed H2 and answered research question 2: the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching is that it enhances decision-making. Furthermore, with the enhanced or improved decision-making, business growth is positively impacted, hence, research question 1 was also answered. In answering research question 1, 2 and 3 after the coaching intervention, the result was also the confirmation of H1, H2 and P1.

The literature indicates that coaching as an intervention enhances and improves the self-efficacy of the entrepreneur (Bushe, 2019; Crompton, Smyrnios & Bi, 2012). However, the literature does not indicate what the driving force is behind this improved self-efficacy.

The contribution to knowledge, and the finding of the coaching intervention relates to the driving forces behind the improved self-efficacy: that is, the entrepreneur, after coaching, makes decisions focussing on the goals of the organisation. The goals guide all their decisions, whether tactical of operational. This therefore ensures that all decisions are aligned with the goals of the organisation and in so doing, increases growth and profits.

6.5 Recommendations and Practical Implications

This section contains recommendations for government, coaches, and entrepreneurs.

6.5.1 Government

The South Africa small business environment is plagued by a high level of business failure, which is not conducive to job creation (Bushe, 2019; Cant & Ligthelm, 2002; Cant & Ligthelm, 2003). Amongst the main drivers of this failure rate are the lack of management and financial skills.

Coaching as an intervention presents a powerful training and learning opportunity for the entrepreneur. Hence, as one of the tools to arrest the high failure rate, it is recommended that the South African government increase efforts to make coaching available to all SMMEs. Vehicles that could be used to increase the availability of coaching are SETAs as well as SEDA. This would not only help to reduce SMME failures but would also enhance the quality of the decisions made by entrepreneurs.

6.5.2 Entrepreneurs

The findings of this study indicated that entrepreneurial coaching as an intervention delivers a multitude of benefits to the entrepreneur. This includes

an increased level of goal focus, which translates to an increase in self-efficacy. The improvement in self-efficacy would lead to improved business decisions. This would ultimately ensure growth and an improvement in the survival rate of SMMEs.

It is recommended that entrepreneurs embrace the opportunity to participate in entrepreneurial coaching as an opportunity to further their learning. In so doing they could contribute to the body of knowledge around business and coaching. This would enhance the quality of coaching delivered to them. It could also contribute to maturing the coaching profession in South Africa.

6.5.3 Coaches

As a relatively new profession in the fledgling stages, it is recommended that coaches strengthen their participation in the regulatory coaching bodies with in South Africa (Schutte, 2019). This participation or affiliation would ensure that coaches are committed to a code of ethical conduct and would contribute to the establishment and the furthering of the reputation of the profession.

It is imperative that the profession maintain and further good rapport with the market. This would aid in the acceptance and maturation of the profession.

6.5.4 Coaching bodies

As indicated, the coaching profession within South Africa is still in its infancy, and access to the profession is limited to the SMME sector (Rostron, 2006; Stout-Rostron, 2019).

It is recommended that coaching bodies increase their membership recruitment drive and ensure the ethical conduct of affiliated coaches. In addition, it is recommended that coaching bodies ensure formal training and development of coaches, which would further enhance the ethical and professional conduct of coaches. Coaching bodies could also collaborate more with government bodies to ensure that coaching is made more available to the SMME sector. This collaboration could be brought about through the SETAs or the SEDA to establish a regulating body for the coaching industry. This body would be

responsible for the regulation of conduct as well as the general coaching practices in the South African business market.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This study focused on the decision-making process of entrepreneurs within the SMME sector in South Africa. There are, however, other areas that could be investigated:

The coaching intervention could be replicated in every province in South Africa. Diversity between provinces needs to be considered. For example, provinces like the North West and the Northern Cape have economies that are, to a great extent, dependent on mining, whereas mining is not that extensive in the Western Cape (SEDA, 2021). These differences make regionalised planning necessary. The decision-making research could be conducted in larger, more successful organisations, pertaining to growth and market expansion. Lessons would be learned and best practises tailor-made for the SMME sector.

Future research could also be conducted into the effectiveness of coaching as a training and development tool for entrepreneurs in the SMME sector in South Africa.

6.7 Conclusion

At the heart of the poverty eradication strategy of the South African government is the growth of small businesses, and specifically, the SMME sector. The high failure rate in this sector poses challenges. This research has demonstrated that coaching as an intervention could reduce this failure rate and contribute to the survival rate of business in this sector.

Effective coaching would contribute to the area of learning and the improvement of decision-making in addition to the increased focus on goals and self-efficacy of the entrepreneur.

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APPENDIX A (Consent Form)

Consent Form

Dear Participant

Subject: Research consent for participation in research: The impact of business research in the decision making of an entrepreneur within the South African SMMEs.

I hereby acknowledge and agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project understanding that the information collected will be used for educational purposes only. The research will include a questionnaire, and should I be selected I agree to participate in a coaching intervention where sessions will be recorded and transcribes which I will have to opportunity to review and approve. The information gather will only be shared between the researcher, his supervisor, and the University of the Witwatersrand.

Ethics and Confidentiality

In dealing with the information gather the research will ensure that the information is handled and archived in the strictest of confidentiality and that all the ethical standards are adhered to as laid down by the University's code of conduct for research and that imposed on the researcher by the University's ethics committee.

I the participant hereby consent:

○ Yes I do consent

○ No I do not consent

APPENDIX B (Research Instrument)

The impact of entrepreneurial coaching in the decision making of entrepreneurs within the South African SMMEs

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Start of Block: Consent Form

Q1

47 Van Riebeeck Street

Nest Park,

Bapsfontein

Johannesburg

1510

Dear Participant

Subject: Research consent for participation in research: The impact of business research in the decision making of an entrepreneur within the South African SMME's.

I hereby acknowledge and agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project understanding that the information collected will be used for educational purposes only. The research will include a questionnaire, and should I be selected I agree to participate in a coaching intervention where sessions will be recorded and transcribes which I will have to opportunity to review and approve. The information gather will only be shared between the researcher, his supervisor, and the University of the Witwatersrand.

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In dealing with the information gather the research will ensure that the information is handled and archived in the strictest of confidentiality and that all the ethical standards are adhered to as laid down by the University's code of conduct for research and that imposed on the researcher by the University's ethics committee.

I.the.participant.hereby.consent:

- ○ Yes, I do consent (1)
- ○ No, I do not consent (2)

End of Block: Consent Form

Start of Block: Demographic Details and Business Information

Q2 Company Name:

_____

Q3.Name

_____

Q4 Position (Please choose one)

- ○ CEO (1)
- ○ Shareholder (2)
- ○ Director (3)
- ○ General Manager (4)
- ○ Manager (5)

Q5 Age (Please choose one)

- ○ 18 - 25 (1)
- ○ 26 - 45 (2)
- ○ 46 - 65 (3)
- ○ older that 65 (4)

Q6 Contact Number (Optional)

_____

Q7 Email Address (Optional)

_____

Q8 In which year was the enterprise established (Please indicate one)

- ○ 1990 - 1995 (1)
- ○ 1996 - 2001 (2)
- ○ 2002 - 2007 (3)
- ○ 2008 - 2013 (4)
- ○ 2014 - 2019 (5)
- ○ 2020 (6)

Q9 My Gender is:

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)

Q10 The highest academic qualification of the CEO is:

- ○ Less than Matric (1)
- ○ Matric (2)
- ○ Undergrad Degree (3)
- ○ MBA/ Masters (4)
- ○ PHD or Doctorate (5)
- ○ Other (6)

Q11 Which one industry best describes your operation? (Please select only one option below).

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry, fishing (1)

- [ ] Mining (2)
- [ ] Manufacturing (3)
- [ ] Engineering and Construction (4)
- [ ] Wholesale Trade (5)
- [ ] Retail Trade (6)
- [ ] Bed and Breakfast, Cafe, Restaurant (7)
- [ ] Information Technology (8)
- [ ] Communications, Public Relations, Media (9)
- [ ] Finance and Insurance (10)
- [ ] Real estate, Property and Business Services (11)
- [ ] Education (12)
- [ ] Medical, Health, Wellness, Beauty (13)
- [ ] Cultural and Recreational (14)
- [ ] Personal and Other Services (15)

Q12 How many people does your enterprise employ?

- [ ] 1-5 employees (1)
- [ ] 6-10 employees (2)
- [ ] 11-30 employees (3)
- [ ] 31-50 employees (4)
- [ ] 51-100 employees (5)
- [ ] above 100 (6)

Q13 What was your gross revenue for the last three years?

	R1.00 - R200 000.00 (1)	R 201 000.00 - R 5 million (2)	R 5 million - R 12 million (3)
2017: (1)	○	○	○
2018: (2)	○	○	○
2019: (3)	○	○	○

Q14 How many customers have you serviced?

	0 (1)	1 -15 (2)	16 - 31 (3)	32 - 100 (4)	above 100 (5)
The year 2017 (1)	○	○	○	○	○
The Year 2018 (2)	○	○	○	○	○
The Year 2019 (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 The main reason for business growth is: (Please indicate two only)

- [ ] internal organic growth (1)
- [ ] acquisition (2)
- [ ] new product release (3)
- [ ] quality control (4)
- [ ] customer service (5)
- [ ] effective decision making (please specify) (6) _____
- [ ] ineffective decision making (please specify) (7) _____
- [ ] other (please specify) (8) _____

End of Block: Demographic Details and Business Information

Start of Block: The entrepreneur's decision-making approach

Research Question 1: To what extent does an entrepreneur's decision impact the growth of an SMME? (Q16 to Q 34)

Research Question 3: How does and entrepreneur make decisions before business coaching? (Q16 to Q34)

Q16 When considering potential customers as an entrepreneur, I look at prices only.

- [ ] Strongly disagree (1)
- [ ] Disagree (2)
- [ ] Somewhat disagree (3)
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- [ ] Somewhat agree (5)
- [ ] Agree (6)
- [ ] Strongly agree (7)

Q17 When considering potential customers as an entrepreneur, I look at product offering only?

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q18 When considering potential customer as an entrepreneur, I look at the competitors only.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q19 When considering potential customers as an entrepreneur, I seek to obtain the most information on the customers.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q20 What is the potential value of the market within which your organisation operates?

- ○ above R100.00 to below R5 million (1)
- ○ above R5 million to below R10 million (2)
- ○ above R10 million to below R20 million (3)
- ○ above R20 million to below R50 million (4)
- ○ above R50 million (5)

Q21 What is your organisations turnover?

- ○ R100.00 to R 200 thousand (1)
- ○ R 201 thousand to below R 500 thousand (2)
- ○ R 501 thousand to below R 3 million (3)
- ○ above R 3 million to R 5 million (4)
- ○ above R 5 million to R 20 million (5)
- ○ above R 20 million to R 50 million (6)
- ○ above R 50 million (7)

Q22 What are you planned growth targets for the next 3-5 years?

- ○ 1% to 5% (1)
- ○ 6% to 10% (2)
- ○ 11% to 30% (3)
- ○ 31% to 50% (4)
- ○ above 50% (5)

○ None (6)

Q23 My organisation growth or non-growth is based on?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Market Size (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Market Potential (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Market Intelligence (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q24 What informs the business decisions?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
My knowledge of the market (1)	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
My market research (2)	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
No thought given really (3)	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢

Q25 Will your future sales remain in your current market, or will you expand?

- ○ Yes, my sales will remain in my current market. (1)
- ○ No, I will be expanding. (2)

Q26 The decision to remain in my current market is based on my knowledge of the market.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q27 The decision to remain in my current market is based on my year of experience in the market.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q28 The decision to expand my current market is based on my research of the market.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q29 The decision to expand my current market is based on my knowledge of the market.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q30 The Decision to expand my current market is based on my experience within the market.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q31 The decision to expand my current market is based on a gut feeling?

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Disagree (2)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ○ Somewhat agree (5)
- ○ Agree (6)
- ○ Strongly agree (7)

Q32 The pricing of my product is based on ...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Market research (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
knowledge (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
experience (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gut feelings (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q33 What sales channel does your organisation employ? (Please only choose a maximum of two.)

- ○ Internet (1)
- ○ Retails store (2)
- ○ Counter Sales (3)
- ○ Telephone sales (4)
- ○ Direct Selling through Sale Representative (5)
- ○ Selling through agents (6)

Q34 The choice of sales channel is informed by?

- ○ Tradition and history (1)
- ○ Market research (2)
- ○ Profit maximization (3)
- ○ Customer requirements (4)

End of Block: The entrepreneur's decision-making approach

Start of Block: Exposure to coaching

Research Question 2: What impact does business coaching have in the decision making of an entrepreneur? (Q35 to Q 50)

Q35 Have you previously used a business coach?

- ○ Yes, continue to Question 36 to Question 50 (1)
- ○ No, continue to Question 51 do not complete Question 36 to Question 50 (2)

Q36 Number of business coaches you've used over your lifetime

- ○ 1 to 3 (4)
- ○ 4 to 6 (5)
- ○ more that 6 (6)

Q37 3. Your last business coaching experience was (please select ONE only)

- ○ With a coach (1)
- ○ With a mentor (2)

Q37 Over what period did you work with the business coach.

	0 to 6 months (1)	6 months to 12 months (2)	longer than 12 months (3)
Coaching Duration (1)	○	○	○

Q38 Your business coach was:

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)

Q39 Did you pay for business coaching?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q40 Did you agree on outcomes/deliverables at commencement?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q41 How many sessions did you have and in what time?

_____

Q42 Were your business coaching sessions mainly: (Please select ONE only)

- ○ Structured (1)
- ○ flexible session to session (2)
- ○ unstructured (3)

Q43 What were the business coach's qualifications? (Please select all applicable)

- ○ Coach training (1)
- ○ Business degree (2)
- ○ Psychology degree (3)
- ○ I don't know (4)
- ○ Other (please specify) (5)

Q44 Had your business coach ever: (please select all applicable)

- ○ Owned a business (1)
- ○ Partnered in a business (2)
- ○ Sold a business (3)
- ○ Publicly listed a business (4)

○ Other please specify (5)

_____

Q45 To what degree did your business coach play the role of:

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	About half the time (3)	Most of the time (4)	Always (5)
Sounding Board (eg. open honest feedback) (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Listen (eg. empathy encouragement) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Counsellor (eg. analysed problems) (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Advisor (eg. expert knowledge) (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Network Facilitator (eg. access to others) (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q46 Did your coach ever refer you to other services:

- ○ Legal advice (1)
  _____
- ○ Financial advice (2)
  _____
- ○ Business advice (3)
  _____
- ○ Psychology/psychotherapy (4)
  _____
- ○ Counselling (5)
  _____
- ○ Other (please specify) (6)
  _____

Q47 Business coaching was for:

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Personal Life (1)		
Business/executive (2)		

Q48 Main reason you engaged a business coach was to:	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
increase skills/knowledge (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
grow the business (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
better business processes (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
better staff relationships (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
change your behaviour (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
increase performance (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
develop your potential (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
expand your thinking/improve decision making (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
other please specify (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q49 Main focus of your business coaching sessions were on:

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	About half the time (3)	Most of the time (4)	Always (5)
Vision, strategy, goals, environment (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Customers (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Stakeholder (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Production (eg. create, manufacture) (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Process (eg. methods procedures) (5)	○	○	○	○	○
People (eg. leadership, management culture) (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Efficacy (eg. decision making, work output and profitability) (7)	○	○	○	○	○

Q50 To what extent were you satisfied with your business coaching experience?

	Extremely dissatisfied (1)	Moderately dissatisfied (2)	Slightly dissatisfied (3)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4)	Slightly satisfied (5)	Moderately satisfied (6)	Extremely satisfied (7)
Period/length (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cost of business coaching sessions (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Delivery method of your sessions (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your relationship with your coach (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your business coaching style and approach (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The role/s your business coach played (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The outcome of business coaching (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Exposure to coaching

Start of Block: Qualitative Action Research Coaching Intervention

Research Question 2: What impact does business coaching have in the decision making of an entrepreneur? (Q51 to Q56)

Q51 The detail below is only a guideline as it is not possible to predict how the coaching sessions will proceed. Due to the varied nature of the goals and the dynamics of each session being different there needs to be a degree of flexibility during a coaching session. To overcome these challenges the coaching sessions will be recorded and transcribed with permission and ensuring compliance to all ethical guideline whilst ensuring confidentiality

Q52 **Goal Setting**

Could you explain to me how you currently make decisions? What would you like to achieve in these sessions pertaining to your decision making?

How realistic and achievable are these objectives?

What is the time frame in which you would like to achieve the objectives around your decision making?

What are the milestones that you will be tracking to ensure that you achieve the timeline?

How will you know that you have achieved these objectives?

Q53 **Realistic**

How realistic is the goals you set for decision making?

How realistic is the time allocation for the achievement of these goals?

Q54 **Options**

What support will you require during achieving the goals around decision making?

What resources are available to you in aiding you to achieve your goals around decision making?

How will you go about achieving these goals?

Q55 **Way Forward**

What will be the next step?

What is the timeline to the next step?

When would like to schedule a follow up coaching session?

End of Block: Qualitative Action Research Coaching Intervention

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Start of Block: Interview Questions

Research Question 3: How does and entrepreneur make decisions after business coaching? (Q56)

Q56, Could you explain what process you followed previously when making decision prior to coaching?

What was the factors you consider during making a decision?

How long did it typically take for you to make a decision?

Did you consult and seek other inputs before making decisions?

After having participated in business coaching please describe if there has been a change in the process you follow when making a decision?

Post the business coach please advise what factors you now consider when making a decision?

How long does it take you to make a decision post the business coaching?

Do you consult for input when deciding and is there a difference after the coaching session?

What changes if any have you experienced?

Please explain if anything has changed around how you make decision?

Did business coaching have an influence around how you make decision?

If so, please explain what the influence or impact is?

Thank you for your participation.

End of Block: Interview Questions

APPENDIX C (Consistency Matrix)

Consistency matrix

Objective: The main objective of the study is to determine the impact of an entrepreneur's decision-making on an SMME's growth and how entrepreneurial coaching impacts this decision making.

RQ #	State Research Question	Prop / hyp #	State Proposition or Hypothesis	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
1	What is the perceived impact of an entrepreneurs' decision-making on the growth of an SMME?	1	Decision-making positively impacts the growth of an SMME.	Survey Questionnaire Quantitative Questionnaire Question 16 to 34	Descriptive Analysis Correlation and regression Hypothesis testing
2	What is the perceived impact of entrepreneurial coaching on the decision-making of an entrepreneur?	2	Entrepreneurial coaching enhances the decision-making of an entrepreneur.	Survey Questionnaire Quantitative Questionnaire Question 35 to 50 and Question 51 to 56	Descriptive Analysis Correlation and regression through Hypothesis testing

RQ #	State Research Question	Prop / hyp #	State Proposition or Hypothesis	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
3	How do entrepreneurs make decisions before and after entrepreneurial coaching?	3	The way in which entrepreneurs make decisions improved after an entrepreneurial coaching intervention.	Survey Questionnaire Qualitative Questions 51 to Question 56	Thematic Analysis

APPENDIX D (Ethics Clearance Certificate)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: WBS/BA2289225/200**

PROJECT TITLE The perceived impact of business coaching in decision making of entrepreneurs within South African SMMEs

INVESTIGATOR	Mr Sebastian Bloem
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	MM (Business & Executive Coaching)
DATE CONSIDERED	12 June 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	LOW RISK
EXPIRY DATE	28 FEBRUARY 2021

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 26 June 2020 **CHAIRPERSON** _____
(Dr MDJ Matshabaphala)

cc: Supervisor: Dr Msimango-Galawe

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

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

Sebastian Bloem 26 /06 /2020

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES